

SOUTHAMPTON RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

PO Box 1081 Southampton ON N0H 2L0 Email: www.southamptonontario.org

ENSURING TAX DOLLARS ARE SPENT WISELY FOR THE BETTERMENT OF THE TOWN

MAY NEWSLETTER

We did enjoy the warm sun in March but this has degenerated now into cold and rainy weather plus a few snow flurries! It is amazing that the talk was all about how dry it was and now how wet and miserable it is. Mother Nature is keeping the best for summer! Environment Canada reported that the 2010 total accumulated precipitation for January through March has set a new record low to for Lake Huron and Lake Michigan. As a result, below average water levels are likely for the next six months and may be several centimeters below last year.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL TIME

Membership renewal fees are now due as the SRA year runs from June 1st to May31st. Please fill in the attached membership form and send it with your cheque to PO Box 1081 or give it to a board member. We have a number of very critical issues coming up where the residents of Southampton need a strong voice – Emergency Room closure, beach and dune issues, escalating taxes, continual heavy capital expenditure plans, increases in Town debt levels and staff head count, etc. Property tax rates have gone up 2.9% but inflation has averaged 1.7% over the last 5 years, so council is not holding down costs. The recent police contract gives increases of 3%, which are well above inflation rates. As well non-union employees, including councilors will get a 2.5% increase. These are clearly inflationary. Our major objective this year is to continue to lobby for the development of a plan which will ensure continued 24/7 operation of the ER in Southampton. The best thing our members can do is to join the SRA and recruit new members because this year will be an important year for our community health care, etc. The larger the membership, the more Town, County and Provincial representatives and staff will listen and respect our submissions. The fees are unchanged from last year.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING – July 17th 9.30 -11.30 AM AT MUSEUM

The Annual General meeting will be held again at the Bruce County Museum and Cultural Center, starting at 9.30 AM. Please mark the date now in your diaries and calendars and plan to attend. We plan on having Town staff and officials present so they can hear your concerns and comment on your input.

EMERGENCY ROOM COVERAGE

We have all been very concerned about the ER situation. This involves coverage by local doctors and locums to fill in where necessary but ultimately it gets down to funding by the province. The Ministry of Health is trying to avoid responsibility by using the recently created Local Health Integrated Networks (LHIN) to make significant reductions in Health Care Services. Block funding is passed over to this group and our area covers all of Southwest Ontario. It is then up the LHIN to divvy it up to all the myriads of health units, hospitals community care units, home care units etc, etc. This has added another level of bureaucracy at a cost approaching \$10 Million for our region alone which, of course, could fund several ER rooms!

Over the winter, several provincial committees have been set up to study the ER problems in rural areas, taking into account the winter conditions along the Lake Huron shoreline. The Hospital Association has also been discussing the problem. Our Association is very concerned that cutbacks in services at the Southampton Hospital are being contemplated. The SRA needs the support of all our members as well as all the residents in Saugeen Shores to ensure our voices are being heard by politicians and bureaucrats who are responsible for these decisions.

SOUTHAMPTON MEMORIAL HOSPITAL AUXILIARY AND SRA GOLF TOURNAMENT

THURSDAY AUGUST 5TH

In previous years, the SRA has held a golf tournament and until two years ago, the Hospital Auxiliary also held one. It was decided to combine the two events to create a focused fundraiser with both groups working together. We look forward to seeing many of our members supporting this good cause.

MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS OCTOBER 25TH

Nominations don't close until September 10 but already sitting councilors have declared their positions. Mike Smith will run again as Mayor, Doug Frieburger as Deputy Mayor and Doug Gowanlock as Vice Deputy Mayor. Luke Charbonneau is also running for the Deputy Mayor position. Diane Huber (Southampton) has not made her final decision as yet but all the other councilors have indicated that they will run again; including Southampton's other councilor, Thead Seaman. Let's hope a few other people will throw their hats into the ring so we can see some good debates on the future of Saugeen Shores.

SRA ACTIVITIES

The SRA participated in Earth Day Clean up on April 24th. A group of volunteers removed over nine bags of garbage from around the Flag Pole and the beach from there to the Pump House. In total in all of Saugeen Shores, thirty groups and over 450 participants collected 127 bags of garbage and 34 bags of recyclables with many other surprising articles!

Your board members have reviewed the key issues that we see as critical to the Town over the next year:

- ER Services at Southampton Hospital.
- Beach Issues including water quality and dune management policies.
- Financial Monitoring of Municipal and County expenditures.
- Traffic and Public Safety Issues.
- Monitoring the current Official Plan and participation in the OP review for 2011.

Ken Robertson on behalf of the SRA has met and written to our local MPP, Carol Mitchell regarding the safety issues on HWY 21 at the Rail Trail crossing beside Hi-Berry's and on water quality and testing. We have been referred to the MTO Corridor Management Office!!! Our position is that this crossing represents a safety hazard with a high potential for a major accident to happen and it is the Province's responsibility to correct and prevent this from occurring. We have not received any response yet on water testing along the beach or at the storm water outlets.

BEACH AND DUNE ISSUES

A public forum was organized by the SRA in the fall to get members and other residents' input into what they thought about the many issues affecting the beach. The meeting was well attended and provided a good basis to go to the next step. It is hoped your Association can develop a dunes management policy which will include the creation of an expanded beach sub-committee. We are planning to convene another meeting in July to summarize the opinions expressed and set out the proper approach to put these views to the various authorities.

SAUGEEN SHORES TOWN AND COUNCIL

The North Shore Sewer Project is in full swing and many streets are torn up. The Town is in further discussions with the School Board on the future of the pool. A completely new pool is very expensive to build and two or three times as much to operate. A new noise by-law has been passed which hopefully allows complaints on excessive noise at night to be better controlled.

There are many projects planned for 2010, as laid out by Lori Sweiger to Council:

- Updating the development charge By-law.
- Complete the long term debt analysis.
- Continued investment in Firefighting turn-out gear; hose replacement and conversion to digital radios for police, fire and public works.
- Conceptual drawings for an expansion to the Police Building.
- Capital investment on the north side of the Saugeen River in Southampton to advance the capital program significantly.
- Completion of a Streetscape plan and the first stages of implementation as part of the Community Improvement Plan primarily focused on the downtown Port Elgin core.

- Continuation of Streetscape improvements with the installation of additional period lighting in Southampton.
- Completion of the Bruce-Saugeen Town Line project in cooperation with the Town of Kincardine.
- Outside operation facilities centralization study.
- Completion of the Miramichi Bay Road paving program and installation of the multi-use path.
- The introduction of an LED and Induction street lighting trial in several locations.
- A number of smaller road, water and sewer projects across the municipality.
- Continued expansion of Sanctuary Park Cemetery and the installation of a Columbarium Wall for cremated remains.
- A focus on creating a more accessible municipality with the construction of a regional integrated accessible playground at Jubilee Park in Southampton.
- Accessible exterior sidewalk improvements at the Port Elgin Chamber Office with the assistance from a Bruce Community Futures Grant.
- Parkland development adjacent to Lake Ridge Drive.
- The relocation of a ball diamond at Cameron Park.
- The installation of a solar powered permit dispenser for the Port Elgin Launch ramp area.
- Ice Resurfacer replacement.

In addition several 2009 projects will be completed in 2010:

- Completion of road work on Laird Lane, Mill St, High Street, Fenton Drive and HWY 21 from Tomlinson Drive to Concession 10.
- Traffic light upgrades.
- Continue with implementation of the recommendations made in the energy audit.
- Completion of a range of water and sewer plant and main upgrades.
- Preliminary implementation of the Signage Strategy.

The Town is also looking at some improvements for the Port Elgin Beach area. Apparently it is not in as good condition as the Southampton Beach. They are also planning on updating the signage by-law.

AROUND TOWN

Marine Heritage has to do some repairs to the docks on Chantry Island due to winter damage and the effect of the lower water levels.

See you all at the AGM and the Golf Tournament.

Tim Andersen for the Board

May, 2010