

SOUTHAMPTON RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION



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

JUNE 2009 NEWSLETTER

It is fun to see the Town come alive with all the summer plans and activities. With what a lot of us feel has been a cool spring; we are all looking forward to warmer weather and many activities, visitors and events.

PLEASE RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP

Membership renewal fees are now due. Please fill out the attached form and send it with your cheque to PO Box 1081. There is no increase in fees for 2009/2010 - \$20 for the Basic Membership plus \$35 for one property winter patrol and \$35 for each additional property patrol. Our membership year runs from June 1, 2009 to May 31, 2010. It seems a little weird to be looking at 2010 when 2000 doesn't seem that far into the past.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING – JULY 25, 2009 - 9.30 AM

The meeting this year is being held at the Museum as the Town Hall is being used extensively by the Art School while repairs to G. C. Houston are being completed. Please mark it on your calendars as we need input from as many members as possible. We are intending to invite the Mayor, Police Chief, our councilors and the By-law Officer. It should be an ideal chance to address your concerns. Barb Ribey will start the meeting with a PowerPoint presentation on the Museum's activities. Coffee will be available to get you all going! A special tour has been arranged after the meeting for those interested.

SRA GOLF TOURNAMENT – AUGUST 6, 2009

The Annual SRA Golf Tournament is scheduled for August 6th at the Saugeen Golf Club. Please mark your calendars and look forward to this fun event.

AROUND TOWN

We encourage everyone to shop as much as possible in our Town. Local merchants are not immune from the economic slump in Ontario, Canada and the USA. They need your business even more these days than ever before. They are all working hard to bring us the products we need at reasonable prices. Please make an extra effort to get to know them and their merchandise.

The Town of Saugeen Shores and Bruce County are preparing main street design guidelines to improve development along the commercial corridor. A workshop is planned for June 24, 9am to 3pm at the Plex and lunch is provided. Those interested should register by June 19th.

Duffy's has changed hands but still looks the same. Sadly, the Grosvenor's Restaurant has closed but we hope something may open in its stead. Local products at the Red and White are becoming more available as the season progresses and it is fun to see the newly renovated store with lots of happy faces.

The Marine Heritage Society is organizing a celebration of 150 years that the Chantry Light has guided Mariners to safety. There will be a parade on July 1st at 9 am and then fireworks that evening.

TOWN COUNCIL – CAPITAL PROJECTS

Having approved the operating and capital budgets, the Town has already started many of the projects that you will see around town. The total capital budget, which includes projects carried over from previous years but not completed, now totals \$17,835,600. This is financed by debt, Federal or Provincial grants or taxpayer user fees. This doesn't include the proposed new swimming pool or North Shore sewers. Significant areas are:

Fire Services Heavy Rescue Truck	\$ 209,918	
Roads Equipment	\$ 650,314	including \$125,314 for fleet purchases.
Road Construction	\$2,881,213	
Goderich Connecting Link Project	\$ 839,117	
Traffic Lights	\$ 241,000	
Waste Management	\$ 160,000	
Sewer Projects	\$9,921,038	includes \$2.3 million for Port Elgin Inlet Building and \$6.7 million for the Conc. 10 sewer service and forcemain.
Water Projects	\$1,007,131	includes completing beach repairs due to new intake and decommissioning Port Elgin Plant.
Parks and Trails	\$ 547,757	includes accessible park (\$235,000)

The Board is concerned about the escalating capital expenditures and its effect on taxes and debt. We need to establish if the Town has a Five Year Plan and if measures are in place to control project spending. All the major projects run heavily over budget and it seems clear that better controls are needed. All the talk lately has been on Infrastructure Spending and money is flowing from the Federal and Provincial coffers. All these grants involve a contribution of one third from the Town, either as tax increases, increased debt or additional levees on taxpayers directly involved.

The Federal and Provincial Governments announced the approval of funding on June 5 from the Federal Infrastructure Stimulus Fund for **sewers on the North Shore**. This is a case in point. This project has come out of the blue because big bucks are being tossed around. Is it a Town Priority? Are there better things to spend this money on? As there was no survey of local residents as required by their own procedures, how are they going to get acceptance from people who have to fork up \$12,000 each? Why do the roads have to be brought up to urban standards when everyone is happy with the current road design? In the treasurer's report, it was suggested that a big project, two smaller ones and a little one would cover all bases to get the cash. This is **NOT PROPER PLANNING**. This project was rejected during the Official Plan review as being uneconomical. Remember, the Feds are taking money out of one of our pockets for these programs and the Town is pulling it out of the other one to pay for its one third share. There will be a public meeting on June 17 at 7 pm at the Southampton Town Hall and June 20 at 2 pm at the Plex.

The Town also received approval for funding from the same Infrastructure Fund for storm sewer connection on Concession 10 for \$1.21 million and the paving of Mirimiche Bay Rd with bicycle lanes. The projects must be completed by March 15, 2011.

OTHER TOWN AND COUNCIL HAPPENINGS

SRA members expressed frustration with the **garbage and recycling services** provided by the Town. Ken Robertson carried out a survey of surrounding communities. Most communities don't accept juice boxes, cookie container, meat trays, egg cartons and clear plastic food containers marked "6". There is no market for these items and the Town rightly rejects them rather than collect them and sort these items only to have them in the landfill anyway. Ken benchmarked the cost of garbage and recycling programs and this shows that Saugeen Shores is close to the Town of Durham, which is very similar in size and services, except for cardboard collection. The SRA will continue to lobby the Town to introduce a program to pick up cardboard as part of the recycling services.

The Board has also followed up on the impact of the new **by-law officer** on compliance with various Town by-laws. The new officer started patrols on June 25 after orientation training and spent 3 hours per shift in Southampton. Last summer much of the time was spent on education and warnings to make people aware of the by-laws. She investigated 113 complaints, resulting in a number of official warning and fines. This covers infractions for parking, property standards and animal control. For the whole Town, the Police Chief reports a total of 410 reported occurrences with 63 for animals, 82 for noise, 41 for municipal by-laws and 224 for parking during the year to November 28, 2008. We are encouraged by the effort so far and hope for better compliance this year with less warnings and more fines. Ken Robertson also bench marked the cost of Police Services based on a 2007 Stats Canada report. It shows Saugeen Shores are close to the lowest in our area except for Kincardine and Goderich who utilize the OPP. Overall, the SRA supports community policing by a municipal force as it is more personal and the Town would not be vulnerable to sudden cost increases by the OPP as a monopoly.

As reported in previous newsletters, the Province has changed the protocol for **lake water testing** and so there will be NO testing along the beach. That's correct – zero. We think this is a mistake as it could be an early warning sign of problems before they happen. The Lake Huron Centre feels the same way and in fact criticized the County of Bruce for having large gaps in the testing sites. The SRA Water Quality and Waterfront Group have had meetings with Bill Jones, Manager of the Works Dept and will follow up again with the Mayor, Health Dept and the Conservation Authority. The Conservation Authority test monthly at County Rd 3. It used to be every two weeks. There are times when these levels are above the provincial guidelines. We are also pushing for the Town to test storm water outlets to ensure beach safety. It is odd that the Province, Boards of Health and the Conservation Authorities are cutting back on testing when cities, Municipalities and the Ontario Government have said they are "strengthening their commitment to coordinate efforts to restore, protect and promote the Great Lakes" The Plan proposed by the Mayors at this conference on May 5 proposes five areas of collaboration:

1. Create a municipal-provincial-federal Great Lake Group to coordinate protection plans.
2. Improve and promote beaches and natural shorelines.
3. Attack nuisance and toxic algae.
4. Reduce untreated sewage and storm water discharges into the Great Lakes.
5. Build a business case and measure results of Great Lake investments.

We encourage everyone to speak about these issues with councilors, the major and our MPP.

The Lake level is still about 10 inches higher than last year. Let's hope it continues to recover from the near record lows of previous years. The test to kill **phragmites** with Round Up was successful with no side effects and will be followed up this year. This common reed is still spreading and is a major hazard to the shoreline.

More money has been approved for another consultant's report on the cost of building and running a **new swimming pool**. This will involve public meetings at some point so you can all express your views. The SRA is very concerned on the potential cost of \$9 million and hopes the Town will look properly at alternatives of a

more basic pool or complete overhaul of the existing pool which has served the community well for nearly 30 years.

The Marine Heritage Society is looking to replace **the Peerless** which is at the end of its effective life. The Town has agreed to a repayable loan to allow a new vessel to be purchased and paid back from future profits from the lighthouse tours.

SRA PRIORITIES

The Board has debated a focus for activities in the upcoming year. This does not preclude taking up other issues that may arise during the year but is designed to make progress in areas of concern to members and the public at large.

1. **Town Finances.** This would cover expenditures, cost of services, long term planning, control of new projects and grants received for other levels of government and debt levels. The Board is concerned that new projects such as the North Shore Sewers appear suddenly and apparently are not part of a long term plan. This project was rejected at the Official Plan review but now is a priority and is being rushed through the review and approval process, bypassing normal public input. The main reason for this haste is the tidal wave of federal and provincial stimulus money and the fact that the balance will be paid directly by the North Shore residents and not the Town. We have similar concerns on County finances where there is zero disclosure and desire for public input by the appointed representatives. County taxes are 35% of your tax bill and are escalating.
2. **Town Strategic Planning.** The SRA has always been at the forefront of involvement with the Official Plan reviews and follow up to ensure the Town uses it as an active control document. There is a long way to go down this road as we need more specific controls and by-laws to protect the heritage of the Town of Southampton. We also fully support our local merchants and want to see them succeed and prosper. The business core on High St and Albert St is vital to our Town and way of life. This was spelled out in the Official Plan and now the Town needs to live up to its agreed mandate.
3. **Water Quality and Beach Issues.** Several of our current concerns have been covered in this newsletter and there is a lot of work yet to do. It is encouraging that federal and provincial / state governments are recognizing the Great Lake Problems. President Obama has allocated money for this. We need to get our governments to match these initiatives.
4. **Traffic and Congestion Issues.** We are all concerned about the Rail Trail crossing on Hwy 21 at Hi-Berry Farm. It is a safety issue and something has to be done before there is a terrible accident. The Sauble Beach Rd and Hwy 21 intersection is another dangerous corner, especially over the summer. Congestion and parking require long term planning and investigation and not a knee jerk reaction to put traffic lights at Clarendon.

The Board will discuss these priorities at the AGM and get your input. If anyone is interested in working with these groups, we would love to hear from you.

We look forward to seeing many of you at the Annual General Meeting and over the summer as we enjoy this great community with its beautiful scenery and heritage.

Tim Andersen for the Board June 8, 2009