



THE View FROM Blue

Published by Blue Mountain Ratepayers' Association
www.bmraters.com
Box 198, Thornbury, Ontario NOH 2P0

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Peter Bordignon, President of BMRA

Welcome to our New Term!

Thank you to all who attended The Blue Mountains Ratepayers' Association AGM in May. The meeting was very well attended and informative, covering highlights of the breadth of issues that we cover. For the 2017-2018 Term, we have an amazing and dedicated group sitting on our Board of Directors. Our established Committees for this term include; County, Budget, Planning, Communications, Fundraising, Environment and Short Term Accommodation. We are also looking at the idea of establishing an Election Committee late this year. The BMRA will be holding our first Annual Major Fundraiser in the coming months; details and tickets will be available very soon.

I personally wanted to address comments written in the 'View from Blue' April edition about the water in Clarksburg. On behalf of the BMRA to the fine residents of Clarksburg, I truly regret the wording that the writer used in this article. I grew up on farm for my first 20 years with both well and septic systems for water and waste and

many areas in the Town of the Blue Mountains use septic systems today without issue. To clarify, the BMRA County Committee comments were to highlight a specific need for creating funding reserves for this project. The statement was assuming that the funds from the County were made available to the Town of Blue Mountains through a more appropriate and fair funding formula. The County Committee is working diligently along with the Town County Steering Committee to get a better monetary deal from Grey County for all residents. If council crafted a new policy direction of reducing waste and securing a better deal with Grey County and other upper tier governments, not only would Clarksburg hopefully benefit but so would all other regions of the Town of The Blue Mountains. We would see the greater delivery of services through pro-action as opposed to reactionary in regards to keeping money here in the TBM for our own infrastructure.

On a positive note, we have spoken many times lately about collaboration with other Town Advocate groups in regards to working together with the BMRA for the benefit of all residents. I am pleased to inform everyone that a Communications Panel has been formed and the first public meeting will be held on

Tuesday, June 20th from 7 to 9 pm. The meeting will be held at the Marsh Street Centre in Clarksburg. All TBM residents are welcome to come and discuss various issues of concern to the community, and offer remedial suggestions.

The BMRA wears many hats and continuously works with various groups for the greater good of the community at large. I will be sitting down regularly with other town advocates to establish a greater line of communication with our Town Staff and Council. Sometimes we will challenge, other times we observe and hopefully in all cases we can evoke real change. We are looking forward to a productive year!

IT'S NOT HARD TO KEEP YOUR BALL IN THE FAIRWAY...AS LONG AS YOU'RE NOT PICKY ABOUT WHICH FAIRWAY.



BRC OBJECTIVES FOR 2017 & 2018

Broadly speaking, our goal is to encourage ratepayer awareness and involvement in the Town's budgetary process to ensure "best practices" and transparency in Town presentations of its financial affairs and get a "better deal" from County.

Specifically, for the next 18 months we will continue to:

1. Monitor water and wastewater fixed and consumption charges. While the issue does not affect those on wells and septic systems, the town is growing and more and more residents are affected by these charges. Long term, Clarksburg must be folded in to modern municipal water and sewage treatment.

2. Encourage Town finance staff to prepare the budget using actual numbers as the base rather than the previous year's budget budget. In addition, providing line by line expense comparisons would enable more transparency in the budgetary process for both Council and the public. Also, including the total Town cost line chart in staff budget presentations is a goal for 2017.

3. Monitor the implementation of the Town's Asset Management Plan and the consequent impact on reserves and taxes. This is of major importance as we need to ensure rules are understood and not followed blindly to build unnecessary reserves and cause major increases in the tax burden.

4. As we approach the elections in 2018, the issue of excessive taxes paid to the County needs to be front and centre to all individuals planning to run for Council in October 2018. Simply put, the future of our Town and our ability to sustain growth depends on a political solution and those elected to Council must engage The Province and County to achieve a "fair deal". We will continue to support Council in seeking needed change.



PLANNING OBJECTIVES

With 2018 being an election year we shall be encouraging candidates to become engaged and knowledgeable on these items:

- Monitor rezoning proposals and speak out in cases where the Town does not follow its Official Plan. Encourage planning staff and Council to adhere to the Official Plan.
- Promote the acceleration of work required to complete and approve the new Zoning By-Law. Support the contract hiring of additional planning staff as needed to facilitate this objective.
- Seek ways to improve communication between Town staff and the community.



STA OBJECTIVES

During this election year, The STA Committee plans to:

- Work with the Town to insure that the STA part of the Official Plan reflects the Bylaw and the needs of the residents most affected.
- Work with the Town on the review of the STA bylaws that will take place later this year to make sure any changes do not dilute the effectiveness of the existing Bylaw.
- Monitor the application of the Bylaw and respond to any inconsistencies
- Continue to have regular meetings with Bylaw Department
- Support the Town in a upcoming OMB hearing
- Advocate for the Ratepayers



COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE OBJECTIVES

With the upcoming election in 2018, the Communications Committee has set the following objectives for itself:

- To reach out to all members of the TBM community with accurate and responsible reporting and analysis on all activities that affect the well-being of TBM taxpayers
- To disseminate as much information as possible on all of the issues and candidates for the 2018 election
- To work with other communication vehicles in the community, and with TBM staff, to ensure that the timely and accurate information is available to all constituents

THE ONLY PROBLEM WITH
TOWN PLANNING IS
HAVING TO ACCOUNT FOR
PEOPLE



ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE OBJECTIVES



- The environmental committee will monitor the outcome of the BMRA and the BMWTF support of the West Thornbury Development. We want to preserve the beautiful cedar forest and its wild life south of the Lakeshore West that has been threatened by the Loft's ideas of the development. We need to make sure that this old and unique part of the old Thornbury will not be destroyed and the TBM will support the ideas of the buffer and the green corridor behind this old residential establishment.
- We will also monitor the threat to the wetland areas south of Hwy 26 from the Grey Road 21 on to the West. This huge 50 acres wetlands have been for sale for some time and we need to make certain that this important filter to the Georgian Bay waters and the home of thousands wild species will be fairly treated by planners and developers.

FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE OBJECTIVES



The newly formed FUNdraising Committee will be hosting a number of "FUN" events in the near future.

We will also look to work with local TBM Charity Groups to give them a portion of our proceeds to help the community. The BMRA F.C. will be hosting our first major event this Fall, please watch for details

STAY TUNED!!!

COUNTY COMMITTEE UPDATE

Update: A very important meeting will take place on June 29th at 6 PM in Council Chambers. The details of the format are yet to be decided (we will advise).

The public will be able to attend and listen. The objective is to explore for a better deal with the County. Two former senior/deputy ministers from Municipal Affairs have been hired by TBM to help with this matter and we look forward to hearing their views at this meeting.

COUNTY COMMITTEE OBJECTIVES

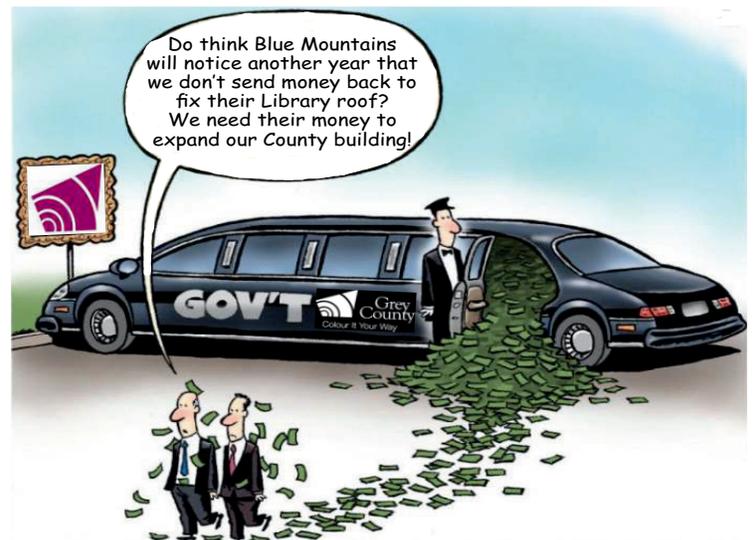
We don't have a goal for achieving Tier 1 Municipality status; instead we have a systematic way of getting there and in the process achieve a better deal for TBM while it is still in the County.

The next step on the journey toward Single Tier will be for the newly formed County/TBM Committee to come up with Terms of Reference that deal with our grievances.

We will together systematically work towards improvements and/or objectives for a fairer deal with the County.

- The primary objective is to promote the assumption of Grey County roads by the Town.
- A long-term objective is to advocate for a better deal with the County such that the Town receives a larger share of County expenditures. The BMRA will continue to promote the Minister of Municipal Affairs's suggestion that the County and the Town should agree on a Facilitator to help negotiate a better deal that reflects the demands on the Town of a peak population of 35,000 residents and visitors.
- The County Committee will identify and champion potential infrastructure investments in the Town that could be made with the tax funding that now goes to the County, such as upgrades to our Library and our roads, as well as Clarksburg's waste and water needs.
- The Committee will argue that all revenue from Grey County Development Charges collected on new TBM properties should be spent in The Blue Mountains.

With 2018 being an election year we shall be encouraging candidates to become engaged and knowledgeable on these 4 items.



FROM THE EDITOR "PASSION AT BLUE"

Thank you for picking up the Blue Mountains Ratepayers Association (BMRA) and checking us out. We think of ourselves as the citizens who "go deep" in all of the issues that impact the taxpayers of Town of Blue Mountains (TBM). Please forgive us our acronyms. We help you with those, too!

What is never in doubt in TBM is the passion and love for community which is shared by TBM citizens for their town. It is wonderful to behold.

When there is passion, there is emotion, and when there is emotion, there are many opportunities for miscommunication and misunderstanding. And the BMRA found itself in such a situation during its recent Annual General Meeting (AGM #**!! acronyms) when our Communications Committee discovered that it had touched a nerve with Clarksburg residents over its description of the current water/waste water services offered to their residents.

Please let the record show that we regret the impact that this article had on some of our readers.

Our writers are passionate too, and they, like all of our TBM citizens, are looking out for their fellow citizens. Please know that the characterization of town services in Clarksburg came from a place of care, concern and a strong wish for action, whatever that action may be. In this case, the writer was looking for TBM's appropriate share of taxpayer's dollars to help with his evaluation of the situation. Tax dollar injustice is a burning issue in TBM that our regular readers will readily recognize.

If at any time, you are not happy with the views expressed in the BMRA newsletter, please do not hesitate to submit your Letter to the Editor at paula@bookedsolid.ca and let us know your views. We will do our best to include your letter in future newsletters.

THE FAMILY CIRCUS



JOIN TODAY!

The Blue Mountains Ratepayers' Association is growing in numbers thanks to many of you who keep abreast of the issues and support BMRA activities! Please don't forget to send in your \$25 and keep us the force we've become! New members and diversity always welcome!

We are actively seeking residential members as well as members from our agricultural community, corporate business, and small business. We are looking for committee volunteers with skillsets in website, social media, fundraising and municipal elections.

PLEASE RENEW OR JOIN TODAY!

**RENEW TODAY
ONLY \$25!**

www.bmratepayers.com

Visit the website and click on JOIN NOW today!



Peter Bordignon, President
pbordignon@outlook.com

John Leckie, Vice President
john.leckie@rogers.com

Bill Pittaway, Secretary
billpittaway13@gmail.com

Peter Sharpe, Treasurer
pesharpe@rogers.com

Directors:

Denis Fennessy, Director
djf@rogers.com

Blanka Guyatt
Chair Environmental Committee
blankaguyatt777@gmail.com

Janet Findlay
Chair Planning Committee
jfindlay@rogers.com

Paula Hope
Chair Communications Committee
paula@bookedsolid.ca

Terry Kellar
Chair STA Committee
tkellar@sympatico.ca

Andree Lovell
Chair Fundraising Committee
email: andree@lovellinc.ca

Jane Moysey
Chair Membership Committee
jane@janemoysey.com

Terry Thompson
Chair Budget Review Committee
terancethompson@rogers.com

www.bmratepayers.com

Visit the website and click on
JOIN NOW

WHY BE A BMRA MEMBER?

- Strength in numbers = influence on government and community issues, paid membership is the proof
- Membership means you can bring issues of concern to the attention of the Association and perhaps find like minded support
- Represent the issues facing your neighbourhood or industry and make a difference
- While your Board are all Volunteers... Website, Newsletters and AGM are costly: for effective and timely communication we need your dues!