

## SOUTHAMPTON RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

October is the month to look back at the summer's activities and plan for the fall and yes, even Christmas. We trust you all had a wonderful summer with family, friends and lots of activities. The local gardens have done really well and the flowers along High Street were fabulous. The Association has also been busy, following the adoption of the Official Plan. Thank you all for your input and now we must make sure all the good ideas are implemented.

### Membership

Thank you to all those who have renewed their membership for the 2006/2007 year. We are enclosing an application form for those of you who may have mislaid it. We would appreciate receiving your payment soon as it makes it so much easier to finalize our membership and patrol list. A few questions have been raised about the patrol. Winter patrols are carried out from October 1st till May 31<sup>st</sup> and involve a scheduled walk by approximately once per week as snow and weather permit. The patroller looks for obvious damage and signs of break-ins. The SRA will attempt to contact the owner/member as quickly as possible but is not responsible for any damages or delays, and provides this service on a best basis only. If owners want a more frequent inspection to meet insurance requirements, they should contract for this separately.

### The Annual General Meeting – July 29th

The meeting elected Ann Marie Harding, Bruce Martin and Gord Boyd to the Board. Officers are Rod McLeod, President, Tim Andersen, VP, Ken Harlock, Treasurer and Dale Robinette, Secretary. Several issues were raised about vandalism on the beach and rowdy parties, especially near the Sand Dunes. Further meetings have been held with the Town on these problems. The main part of the AGM was devoted to a presentation by Geoff Peach on the State of Southampton Beach. Key conclusions and a letter sent to the Town are summarized later in this newsletter.

### Municipal Election

We will be voting for a new Council on November 13. All positions will now be for a four year term and so it is even more important that everyone participates and votes for the people of their choice. A strong voting turnout is critical for good government. Ask lots of questions on your concerns.

Voting will be by mail. All eligible voters will receive a voting package sometime after October 17<sup>th</sup>, sent to the address on the tax roles. To check whether you are on the voters list, phone the Town or go to their web site at [www.town.saugeenshores.on.ca](http://www.town.saugeenshores.on.ca) You can mail your vote to the Town according to the instructions or drop it off at the Town office. It is simple to vote, so don't delay. Anyone who is away from October 17 till Election Day should talk to the Town officials. Candidates for key positions of interest to residents of the Southampton area are:

At Large	Southampton Ward	Saugeen Ward
Mayor	Norm Gurr	Jane Barber
Deputy Mayor	Dennis Haggerty	Luke Charbonneau
Vice Deputy Mayor	Diane Huber	Joshua Hebb
	Thead Seaman	
	Joe Sholtes	

An All Candidates Night is being organized by the Chamber of Commerce for October 19 at 7:30pm at the Plex.

### Important Activities Around Town

The SRA organized its second annual golf tournament to raise funds for its increasing involvement in issues like the Official Plan, the Peach Report on the State of Southampton's Beaches and other needs in Town. It was very successful

and about 70 people raised over \$2900. We would like to thank Bruce Martin for his strong support in sponsoring the prize table.

We have agreed to sponsor a light pole for the Streetscape Committee who has worked for several years to bring this to fruition. New period lighting will be installed from Albert St to Grosvenor St in the fall and will make the main street even more attractive than it is now. The board feels it is vital to support our downtown merchants and maintain the small town appeal of the main street. This is also highlighted in the Official Plan and we hope the new council will do more in this regard to obtain a balance between the big stores like Wal-Mart and the local merchants who have done so much for Southampton and Saugeen Shores over the years.

The 150<sup>th</sup> Committee has been quietly working over the summer. The Association will assist this committee as much as possible, financially and in communication and support. An event is planned for October 26 at 1:30pm at the Seniors Centre. Bring your old photos of Southampton and they will be scanned for possible use in the Event Calendar.

Various trails have been upgraded this summer. The Rail Tail from Adelaide and Grosvenor to South St has been completed with surfacing and signage. Upgrading south of South St is being completed. The section on Albert St from Summerhill Rd to South St has been completed with surfacing and bridging over the three creeks. These are all commendable improvements to the trail system and will be well used by our active outdoor orientated community. Further plans are underway to extend this to Port Elgin and join the trail system south of Port Elgin to Macgregor Park.

There has also been activity on the cultural side. A one day workshop hosted by the Creating Community Network is planned for October 21 at the CAW and is titled "Celebrating Cultural Connections. It recognizes that promoting culture improves the quality of life for residents and visitors. For information contact Jayne Jagelwski at the Town at 832 2008, Ext. 126.

### **The Peach Report – State of Southampton Waterfront**

The Association contracted with The Lake Huron Center for Coastal Conservation to inspect and comment on the condition of the beaches, sand dunes, water pollution and storm water drains problems. Many residents have expressed concern with these issues and it was felt that an independent review of problem areas would provide a basis for constructive discussions with Town staff and Council. The importance of maintaining and protecting this valuable resource was an important part of the public input on the Official Plan and is now part of the final version. The Provincial guidelines on planning also recognize the importance of culture, the environment and historical architecture. In summary, key points and recommendations are as follows:

**1.1** The beach and dunes between South St and Bay St are in excellent condition and private landowners have taken care not to damage the dune system. Seasonal sand fencing at South St would help prevent sand drifting into the parking lot.

**2.1** The Chantry Dunes area from Bay St to Beach St has some good and bad aspects. The south end near Bay St is in very good shape with an embryo dune forming lakeward of the main foredune as should occur in periods of low lake levels. Further north where the beach is most heavily used, the embryo dune is unable to form during the busy summer season. Without this embryo dune, sand blows into the foredune, this leads to a higher, growing foredune. Dunes are never static but these changes affect the local landowners. Reducing the dune height by controlled burns or topping the dunes is not appropriate. It is recommended that sand fencing be installed in front of the dunes as a surrogate for dune vegetation which cannot be established due to human pressures.

The Chantry Dunes management area where access pathways have been established has been a very successful project in dune conservation. There has been no active maintenance since the project was completed twelve years ago. As a result, there are issues that need to be addressed that would have been minor fixes had maintenance occurred regularly since the project was completed. The most obvious areas of neglect have been the educational signs that introduce visitors to the area and explain why the area is important. It is recommended that the Town budget for sign upgrades for Chantry Dunes as well as the rest of the waterfront.

**2.2** The trail system in the Chantry Dunes has been impacted by sand migration and part of the nature trail has been filled in with sand, covering the post and rails. It is recommended that the trail be re-routed landward of the existing trail and outside of the sand accumulation area.

**2.3** The Island St access path has an abundance of sand accumulation, making it hard for some older people to reach the beach. Removing a portion of this sand and distributing it on the beach is an option if done carefully.

**3.0** The beach from Beach St to High St is the most actively managed beach in Southampton. Historically, the beach has been regularly graded, which has left it completely barren of vegetation. Consequently, this area has experienced a large amount of sand erosion from the beach on to area streets, sidewalks and private properties. This ongoing loss of sand from the beach will over time, continue to compromise the quality and quantity of the beach. (Many people have commented on this change from 20 years ago.) Enacting conservation measures can help reverse this trend.

**3.1** The dune grass demonstration plots that were established in the 1990's are fulfilling their purpose of showing people how dune restoration slows sand migration and can hold the sands in place. It is recommended that additional planting occur in between to link the existing plots and establish a complete dune corridor. The beach at the end of Morpeth, given the nature of the beach here, should be exempt from planting but fencing should be established from September to May to help address the sand mobilization problem.

**4.0** The temporary stone barrier placed on the lakeward side of the shipwreck will need to be monitored for localized erosion and scouring that may result from storms.

**5.0** Water quality is a major concern for many residents, especially as regards to safe swimming and other recreation activities as well as a source of drinking water. The increased discharge of surface and storm water is another key concern. The Lake Huron Center issued a report in 2004 titled "Nearshore Water Quality in which it identified a number of data gaps and inconsistencies in water quality monitoring and public awareness programs along Lake Huron's beaches. The following recommendations reflect the findings of that report.

**5.1** The Grey Bruce Health Unit monitors water quality (E. coli levels) along a limited part of Southampton's Beaches. Six samples are taken weekly between Chantry View and Island St, as long as it is not stormy or raining. E. coli can be high during these periods. Additional testing should be done closer to the river, along the main Southampton Beach and by South St where significant people use the beach. The river is a potential source of E. coli.

**5.2** Two testing options can be considered. Systematic public health testing can be done at more sites at a cost by the Health Unit. Other municipalities along the lakeshore have retained consultants or conservation authorities (again at a cost) to test for E. coli as well as nutrients on a grab sample basis.

**5.3** The public are not advised where testing occurs or where it is not. There are no cautionary signs warning of possible elevated eColi levels after storms or high winds and no specific data is available for Southampton under these conditions. There is no evidence from other municipalities along the Lake that these signs have had an adverse affect on tourism.

**5.4** The current testing regime by the Health Unit is limited to fair weather days. The SRA should encourage the Health Unit to test in all weather conditions (unless unsafe) as is done by the Huron County Health Unit. This approach avoids introduction of bias towards fair weather conditions and achieves more realistic data.

**5.5** The concerns regarding chemical pollutants reaching the shore from storm drains is valid. It is recommended that these outlets be tested to establish a baseline for future reference. It is also recommended that this program be set up professionally by a qualified consultant or agency. Consideration should be given to warning signs near storm drain outlets to raise public awareness. These signs have been posted at Sauble Beach.

Tim Andersen for the Board, October, 2006

## **Discussion with the Town of Saugeen Shores**

Preliminary meetings have been held with Town officials to discuss this report and key conclusions. We feel that it is critical that the Town develop proper long term plans to address beach maintenance and improvements as mandated by the new Official Plan. A following letter has been sent to the Town:

October 3, 2006

Mr. Ron Brown  
CAO  
Town of Saugeen Shores  
600 Tomlinson Drive  
P.O. Box 820  
PORTELGIN ON N0H 2C0  
Dear Mr. Brown:

**Re: Report of Geoff Peach, Lake Huron Centre for Coastal Conservation on the State of the Southampton Waterfront, Summer 2006 (Delivered, in multiple copies September 29/06)**

The Southampton Residents Association is pleased to provide this most important report on the state of Southampton's beaches to the Town of Saugeen Shores.

We want to thank you for the opportunity of meeting with you and senior Town staff, Mike Myatt and Dave Burnside and Gary Senior from the Saugeen Valley Conservation Authority at your offices September 29 to review Mr. Peach's report and to discuss next steps relating to his recommendations.

As you can see from his report, he provides a detailed analysis of the whole of the Southampton beach area, including the South Street to Bay Street portion, the Chantry Dunes portion and the Main Beach from Beach Street to High Street and then concludes his report with a Summary and Recommendations section commencing at page 10.

Our comments below are cross-referenced to the numbering system Mr. Peach uses in his Summary and Recommendations section.

**1. South Street to Bay Street (Peach Report 1.1)**

We agree the beach is in excellent condition.

**2. Chantry Dunes (Peach Report 2.1, 2.2, 2.3)**

We agree that the Municipality should budget for sign upgrades for the Chantry Dunes area and also agree that such upgrades should be a part of an overall waterfront sign plan for Saugeen Shores. We also agree there should be a commitment to ongoing maintenance of these signs.

We agree the trail should be rerouted landward of the existing trail and outside of the sand accumulation area.

We agree with his recommendation to remove accumulated excess sand and distributing it on the beach with the care he has recommended.

**3. Dune Corridor (Peach Report 3.1)**

3.1.1 We agree with Geoff Peach's conclusion that the grass demonstration plots that were established in the 1990's are fulfilling their purpose of showing how dune grass can reduce sand migration off the beach. We note, however, that

the success of these demonstration plots was slowed by lack of proper measures (signs and roping off) to keep people from walking through the plots. (There was a good effort at the very start but that effort was not maintained as well as it could have been.)

3.1.2 Geoff's recommendation that additional planting occur between the existing plots to link them and establish a complete dune corridor from Beach Street to High Street was the potential long term plan when the demo plots were planted. The establishment of a dune corridor was seen as a sensible compromise to avoid the need to discontinue grading and lose the aesthetic advantage grading provides.

3.1.3 We note that there may be specific areas between Beach Street and High Street where existing dunes or retaining walls immediately east of the sidewalk make the need for completion of a dune corridor west of the sidewalk less urgent than in other places.

3.1.4 We note, as well, that with at least one of the existing dune plots, - the one at Chantryview Drive, the height of the dune and grass is causing impairment of sight lines to the water for adjacent owners.

Before making any decision to embark on a planting program we recommend the Town, in consultation with the Saugeen Valley Conservation Authority, and in partnership with the SVCA and the SRA, develop a protocol or plan to:

- (a) determine exactly where the planting should take place and how new planting would be protected on an ongoing basis; and
- (b) limit the height of the new dunes that would be created; and
- (c) limit the height of the existing dune demo plots.

The SRA does not favour the bull-dozing of existing dunes. However, limiting the height of existing (and new) dunes and/or their grasses, in accordance with best available (and possibly evolving) beach ecosystem and sand preservation practices is worthy of consideration, if needed, to preserve sight lines.

3.1.6 Before any such plans are finalized, we would like an opportunity to discuss drafts thereof with our members. This should not affect the Town's budgeting now for dune grass planting next summer. As discussed September 29, we will work with our members to provide volunteers to plant as part of our partnering with the Town.

3.1.7 Gord Boyd, one of our Directors and a member of the Town's Parks and Trails Committee, is available to participate in this planning process with the Town and the SVCA. (519.797.3436).

#### **4. Fencing:**

We acknowledge and understand the Town's need to use all available Town-owned fencing for purposes of the Pumpkin-Fest weekend, traditionally the first weekend in October before being able to do any fencing on the Southampton Beach. We urge the Town to proceed at the earliest possible moment after Pumpkin-Fest to commence fencing of the Southampton Beach in accordance with the 2003 Guidance Manual. Given our discussions at the September 29 meeting with respect to the need for fencing, we would support an additional budget allocation for more fencing.

#### **5. Water Quality (Peach Report 5.1 and 5.4)**

We believe the Town of Saugeen Shores should ask the Bruce County Health Unit to change its current testing procedures in the following ways:

1. Test of locations spread throughout the whole of Southampton beaches rather than the six current locations concentrated in one area only on the Main Beach;
2. Test in all weather conditions;
3. Report all test results not just averages;

4. Test weekly (no exceptions)
5. Report all test results (not just averages) and forward same to the Town.

The new Council in Saugeen Shores may wish, in due course, to consider Mr. Peach's recommendation found in paragraph 5.3, in relation to signage.

**6. Storm Water Drains on Southampton Beaches (Five Locations) (Peach Report 5.5)**

We acknowledge the points made by staff in our meeting of September 29 about the fact that the extensive MOE mandated testing of both the raw and treated water at the water treatment plants provides some evidence of the quality of the water exiting the storm drains because it provides overall evidence of the water quality in the lake.

We acknowledge the further point made in our September 29 meeting that new requirements imposed on developers are more stringent with respect to the quality of storm water runoff than may have been the case historically.

Notwithstanding these two points, we believe that there is a strong perception by users of Southampton's beaches that there may be water quality issues at these five locations. Accordingly, we believe that, at a minimum, the Town should make arrangements with the Saugeen Valley Conservation Authority for some baseline testing for pollutants at these five locations, at both low and high water flows. The need for additional steps should await the results of the baseline testing.

In addition to the issues covered by the Peach Report, we also want to thank you for taking the time to discuss the following additional matters:

7. We favour the construction of appropriate permanent fencing at the entrances to the beach from the east-west streets that intersect with the beach and would be happy to work with Town staff in the development of a plan for same. As we have in the past with the public benches in these areas, we would be happy to provide some volunteer labour to assist in the construction and maintenance of such fences. Our contact person for this purpose is one of our Directors, George Calder (519.797.5635)
8. We thank you for agreeing to take steps to prevent unauthorized vehicular access to the beach through the entry point that your vehicles use at the foot of High Street. Hopefully, this will prevent reoccurrence of recent events of illegal vehicular access at night.
9. We thank you for briefing us with respect to steps the Town is taking in relation to the recently discovered problem with phragmites. Gord Boyd will represent the SRA at the meeting you have scheduled for November 3. Please accept our thanks, again, for the significant time you and senior staff and the Saugeen Valley Conservation Authority devoted to discussion of these matters September 29. Your effort is much appreciated.

Yours very truly,



Rod McLeod  
President, SRA