

# Citizens' Pages in the Blue Mountains Review

## Town Council Round-up

### The Town-County Relationship Committee

At the Committee of the Whole Meeting on March 13<sup>th</sup>, Council received [Staff Report FAF.17.46, entitled "Town / County Steering Committee, Terms of Reference"](#) and approved the Town / County Steering Committee, Terms of Reference.

At the February 13, 2017 Council Meeting, Council had established a Committee comprised of Michael Martin – Chair, Councillor, Joe Halos –Councillor, John McGee – Councillor, Troy Speck – CAO, Ruth Prince – Director of Financial and IT Services, and Jennifer Moreau –Manager of Human Resources to explore possible solutions to resolve existing issues between the Town and the County regarding the Town's share of the County annual levy.

The Terms of Reference set for the Committee are to

1. Consider alternatives to the Town's current financial and governance relationship with the County of Grey, including Single Tier governance
2. Determine the most viable alternatives
3. Present to Council the most viable options for a change in that relationship for Council's consideration

The Committee may investigate any possible opportunities to improve the Town/County relationship, may interview individuals or organizations and may hold public meetings, may consult with experts in the municipal/provincial field.

It is beyond the Committee's mandate to initiate discussions or negotiations with the County of Grey, unless authorized by Council.

Council has approved a \$20,000 budget for a workshop and the Committee may use that budget in both determining viable options and presenting them to council for their consideration.

### Is the Thornbury Waste Water Treatment Plant reaching capacity ahead of schedule?

In order to extend the Environmental Compliance Approval (ECA) for the Thornbury Waste Water Treatment Plant ("WWTP") in 2010, the Town committed to begin final design and expansion of the WWTP the year after it reached 80% Average Daily Flow ("ADF") of its current capacity of 3,580 m3/day and proceed to construction immediately thereafter to increase the capacity of the WWTP from the current 3,580 m3/day to 5,330 m3/day.

Last year the [2015 Year End Water & Wastewater Capacity Assessment Report](#) stated: "The Thornbury WWTP's 5 year rolling ADF is 2,183 m3/day which means that the flows are utilizing 61% of the Thornbury WWTP built capacity. Based on this information the Town does not need to take immediate measures to initiate final design. Continued measures to reduce inflow and infiltration of storm and groundwater into the wastewater collection system will further delay the Thornbury WWTP expansion. Staff estimate that it will be 10 years or 2026 before the expansion will be required."

At the Committee of the Whole meeting on March 13,

Continued on last page

## Citizens of our Town

**Joan Gaudet** is an energetic senior citizen volunteer who works tirelessly for our Town. She has volunteered at many community organisations and events including at the Library looking after plants, the Marsh Street Centre, Beaver Valley Outreach, and the Thornbury Beaver Valley Lions Club. You will often see Joan motoring around town on her scooter, on her way to her volunteer work or putting up posters for some event or organisation.

Joan was born Margaret Joan McClung in Midland, and developed her sense of community at an early age, living in what she describes as "a very close knit, hard- working community who cared for and worked with each other with respect, consideration, and community spirit for all our neighbours and families." "I was the richest child in the area although we had no plumbing, no heat, hydro, just a wood stove. We had security because of a caring family and community."

She operated her own business for 12 years and then worked for Trentway Coach Lines for 25 years. She moved to Thornbury in 2006.

Joan is very passionate about our community and the Library in particular. She is dismayed about how the Library was re-structured and how the staff who lost their jobs were treated.

"In my career I have been involved with three restructurings including the merger of Trentway Bus Lines and Wagar Coach Lines in 1976, which was carried out with dignity and respect for all employees. The company went out of its way to look after its employees. There was a retreat held, and support offered for those that would be impacted. The other two restructurings were also carried out compassionately with consideration."

"When I moved here 11 years ago, the Town was a friendly and welcoming place. Somehow, over the last year, with how the restructuring of the Library was handled, it has ripped the heart out of our community. Hopefully we can get our community spirit back."

Joan attributes her community activism and spirit in part to the fact that she is the great-great niece of Nellie McClung, the famous Canadian feminist, politician, author, and social activist who fought her whole life for freedom of speech-equality for all and was instrumental in securing women's right to vote and having women recognised as "persons" under the British North America Act. Says Joan, "My great-great aunt Nellie would be disappointed if I didn't fight for what is right."

Thank you Joan for all you do for our community. It is citizens like you who make our Town a better place for all of us.

## Know your businesses

This month's business:



1. For how many years has Bay-Mount Service been serving the TBM?
2. What service is Bay-Mount best known for?
3. What other services does Bay-Mount provide?

# Citizens' Pages in the Blue Mountains Review

## Citizens Survey – What is important to you? Let Us Know!

Please take a few minutes to fill out this survey and return by e-mail to [tmmcizitens@gmail.com](mailto:tmmcizitens@gmail.com) , or drop off your responses at Riverside Graphics in Clarksburg.

There are many in this Town who are passionate and care about the future of our community and the issues that Council has to deal with. There are also many who just don't care, and are merely happy to live here and pay their property taxes.

During the last election in 2014 only 37.85% of eligible voters in the TBM even bothered to vote. This is lower than the Ontario average voter turnout of 43.12% and well below the largest voter turnout of 86.63% reported for the Town of Latchford.

If you care about the future of our Town, please take a few minutes to fill out our survey to let us know what is important to you. Answer as many questions as you feel you are comfortable answering. A partial response is better than none. Individual responses will be kept confidential.

### Who am I?

\_\_\_ I am a full-time resident of the TBM

\_\_\_ I am a part-time resident of the TBM

I have resided full or part-time in the TBM for

\_\_\_ > 20 years \_\_\_ 10-20 years

\_\_\_ 5-10 years \_\_\_ <5 years

I \_\_\_ am, \_\_\_ am not, involved in a community organisation.

During the last 2 years I have attended \_\_\_ >10, \_\_\_ 5-10, \_\_\_ 1-5, or \_\_\_ no Council or Committee meetings.

I feel I know \_\_\_, do not know \_\_\_ enough about most issues before council to have an informed opinion.

I \_\_\_ voted, or \_\_\_ did not, vote in the last election.

I \_\_\_ will, or \_\_\_ will not vote in the next election.

### What is important to me?

Please rate the following issues in terms of importance to you. 5=very important 4=important 3=moderately important 2=slightly important 1= not at all important

\_\_\_ How we elect our municipal government

\_\_\_ How our municipal government runs

\_\_\_ The Budget and Property Taxes

\_\_\_ The amount of our taxes going to Grey County

\_\_\_ The Library and provision of Library Services

\_\_\_ Recreation opportunities supported by the Town

\_\_\_ Town Services such as policing, fire services, garbage pick-up and snow plowing

\_\_\_ Service levels provided by the Staff at the Town Hall

\_\_\_ Short Term Accommodation Bylaw and Enforcement

\_\_\_ Sewer and Water Rates

\_\_\_ The Official Plan and Development

### How we elect our municipal officials

Council recently approved the elimination of mail-in ballots and the institution of Internet and telephone voting only for the 2018 election.

I \_\_\_ support, \_\_\_ do not support the elimination of mail-in ballots.

Currently, the five members of Council are elected to represent the entire Town. Some other municipalities have

a ward system where councillors are elected to represent individual wards within the Town. Some argue that having a councillor represent a specific ward means that citizens have a specific person to go to with their local concerns, which might not be shared by people from other parts of the community. Others argue that having councillors represent individual wards will mean that it will be harder to get consensus.

I \_\_\_ support, \_\_\_ do not support changing to the ward system.

### How our municipal government runs

Over the last year there have been concerns expressed over the way our municipal government has operated, in particular with the secrecy involving the alleged harassment allegations against Councillor Seguin, and the involvement of the Town in the restructuring of the Library.

I \_\_\_ am, \_\_\_ am not satisfied with the level of openness and transparency in the TBM government.

Currently meetings of Council are held on Monday nights at 7 pm and the Committee of the Whole on Mondays at 1 pm.

I \_\_\_ would like all meetings of Council to be held in the evenings so I could attend.

I \_\_\_ would like all meetings of Council to be held on weekends so I could attend.

I \_\_\_ believe, \_\_\_ do not believe that the minutes of meetings should include a record of who voted for and against motions, as is done in some other municipalities.

I \_\_\_ believe, \_\_\_ do not believe it is currently too difficult to make a deputation to Council.

I \_\_\_ support, \_\_\_ do not support the concept of an Open Mike session following Council meetings to allow citizens to be heard.

I \_\_\_ believe, \_\_\_ do not believe that meetings of Council and Committees should be videotaped and archived so that a complete and accurate record is available.

I \_\_\_ believe, \_\_\_ do not believe that closed meetings of Council and Committees should be videotaped and securely archived, so that a complete and accurate record is available for any Closed Meeting Investigations.

Historically, the Town had a number of committees with citizen participation, which provided council with advice on specific items such as the Harbour, etc.

I \_\_\_ support, \_\_\_ do not support the idea of Committees to enhance citizen involvement in government.

### **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 Monday nights between 4 and 7 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.**

This insert is brought to you as a public service to provide citizens information about issues facing their Town. It is funded by the citizens of the Town through online contributions. If you like this page and would like to keep it going, please donate by following the link <https://www.gofundme.com/Citizens-Page-in-the-Blue-Mts-Review> To contact us with your letters, comments, ideas, and suggested content please e-mail [tmmcizitens@gmail.com](mailto:tmmcizitens@gmail.com)

# Citizens' Pages in the Blue Mountains Review

## **The Budget, Spending, and Property Taxes**

I \_\_\_ believe, \_\_\_ do not believe that Council has done a good job of keeping the budget and spending under control.

Which of the statements best reflects your opinion:

\_\_\_ 1) Our taxes are too high; I would like to pay less even if it means a cut in services.

\_\_\_ 2) Our taxes are too high; I believe there efficiencies which could be used to lower taxes without cutting services

\_\_\_ 3) Our taxes are appropriate for the services we receive from our local government.

\_\_\_ 4) Taxes are what we pay for a civilized society. I would pay more for better services and government.

I \_\_\_ support, \_\_\_ do not support the new Purchasing of Goods & Services Policy which give staff more authority over spending by removing council from the tendering process for projects that are within the annually budgeted amounts.

## **The Amount of our taxes going to Grey County**

At the time of amalgamation of the TBM, the TBM contributed 20% of Grey County's total revenue. Today our contribution has shot up to 26%. Last year we sent \$13.8 million of our tax dollars million to Grey County, far more than the next largest contributor, Owen Sound at \$7.7 million.

Of your tax dollar 40.6% goes to the Town (Tier 2 government), 39.2% goes to the County (Tier 1 government) and 20.2% goes to the Province of Ontario for Education. Although we pay 26% of the County expenditures we only have 2 votes on the 18 person County Council, so very little say on how this money is spent.

Which of the following best reflects your opinion on this issue:

\_\_\_ 1) As the wealthiest community in Grey County, we should pay the largest share, to help out the people in less fortunate communities, even if we don't have a proportionate say.

\_\_\_ 2) We should negotiate a new deal with Grey County, which gives us a vote on County Council proportionate to our percentage of the funding.

\_\_\_ 3) We should negotiate to cap our proportion of County expenditures at 20%, the level it was at amalgamation.

\_\_\_ 4) We should work to secede from Grey County and become a Tier 1 government.

## **The Library and provision of Library Services**

I \_\_\_ do, \_\_\_ do not, use the TBM Library. I use the \_\_\_ L. E. Shore, and/or \_\_\_ the Depot Branch. I \_\_\_ know, \_\_\_ do not know what services the Library provides.

I am \_\_\_ aware, \_\_\_ not aware that the Town is obligated to provide and fund library services under the Public Libraries Act.

I am \_\_\_ aware, \_\_\_ not aware that under the Libraries Act the operation of the library is governed by the Library Board, while the budget is approved by Town Council. In the last few years the library services and programs offered by the Library have \_\_\_ improved, \_\_\_ remained

the same, \_\_\_ deteriorated.

I \_\_\_ am, \_\_\_ am not aware of the issues surrounding the restructuring of the Library and the summary dismissal of long term Library staff.

## **Recreation opportunities supported by the Town**

The Town provides funding for 21 municipally owned and maintained Parks, some of which contain \_\_\_ green space \_\_\_ tennis courts, \_\_\_ picnic tables, \_\_\_ playgrounds, \_\_\_ swing sets, \_\_\_ pavilions, \_\_\_ washrooms, \_\_\_ beaches, \_\_\_ river access, \_\_\_ a basketball court, \_\_\_ a shuffleboard court, \_\_\_ a volleyball court, \_\_\_ baseball diamonds, and a \_\_\_ skateboard park, as well as the Tomahawk Recreation Complex - \_\_\_ Soccer and \_\_\_ Golf, \_\_\_ the Beaver Valley Community Centre (Arena) and \_\_\_ the Thornbury Harbour.

Please check above which you have used in the last year.

I believe the Town should increase, decrease, or maintain its level of support for the following:

Facility	Increase	Maintain	Decrease
Parks			
Tomahawk			
Arena			
Harbour			

Historically curling was a popular sport in Clarksburg and Thornbury with up to 150 curlers participating in the 1950s. Recently a local group has shown interest in re-establishing curling, by turning the arena into a multi-use facility by converting it to curling ice for part of each week, as is done in some other communities.

I would, \_\_\_ support, \_\_\_ not support this initiative; or, \_\_\_ I would rather support a dedicated curling facility.

## **Town Services such as policing, fire services, garbage pick-up, and snow plowing, and road maintenance**

Please rate your satisfaction with the following services. 4=very satisfied 3=satisfied 2= moderately satisfied 1=not at all satisfied

\_\_\_ policing, \_\_\_ fire services, \_\_\_ garbage pick-up, \_\_\_ waste disposal site operation, \_\_\_ snow plowing, \_\_\_ road maintenance

## **Service levels provided by the Staff at the Town Hall**

I \_\_\_ have, \_\_\_ have not used the services or corresponded with Town staff.

I was \_\_\_ very satisfied, \_\_\_ satisfied, \_\_\_ moderately satisfied, \_\_\_ not at all satisfied with the service I received.

## **Welcome to the Citizens' Pages**

This is the fifth monthly issue of the Citizen's Pages, a Citizen funded insert into the Blue Mountains Review. **If you like reading us, please follow the link and make a donation to keep us going. We can't do it without your support! We have managed to raise enough to survive for our first four issues, but we are surviving month to month.** <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. All of the funds we receive go towards printing and distribution. All content and editing is provided by citizen volunteers.

Alar Soever, Editor

# Citizens' Pages in the Blue Mountains Review

## Short Term Accommodation Bylaw

Since 2014 the TBM has had a Short Term Accommodation (STA) Licensing By-law, which provides for a system of licensing of STA premises (premises rented on a basis of 30 consecutive days or less)

Under the STA Licensing Program, property owners must apply for and obtain a licence, and renew it bi-annually. The licence may be suspended or revoked by the Town should the property owner not comply with the provisions of the By-law which cover the responsible operation of the premises. Most common complaints deal with parking, maintenance, and noise infractions. I  have, or  do not have an STA in my neighbourhood. I  have, or  have not had reason to complain about an STA during the last 2 years.

I believe the Town is doing a  good,  poor,  adequate job in regulating STAs. I believe the STA bylaw should be  strengthened,  relaxed, or  maintained as it is at present.

## Sewer and Water

I  am,  am not currently serviced by Town Sewer and Water.

If you are currently serviced please answer the following questions, if not skip to the questions below.

1) I  am,  am not happy with the sewer and water services I receive.

2) I believe the sewer and water charges I pay are  too high,  reasonable, or  too low.

If you are not currently serviced please answer these questions.

1) I  would,  would not like to have Town sewer and water.

2) I  believe,  do not believe, I should have a say as to whether my area is serviced by Town sewer and water.

3) I  know,  do not know if I will be forced to be hooked up if my area is serviced.

3) I  know,  do not know, roughly how much I will have to pay to be hooked up to Town sewer and water.

4) I  believe,  do not believe that the proposed deferred payment plan for hooking up is fair.

## The Official Plan and Development

Which of the following best represents your vision for the Town of Blue Mountains?

- A seasonal resort community
- A retirement community for wealthy people
- An agricultural community
- A combination of the above, where most jobs are low paying service industry jobs, filled by people from neighbouring towns because they can't afford to live here.
- A community with a diverse economy, with year round well-paying jobs which takes advantage of our location, geography and other attributes.

I believe the Town has  too much,  too little,  the proper amount of new residential development.

I believe the Town has  too much,  too little,  the proper amount of new commercial development.

I believe the Town has done a  good,  poor, or  adequate job in attracting new businesses which provide year-round well-paying jobs.

I  believe,  do not believe that the Town should zone some land light- industrial/commercial to attract new businesses which would provide year-round, good paying jobs to our community.

## Local Media ,The Citizens' Pages, and the Blue Mountains Review

Which of the following media do you read 1=frequently, 2=sometimes, 3= almost never

Blue Mountains Review     Citizens' Pages  
 Collingwood Connection     Enterprise Bulletin  
 Owen Sound Sun Times     Meaford Independent  
 The Thornbury Paper

On a scale of 5 to 1, 5 being good and 1 being bad, rate the following media in terms of the quality of their coverage of local affairs in the TBM.

Blue Mountains Review     Citizens' Pages  
 Collingwood Connection     Enterprise Bulletin  
 Owen Sound Sun Times     Meaford Independent  
 The Thornbury Paper

I  would,  would not likely subscribe to a local weekly or bi-weekly print newspaper which provided coverage on events in the TBM.

I  would,  would not likely subscribe to a local weekly or bi-weekly internet newspaper which provided coverage on events in the TBM.

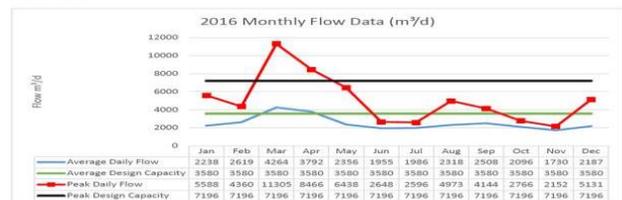
## Is the Thornbury Waste Water Treatment Plant reaching capacity ahead of schedule? Continued from Page 1

2017 staff tabled the [2016 Annual Performance Report for the Thornbury Wastewater Treatment Plant.](#) This report stated, "The Thornbury WWTP is operating at 65% average day design capacity, up from 51% during the 2015 operating year. The Town is obligated to expand the Thornbury WWTP when it reaches 80% design capacity, as required by the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change (MOECC)."

No mention was made this year of 2026, as the projected dated the plant will exceed the 80% design capacity.

A graph included in the report showed that the plant exceeded 80% of capacity in both March and April of last year.

Chart No. 1



Councillor Seguin asked the question: "How does the current building boom in the TBM, and the increase to 65% usage from 51% over the last year, affect the timeline projection for expansion as stated in the 2015 report?"

Staff could not confirm that it was still 2026.

If the plant does reach 80% capacity in the next few years, the Town is obligated to start building the expansion, which was estimated to cost \$6.44M in 2014.

## Answers to Know Your Businesses

- Bay-Mount has been serving the TBM area for over 30 yrs.
- Bay-Mount is best known for fast, dependable, year round, water delivery. Many people in the TBM rely on Bay-Mount for their potable water.
- Cistern installation, cleaning & maintenance
  - Excavation
  - Drain repair
  - Bobcat service
  - Snow removal services
  - Small landscaping jobs
  - Driveway levelling and resurfacing
  - Septic systems installation
  - Sewage system installation and repair
  - Water lines
  - Hydro lines