

SOUTHAMPTON RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

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

NOVEMBER 2011 NEWSLETTER

We hope you all had an excellent summer and are now making plans for the winter, either here or away. We seem to be in the midst of Indian summer which helps the garden clean up. There seem to be more leaves each year to go with our advancing years! There are a number of issues that we should report to you to keep you up to date. No doubt we are all glad that next year will be election free and all levels of government can concentrate on the difficult issues facing us.

Membership and Renewals

We welcome all new members and we are glad to see the majority of last year's members have renewed. **We are still missing a number of members who have not renewed and would remind them that they will not be able to count on cottage patrols or future newsletters. Please take a minute to send your cheque and registration form to us.** We were happy to see that a good number of members took advantage of the discount on insurance offered by Hills Insurance for SRA members. Lower costs are always welcome and it is good to keep the business in town.

Official Plan

Several public meetings have been held, led by the consultant. The SRA submitted a list of items that we felt should be included in the OP as they were in the last plan. We emphasized the need to recognize the separate and unique characteristics of Southampton, Port Elgin and the Rural areas that make up the Town of Saugeen Shores. We also said that pure lake water, the sandy beaches, the architectural and cultural features of the Town are very important. There was also many other items relating to the wording and structure we feel should be included in the draft. We are very disappointed that our submission to the Town and consultant has not even been acknowledged let alone incorporated in the consultants outline presented at the last public forum. The President has communicated our concerns and we are waiting for a response from Mayor Smith. Also we have had to chase up the Town to get the consultant's reports and minutes put up on the web site despite their repeated promises of an open and full consultation. We get the feeling that the Town and consultants will do as they please. There are a number of positive items in the plan so all is not lost. There is ample room in the existing Town limits for the expected population growth for the next 20 years and they seem to have responded to our concerns about highway development along the full stretch of Hwy 21. The various documents are on the Town web site at www.saugeenshores.ca/municipal then under Official Plan Review. There are two more public meetings planned before the final one ahead of council ratification. We have asked that the last two meetings be held after the summer people are back in June so they can participate in the discussion.

Beach and Waterfront Issues

We have had numerous discussions with the Town and Grey Bruce Health Unit on the need for water testing along our important beaches. The minimal testing done in the past was dropped as a result of revised Provincial guidelines. Our position was that some testing is necessary to look for long term trends before any contamination became irreversible; the lack of testing represents a public safety issue. The Health Unit was willing to do some

testing of critical areas on a one off basis and we suggested that they test the storm drain outlets along the Southampton beaches. This they did in August, sampling seven separate surface water / storm drains after several days of heavy rain and so represent a worst case scenario with all sites flowing properly. The results were as follows:

Storm Drain Location	E.Coli Cfu per 100 ml
South of South St	840
Liz Squires' Cottage	870
Tommy Smiths' Cottage	660
North of Pump House	610
Gerry's Fries	340
Morpeth St	590
Palmerston St	1200

The Provincial standard for swimming areas is 100 Cfu per 100 ml and this is the level used under the Blue Flag Program as applied to Sauble Beach. It should be pointed out that these are one off tests. Normally if a high value is found, five additional samples are taken and analyzed to obtain an average. This was not done in this case but another sample was taken in early October at the Palmerston St Drain and tested at 140, well down from the earlier one but still above the 100 limit. Rains clearly wash contaminates down the storm drains to the Lake. Jim Henning has discussed these findings again with the Health Unit, the Ministry of the Environment and the Town. More testing will be done in the spring. Also the MOE will raise the matter with the Great Lakes South West Region Steering Committee. Apparently, this problem exists at other locations along the shoreline, including the Port Elgin main beach and Goble's Grove.

We asked the Grey Bruce Health Unit to do some testing on the water quality on the various storm sewer water outflows into the lake, especially after a storm when pollutants can be washed into the lake. They are looking into this further. They don't feel lake water testing on a regular basis is necessary. We are concerned about sporadic surges in pollutants at different times of the year or during heavy runoffs. The SRA will continue to push for some testing and will also try and determine the cost of doing this. Mayor Smith has indicated in the past he feels this is a provincial responsibility but would consider putting a budget proposal to Council if all else fails.

Sand Dune Protection and Maintenance

The SRA made a presentation to Council in early August based on a well qualified consultant, Ian Seddon on the question of dune maintenance. It was his expert opinion that the dune growth in the Hammer St area is exaggerated by the storm drain the council built several years ago. In the process sand was excavated and added to the south dune. More sand is being cut out of the drain ditch and added to the dune by the wind. The ditch is now over six feet deep. We have suggested that the ditch and drain be extended further to the lake and the dunes adjusted. The Town's position is that the beach is under the Conservation Authority's control not theirs. The Conservation Authority position is not touch the dunes or to do anything. Geoff Peach from the Lake Huron Center for Coastal Conservation also takes this position. The SRA fully supports the need to protect the dunes and beach grasses but fear that public support for further plantings will be eroded due the failure of authorities to face up to this issue and resolve it.

Southampton Town Hall Renovations

Thor Dingman and Associates have prepared a reports on the condition of the Town Hall with the objective of better understanding the condition of the building, it historical significance and possible medium and long term strategies to expand its life and use. It is a very detailed and was presented to Council November 14. It provides cost estimates for their budgeting process. Overall the building is in fair condition given its age. There are a number of urgent maintenance items that need attention in the short and medium term. Also accessibility, wash

rooms and elevator conditions need to be rectified. The heritage aspects were confirmed and planning took these into consideration. The report also considers changes that could be made to better serve the community's activities. Several alternatives are offered from a status quo to a partial upgrade to an addition for elevator and washrooms plus several other features. The other alternative involves joining the Town Hall to the library. The library should be rebuilt or upgraded in the near future and it makes sense to combine the two projects so the elevator and wash rooms can service both as well as the auditorium and Art Gallery. This would greatly increase the overall cost but would create an important cluster for cultural activities. An open house at the August council meeting at the Town Hall showed the alternatives and allowed for further input from residents. We hope council goes ahead with the schedule for years one and two as soon as possible. The larger expenses will need further funding reviews.

Hospital

The Liberal Government made a number of promises during the recent election campaign. They announced a significant expansion for the Kincardine hospital and that the Province would proceed with the expansion and modification of the Emergency Dept and Lab at the Saugeen Memorial Hospital. This has been proposed for many years and the conditions in these areas are below standard, increasing the work load, frustration and quality of care. This is great news but the announcement came with so many conditions and demands on our local physicians that unless these conditions are settled and resolved, the project could stall. Detailed plans will have to be drawn up, costs established, all the approvals given by the Ministry of Health and finally the actual funds released by the Government, likely not until 2013. It is wonderful that the need for this facility is recognized by the Government. The Hospital Board and administrators have been working on this file for years and it is due to their dedication and hard work as well as strong community support that the expansion should finally come to fruition. The SRA will be lobbying the Provincial Government to deliver on their election promise and work with the doctors to staff the new expanded Emergency Department. There will be a need to mount a major campaign to raise in the neighborhood of \$1 million as part of this upgrade.

The Saugeen Memorial Hospital has made a commitment to raise \$300,000 towards the new Digital Mammography equipment and needs your support to meet this important goal.

Way Finding Signs

The sign issue still is still an issue with many people. Some feel the signs are a negative because of their appearance and others think they are a great idea. One of our directors is working on a pilot project for some local appropriate artwork to cover the back sides of these signs. Once one is completed we will evaluate this initiative before we make further recommendations to the Town.

Around the Town

A site plan has been filed for the rebuilding of the Guest House Inn on Hwy 21. It will be good to have more motel space and to see this lot restored.

The Board would like to hear from you on any of these issues and wishes you all happy holidays and an enjoyable winter in the sun and snow.

Tim Andersen for the Board of Directors