

## BMRA Town Talks III: Planning for TBM's Future

The third of the BMRA's "Town Talks" virtual member forums was held on Tuesday, April 27. Following a theme of "Planning for TBM's Future", TBM Director of Planning Nathan Westendorp and Councillor Jim Uram joined us for a discussion of the key planning issues facing TBM. Some of the session highlights included:

- 1) **Control of Growth** – The pace of growth is probably the highest concern of TBM residents. TBM's rate of growth is largely driven by Provincial mandates. The Province dictates that Grey County must forecast how much growth will occur in the next 25 years. Grey then divides that growth across the various Municipalities. The BMRA is engaging with both County and TBM Planning Departments to better understand how that process works, and to what extent TBM can influence how that growth is to be accommodated. Effective growth planning needs to be informed by good data. The 2021 census will provide more guidance in this regard, but given the ongoing shift from part time to full time residents, additional information will be required to give us the full picture.
- 2) **Public Involvement in Town Planning** – Nathan and Jim both spoke to their receptiveness to well considered public input on development proposals. There is currently an insufficient level of understanding when and how the public should engage. They stated that written input on projects can be submitted until such time as the Council decision on approval is confirmed. Verbal comments can only be accepted at a formal public meeting, and social media comments are not recognized. Public input should be constructive, specific, and clearly explain on what basis objections are being made. Applications can be followed on the Town's Development Projects interactive website. In the future, residents will be able to sign up for updates on applications of interest to them.
- 3) **Sustainability of our Community** – Sustainability was discussed as being related to a multitude of factors. Collingwood's moratorium on new development approvals due to water supply capacity was raised. It highlights the need to build out our infrastructure to support future development, which given our growth will be a challenge. That is an issue that warrants further investigation with the Town. Nathan also spoke to the fact that sustainability includes the economic vitality of our Town, and that clear strategies regarding the Town's areas designated for employment are required. Encouraging economic diversity to supplement the recreation tourism segment is beneficial.
- 4) **Official Plan Review** – The five year review of the Official Plan is starting in 2021. The review will be looking at issues related to conformity with Provincial & County Plans, growth forecasts, density and design guidelines. This will be a critical opportunity for the public to weigh in on their vision for TBM's future. A staff report on the Review process is to be tabled at a May 4 Committee of the Whole meeting, accessible to the public.

A recording of the Town Talks session is posted at our website, [bmra.ca](http://bmra.ca). Stay tuned for details of upcoming Town Talks.

Your BMRA