

Citizens' Pages in the Blue Mountains Review

Last Minute Breaking News

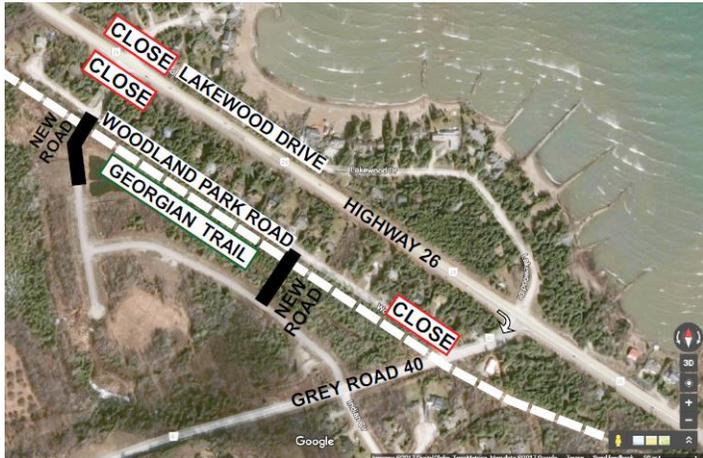
Library Board Terminates Services of CEO

On May 29th The Blue Mountains Public Library, issued a Media Release stating, "Terri Pope, formerly CEO, is no longer with the L.E. Shore Library, effective immediately." (May 29th, 2017) "The library board decided we were going to end our relationship," Library Board Chair, TBM Mayor John McKean said in [an interview with simcoe.com](#). McKean couldn't comment on the reason for the decision, saying, "it's a board decision."

The decision was well received by many in the community. A media release by [VOCAL Voices of Our Community for Accountable Leadership](#), a community group focused on library issues, also supported the decision stating "we applaud them for making this decision and hope that it promises more wise decisions in the future."

We understand that the Board acted on concerns raised by library staff. The decision shows that issues can be resolved by staff and elected and/or appointed officials working together within the governance structure and by using the tools provided to them.

Town Council Round-up Council Listens to Residents and Supports Them Re Road Closings – Councillor Halos, as Chair Allows Questions and Comments from Audience



On May 15th Committee of the Whole meeting heard a deputation from the Woodland Park Road residents and the Board of Directors of the Shore Acres Property Owners' Association that they UNANIMOUSLY OPPOSE the proposal to close intersections at Highway 26/Lake-wood Drive/Woodland Park Road and Grey Road 40/Woodland Park Road for the following reasons:

SAFETY

- two new crossings on the Georgian Trail create two new hazards for Trail users
- statistics indicate that the level of the problem at the intersections slated for closure is minimal
- proposed short term improvements do little to improve

The Citizen's Survey: There is Still Time to Let Us Know What is Important To You

We continue to get responses to our Citizen's Survey, which was featured in the April Issue of these pages, so we have decided to keep it open for a while longer. It has now also been posted online on the Blue Mountains Review website <http://www.bluemountainsreview.ca/>, so you can fill it out on line. If you have lost your copy, and still want to fill out a hard copy of the survey, you can pick up a copy at Riverside Graphics in Clarksburg. Completed surveys can be returned by e-mail to tbcitizens@gmail.com or dropped off at Riverside Graphics.

the safety at the critical intersection of Highway 26 and Grey Road 40 Woodland Park residents

COST

- The proposal is a needless expenditure of taxpayer dollars
The residents were supported by correspondence from the Blue Mountains Ratepayers Association, the Georgian Cycle & Ski Trail Association, and the Georgian View Estates Ratepayers Association who all voiced their opposition to the proposed closing on the basis that con-structing two new roads crossing the Georgian Trail would pose a significant safety issue for all users of the trail.

The Committee of the Whole meeting of May 15th was memorable for two reasons – 1) Councillor Halos who chaired the Community Services and Infrastructure & Public Works Reports session actually allowed people from the audience to ask questions and make comments, even though they had not registered to make a deputation; and,

2) Council actually listened to the citizens and directed staff to inform the County of Grey and the Ministry of Transportation that Council of the Town of The Blue Mountains does not support the recommendation in the Environmental Assessment to close the intersections at Woodland Park Road and Lakewood Drive (onto Highway 26), and Grey Road 40 and Woodland Park Road, in spite of the objections of Reg Russwurm, Director of Infrastructure and Public Works who noted that this would be inconsistent with the Town's earlier position on the matter.

The fact that the audience was allowed to participate is a refreshing change from the way this Council has conducted itself to date. In December when Lauren Bernardi, Lawyer & Human Resource Advisor addressed a Special Meeting of Council providing training on the Town's Obligations Under the Workplace Harassment and Violence Program, the public was prevented by the Mayor from asking questions.

More recently Councillor Gamble was quoted in the press as saying the public "**cannot be trusted for the type of comments or concerns they might put forth in an open mike.**"

Thumbs up to Councillor Halos for allowing public participation on this matter, and to Council for listening to the public and what they want. Let's hope this is a start of positive change.

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Community Roundtable Discussions are coming to your neighbourhood

A new community initiative hopes to bring together different individuals and groups to discuss ways to improve communication between the Public and the Town, and among each other. This last year has seen unprecedented development and change within our Town, with a corresponding increase in public awareness and engagement in Municipal affairs. The first community roundtable meeting is being held at the Marsh Street Centre on Tuesday June 20th (7-9pm), and is open to all community members (refreshments provided). A panel of representatives from various groups from our community will start the conversation. The hope however, is to hear from as many people as possible throughout the evening. We are eager to hear YOUR views. No registration is required.

Council Turns Down Request by Bridge's Tavern for Relief From Sound Bylaw

At the Committee of the Whole Meeting on May 15th Council received [Staff Report FAF.17.66 "Bridges Tavern, 27 Bridge St. E – Noise By-law Exemption Request"](#) to consider Bridges Tavern's request for relief from the noise by-law for outside entertainment during the spring/summer/fall months on various dates and times similar to previous years until 11:00 p.m.

Two deputations were made opposing the application. In addition, the Town also received 11 letters opposing the exemption. Bridge's was not represented at the meeting.

The Committee of the Whole recommended Council not approve the application.

At the Council Meeting on May 29th a letter from Bridge's Tavern was tabled stating that *"After reading the letters from our neighbours and learning some of their concerns, we would like to express that it is not our intention to upset anyone with loud live music every night past 8pm."...* *It is not our intention to have live music or DJ's playing past 8pm on any day going forward. We are trying to make Bridges Tavern a destination for alfresco dining, where you can take the whole family."*

"We hope that our neighbours will continue to work with us to keep Bridges a positive contributor to the neighbourhood both as an employer, and a destination for locals and seasonal visitors."

No one from Bridge's was at the Council Meeting to answer questions from Council as to what changes to their application Bridge's might be willing to make to address the residents' concerns.

As a result, after some discussion, Council decided to pass the motion as recommended by the Committee of the Whole and not approve the application for the exemption. It is now up to Bridge's to come back to Council with a new application which might be more acceptable.

Welcome to the Citizens' Pages

This is the seventh monthly issue of the Citizen's Pages, a citizen funded insert into the Blue Mountains Review. This insert allows for an extra four pages of news about what is going on in our Town.

If you like reading us, please follow the link below and make a donation to keep us going.

<https://www.gofundme.com/Citizens-Page-in-the-Blue-Mts-Review>

Donations can also be made to the Citizens' Pages care of The Blue Mountains Review and be dropped off at Riverside Graphics in Clarksburg.

We can't do it without your support! We have managed to raise enough to survive for our first seven issues, but we are surviving month to month.

To date we have raised \$2,350 on our Go Fund Me web page (net from Go Fund Me of \$2,063) and we have received \$1135 in cash donations from individuals.

All of these funds have gone towards printing costs for the first seven issues, which have amounted to \$4,000. We hope that with your generous support we are able to continue.

All of the funds we receive go towards printing and distribution. All content and editing is provided by citizen volunteers.

Alar Soever, Editor

You are invited to a
Community Roundtable Discussion
Tuesday June 20th, 7- 9pm
Marsh St Centre, Clarksburg
Informal panel discussion
Refreshments provided

Sponsored by the Citizens' Communication Committee to create increased opportunities for public dialogue and input into issues which affect our Town

Know your businesses This Month's Business



1. When did the Scandinave Spa open? One point each for month & year.
2. The Scandinave Spa Blue Mountains contracts how many Registered Massage Therapists (RMTs)
A)17 B)28 C)41 D)53 E)65
3. Which is the Spa's busiest month?

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Library news Brought to you by [VOCAL Voices of Our Community for Accountable Leadership](#)

For the past fourteen months VOCAL (Voices of the Community for Accountable Leadership) has been working to clarify what led to the astonishing firing of all staff and the restructuring of the L.E. Shore on Tuesday, March 8th 2016, which outraged library users and set the community at odds with the Library Board and the CEO. In the aftermath VOCAL has done a great deal of research, completed a timeline, conducted an online survey, established contact with the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Recreation, which oversees the Ontario Libraries Act, reached out to the community through events, meetings and rallies, published informational materials, sought the advice of former Chairs, and drawn on the wisdom of some elder statesmen in this municipality. Our objective has been to shed light on what occurred, for both the Library Board, and the community at large.

A great deal of what led up to “Black Tuesday” happened behind closed doors, often for legitimate reasons, but on a number of occasions it appears that decisions were taken which should have been made in consultation with the primary stake-holders, the tax-paying citizens of the Town of the Blue Mountains. Apparently, the Library CEO and the Board were “surprised” by the outraged response to the firings, to the restructuring and the apparent dumping of the original strategic plan, which was accomplished in closed session without any community knowledge or input. Their “surprise” suggests they knew little about the people who used and loved the library and payed taxes to support it.

Following the debacle, communications with the Board and the Chair (Mayor McKean) have been stifled, public input censored and concerns have remained unaddressed, the chief one being that the Mayor’s serving as Chair of the Library Board contradicts the spirit, if not the law, of the Ontario Libraries Act, which specifically requires Library Boards to function at arm’s length from the council that appoints them.

As a result of the radical changes brought in under sleight of hand, the atmosphere at the library changed, many people stopped going, children’s programming suffered, and the Library Board appeared to be completely dysfunctional and helpless to deal with the community’s angry response.

It’s now apparent that we must look ahead to the next election to bring about real change in this situation. VOCAL is now looking forward rather than back, and we intend to concentrate on communicating to the electorate why it’s important to pay closer attention to who will represent us, both on Council and as appointees to the Library Board. In the past many of us probably paid little attention to municipal politics, and if nothing else, the inept decision-making that went into the library restructuring has awakened us to the fact that some of

our elected and un-elected representatives are hopelessly out of touch with their constituents.

VOCAL hopes that the next Library Board will better reflect the demographics they serve. Imagine a Board on which there was a dynamic representation of those who really use the library – for instance a home schooling parent, a high school student, a young entrepreneur from this area (there are many!), a farmer, an educator, a local business owner. Imagine a Board that realized they have the power, and the responsibility, under the Libraries Act, to make accountable and transparent decisions independent of council, who would freely and openly communicate with Library users. Imagine a Board that would revisit the original strategic plan and move ahead with plans to incorporate the adjacent building, expand the gallery facility to provide for more art shows and public events, perhaps include a coffee shop and a garden . . . and imagine a council who would back them and endorse a vision to enhance the library rather than diminish it.

VOCAL is looking forward to these changes, and is prepared to help make them happen by supporting candidates who would not be “surprised” by reactions to decisions made without transparency and accountability.

THE VOCALIST

Town Legal Bills Soaring

The Town’s legal expenses are soaring. This year the Town has already paid law firms in excess of \$195,000, compared to expenditures of approximately \$125,000 for the same period last year. The largest billers this year are the Town’s solicitors, Aird and Berlis (\$161,198.82) and the Town’s Human Resources Lawyer, Bernardi Human Resource Law (\$18,163.08).

At December 31, 2016 there was \$130,159 in the Legal Reserve Fund. On May 15th the Committee of the Whole recommended that Council approve the allocation of the 2016 taxation year-end surplus of \$53,624 to the Legal Reserve, and that Council approve that any differences or remaining taxation surplus be transferred to or reduce the amount of the recommended transfer to the Legal Reserve.

Clearly Staff and Council are expecting more legal costs to come.

Citizens at the

THE CORNER
CAFÉ & GRILL

Come out and meet people who are interested in what is going on in the Town, and what is before Council. All citizens are invited to drop in at the Community Room at Corner Café on most Monday nights between 4 and 7 (except for holiday weekends) for some socializing and friendly discussion on the issues facing the Town and what is on the Council Agenda.

Come, meet new friends, listen, and have your say.

Rules: Be polite, respect other people’s opinions, and if you don’t agree with them, just remember: They have the right to be wrong.

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Citizens' Letters

Boom and Bust: An Overview of the Town of the Blue Mountains

Ski towns are bellwethers that attract all kinds of people and you see all types of development trends along with "behind closed doors" politics.

Today's urban decline in cities doesn't necessarily lead to a rural renaissance in resort areas re: humanly scaled and designed developments.

An ensuing Town of Blue Mountains build out could be an environmental disaster depending on the number and size and density of subdivision approvals.

In many ski towns rampant growth has led to a paradox How can a town embrace a boom of residential growth and still hang onto its character ... if there's any left to speak of thanks to poor planning.

What will guide development and people in the future the official plan and zoning and design guidelines or common sense, versus greed and lack of vision?

The Town is becoming an urban centre ... the rural aspect is virtually gone and we're certainly not managing growth. We're filling the landscape with sprawl. ... The scenery is medium rural. i.e.) you can see the cows but not smell them, so to speak. There's one season now ... construction!

Is there any end to it or are the future development charges and property taxes too great an incentive to the Town and the politicians to pause and reflect on the beautiful Town that we have. -

People don't understand growth they think, what's a little expansion. The ideology of growth is so imbedded in our commercial culture that no one stops to ask ... what's happening?

People believe that growth is important because it's all that they hear along with job creation and affordable housing. In essence, growth has the ethic of a cancer cell.

When you have too much development and growth the quality of life suffers. The assumption that growth is always good just isn't true. i.e.) overpowering densities and lack of human scale.

In turn, the hardest thing to say in the Blue Mountains is, "Is there a limit to growth?" Their mantra is "build it and they will come" Well they definitely have come, along with gridlock and monopoly houses.

It's the result of no master planning and too few secondary plans, just ad hoc planning. It's too late for a Master Plan per se and for reasonable secondary plans.

There is no balance of development and nature, and, in turn, the rustic character is gone.

So what is next ? Who knows! There's no transparency for residents.

To summarize ... some examples ...

Boom: Windfall (800 units) and Mair Mills- very high densities and future traffic impacts.

Bust: The Telfer leasehold development- totally inappropriate and future problems like Keeper's Cove.

John Sinnott

John Sinnott is a semi-retired planner, who is a long time resident of the Town of Blue Mountains and who cares passionately about its future

The New Appointees to the Library Board

We are impressed by the seriousness with which the newly-appointed Library Board members are approaching their responsibilities.

For some of us who have been deeply troubled by recent events at the L.E. Shore Library, your willingness to listen to our concerns, to question decisions, and to seek information is heartening.

We applaud the newly constructed Board's strong efforts to participate in the MOU, to fully understand the financial situation, to carefully carve the relationship with MAC, to earnestly tackle strategic planning, and to, at last, communicate and engage with the public.

With warm appreciation,

Rosemary and Roland Gosselin

We gladly accept letters to the editor. Please be advised that these letters will be reviewed & published at the discretion of our Editor. Please limit your letters to 200 words or less. You can email your letters to tbcitizens@gmail.com. Please include a phone number for validation.

By submitting a Letter to the Editor you agree to be bound by the following terms and conditions: You may not use a false e-mail address, impersonate any person or entity, or otherwise mislead as to the origin of submitted material. You agree to be fully responsible for your own submissions. You agree to grant The Citizens' Pages a right to use your name and other identifying information you provide in connection with that letter. You agree to indemnify and hold the Citizens' Pages and its associates harmless from any claims, damages, losses or costs that arise out of any Letter to the Editor that you submit, including, without limitation, any material submitted or otherwise provided by you that infringes upon any copyright, trademark, or intellectual property right of any person, defames any person, or violates any person's rights of publicity or privacy.

Answers to Know Your Businesses



1. December 2006
2. 65
3. February

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