

# ST. EDMUNDS PROPERTY OWNERS INC.

P.O. BOX 152, TOBERMORY, ONTARIO N0H 2R0

[www.sepo.ca](http://www.sepo.ca)

## 2019 NEWSLETTER #1

### SEPO's GOALS

To lead collective action in support of the long term affordable enjoyment of our properties in an unspoiled natural environment.

To encourage responsible attitudes for sustaining the high quality of life on our St. Edmunds properties.



.... and best wishes for 2019. A belated Merry Christmas greeting to members who did not receive the Christmas greeting due to the postal disruption

### **Our New Council – Hope for the Future**

Congratulations to Mayor Milt McIver on his re-election and for becoming the second longest serving Mayor in Ontario. Congratulations to newly elected Deputy Mayor Debbie Myles and Councillors Jamie Mielhausen and Megan Myles and returning and previous Councillor Laurie (“Smokey”) Golden.

Our sincere appreciation to those who served on the past council as well as those of you who ran for council positions. It was encouraging to see so many candidates for this election. We thank all of you.

It is now time to size up the election promises made by our new council members and how well these mesh towards cohesive objectives. Their personal profiles and comments made by the individuals have been detailed on our website:

<http://sepo.ca/mnbp/ca> and in issue #17 of the 2018 *Bruce Peninsula Press*.

A common theme from all is to strive for greater input from all stakeholders in the municipality (not the least being tax payers) in planning and inclusion in discussions involving key issues affecting specific communities or the municipality as a whole. While promised by most successful candidates in previous elections, it remained largely elusive in practice with the most recent evidence being the handling of the draft Comprehensive Zoning Bylaw. Hope springs eternal that this promise by all will at last be fulfilled.

Key priorities cited by all are to seek solutions (with public input) to the following:

- Effective tourism management
- Fair and equitable Comprehensive Zoning By-Law
- Short term rentals

Other important issues identified:

- Improved safety on Hwy. #6 and on local roads
- Infrastructure improvements including better use of existing facilities

Noticeably absent was any detailed reference to healthcare, education, expense management or staff accountability. The electorate has sent a clear message with the recent elections that change is needed for Council to listen to the people and to solicit community involvement in a timely manner.

## **NEW COUNCIL, NEW BUDGET**



With the election of a new Council comes the opportunity to turn a new leaf in the way the municipal budget is put together.

For too long, the previous Council has been largely content to increase their portion of our tax rates year after year – unlike the County and education portions which have decreased year after year.

How can the new Council members accomplish this? We recommend a close look at every budget line, comparing what was spent in the previous years, not just rolling over last year's budget allocation. Too often the spring budget can contain amounts that aren't needed or likely to be spent: then near the end of the year, proposals emerge to spend the balance on expensive equipment or plans that would never survive the scrutiny of a budget process.

Next year, even holding the tax rate level, Council can expect its revenues to grow as the assessed property tax base grows due to inflation in property values. Those increased taxes are paid by all of us. The challenge to the new Council is to live within those bounds, and keep its property tax rate at or below the current level.

## OPP - 2018 in Review, Planning for 2019

In 2018 we saw again another, spring to fall, visitor season on the Bruce Peninsula that tested our resources and resolve to keep the community safe. The deployment of our officers was purpose driven with the intention of answering the ongoing concerns over unsafe driving by some motorists on Highway 6. The measure of success for this past year was that there were **zero fatalities** on Highway 6. OPP charged a total of **130 drivers** with stunt driving – 50 kms/h or more over the posted speed limit, a **300% increase** from 2017. A sobering thought, we estimate **1500 drivers**, throughout the spring to fall months, were not stopped by our officers committing the same offence. There was tremendous effort put forward by multiple community partners. We want to recognize that the many parts working together made up the whole success.



Going forward, our community partner relationships will continue to be an important part of 2019. We are going through the traffic data collected and setting a planned response to address the highest volumes. In 2019 social media will remain a tool that OPP will use to educate drivers with awareness and traffic enforcement messaging. Ontario Provincial Police are committed to public safety. We remain focused to providing a service that answers the needs of each individual communities, from Sauble Beach to Tobermory and places in between. We are answering the call and committed to success.

Submitted by Staff Sgt. Paul Richardson.

## Sustainable Tourism Management Plan for NBP

The exponential increase in the number of visitors to the Northern Bruce Peninsula causes alarm and concerns for permanent and seasonal residents of our community. These concerns that have yet to be addressed are:

- Unmanaged growth
- Limits to the carrying capacity of our community.
- What are the limits of acceptable change?

The rapid expansion of tourism in recent years is fast depleting the beauty, sustainability of the resources and ambience of our community. This encompasses not only the land base but the services of sewers, water, garbage disposal, parking, access roads, etc. These are big ticket items that must have funding and time line commitments prior to proceeding. Our precious land and water bases belong to all of us; benchmarks for capacity and access ought to be established similar to those used by Parks Canada.

The plan for “Sustainable Tourism” as presented touches on the significant issues that

we face in our community and advocates for the establishment of a “Tourism Advisory Committee” that could include a Tourism Coordinator. The plan is a lead in to continuing higher maintenance costs and virtually shows no budgetary expenses. The problem is that a few want to utilize it for profit while others want to enjoy the ambient character of our community; commercial interests make up 5% of the tax base whereas private property owners comprise 94%.

The key issue is, who controls and who runs the show? These parameters must be front and centre in order that our staff and Council knows and understands what they are planning for. Sustainable Tourism planning should not be up to the taxpayers of the MNBP nonetheless, oversight by our elected officials is vital in order to maintain accountability to all NBP tax payers. Accountability of performance should be administered by the municipality.

Concerns about a Tourist Coordinator.

-Who funds such a position?

-What does a Tourist Coordinator do?

-Would a Tourist Coordinator manage over-tourism and have the authority to implement and possibly impose prompt and timely changes in the tourist industry to prevent the detrimental effects of over tourism on the environment and on particular aspects of the Tobermory community. (i.e. traffic; parking, short term rental properties, Solid waste management, sewage, potable water, aerial tourism, shoreline tourism, fire hazards, year-round employment, the lack of a walk-in emergency clinic, etc.

Discussion about Sustainable Tourism was a focus at the December 17, 2018 Council meeting, with reservations being expressed about Council’s involvement on Tourism and who would shoulder the costs of this initiative. *“Mayor McIver suggested Council receive the Sustainable Tourism report as information (they can always upgrade that to “support” at a later date) and help organize meetings with other stakeholders to form a TAG”* 1)

St. Edmunds Property Owners, Inc. continues to encourage the participation of diverse groups who represent a cross section of our community, in order that a true consensus for our community is established and maintained.

1) Publisher’s Rant, Bruce Peninsula Press, January 28, 2019

Please follow this link to read the entire article from the Bruce Peninsula Press  
<https://brucepeninsulapress.com/2019/01/28/sustainable-tourism-initiative-hits-a-speed-bump/>

## **Benefits for SEPO members.**

Sparlings Propane offers bulk rate pricing to members of St. Edmunds Property Owners, Inc. SEPO is a member of FOCA (Federation of Ontario Cottagers’ Associations), as such, you as a SEPO member can benefit. Additional information is available on the secure section of [www.sepo.ca](http://www.sepo.ca). Recently, you received an email detailing access to the secure section of the website.

## Looking ahead

There are many important concerns facing us that will be addressed in future newsletters including and not limited to:

- Short term rentals
- Septic systems
- Parking lots
- Planning
- MNBP Budget and Taxes

## MEETINGS IN 2019

### SEPO SPRING MEETING

SATURDAY, MAY 25, 2019 9:00 – 11:00 A.M.

TOBERMORY COMMUNITY CENTRE

## MEMBERSHIP

To join or to renew your membership, please click on <http://sepo.ca/> for our webpage containing information and a link to download a membership application form.

**NEW** The membership form can be completed and submitted online and the fee can be paid by Interac etransfer. Of course memberships can be renewed by mailing the form and cheque to: SEPO, P.O. BOX 152, TOBERMORY, ONTARIO N0H 2R0

## SEPO EXECUTIVE

<b>President</b>	David Almack	<b>Directors</b>
<b>Vice-President</b>	Udo Nixdorf	Kevin Doyle
<b>Secretary</b>	Udo Nixdorf	Barry Hatt
<b>Treasurer</b>	Jace Weir	Jack Schenk
		Bob Wilson

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St. Edmunds Property Owners, Inc.

*Representing property owners in the former Township of St. Edmunds and  
the Municipality of Northern Bruce Peninsula*

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