

ST. EDMUNDS PROPERTY OWNERS INC.

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

<https://sepo.ca/>

2021 NEWSLETTER #1

Greetings and Welcome to 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.

**Stay home, stay safe, save lives.
Only go out for essential purposes.**



<https://www.northbrucepeninsula.ca/en/live/covid-19-coronavirus.aspx>

The latest Covid-19 Memo from CAO Peggy Van Mierlo-West or on the SEPO website homepage: <https://sepo.ca/>

2021 MUNICIPAL BUDGET

Aspects of the 2021 Municipal Budget, Draft #2 that was passed by Council at the virtual, Special Council Meeting on February 8th are cause for concern



The lack of debate during the February 8, 2021, Council meeting.

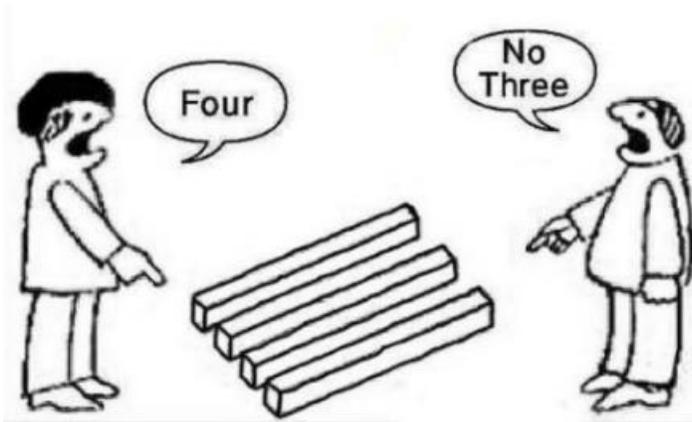
Aside from two clarifications involving the Tobermory sewer system and a particular road construction project reserve, the exercise involved no debate among Council members or Department

Managers whether the tax rate increase of +5.66% (2020 +1.45%) and tax levy of + 6.01% (2020 +3.85%) is the best that can be done in the interest of the municipal constituents, the tax payers.

What is the justification for any tax increases when the 2020 Consumer Price Index was only 1.6% and many people and businesses are in dire economic peril during this Covid-19 Pandemic?

Nor was there any discussion or debate over the burgeoning Reserve Fund with a 2020 closing balance of \$13.228 million versus the estimated closing balance of \$10.175 million. In fact, the Reserve Fund has increased each year from \$6.082 million in 2016 to the current amount. It is entirely at the expense of tax payers for which there is no strategic plan as to how much is enough and how much is too much. The anticipated Reserve Fund closing balance in the 2021 Budget is \$11.873 million. Yet, any person who understands how this Municipality sets budgets, on looking at the current 2021 draft, will see that this is a fictitious number and the true amount will be closer to \$15+ million, again at the expense of the property tax payers!





Why does the Reserve Fund keep increasing year over year with no clear plan or end in sight?

The Mayor will likely argue that a healthy Reserve Fund is good in order to deal with “rainy days” but without any strategy or guidance, it remains vulnerable to abuse and misuse, particularly in the manner that money flows into the Fund. The source is primarily from the Operating side of the budget that is funded from taxes.

In each year that we have reviewed budgets, the process is the same in that the amounts budgeted have no correlation to what is actually spent year over year with the predictable excess amounts flowing into the Reserve Fund.

For the department managers there is never any risk of exceeding their budgets as the amounts are set unrealistically high. This does very little to encourage efficiency and fiscal responsibility.

For 2021, the budgeted tax revenue increase of \$525 thousand will be largely generated by the increase to the tax rate of +5.66% since the property assessment re-evaluations by MPAC have been deferred, at least for this year. Therefore, most tax payers can expect a 5.66% increase in the municipal portion of their property taxes.

Why was management not encouraged to come up with a zero-rate increase budget for 2021 without any financial risk to the municipality short term or long term? We encourage you to at least do that!



A public Council meeting is to be held on February 22nd to approve the final budget.

This spread sheet, “MNBP BUDGET OBSERVATIONS 2016 – 2021” can be accessed at <https://sepo.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/2021-MNBP-BUDGET-S-2016-2021-tax-Reserves.pdf>

STUDENT SUMMER EMPLOYMENT



Parks Canada and the Municipality of Northern Bruce Peninsula are seeking applications from students pursuing a summer job.

PARKS CANADA

Recently received from Ethan Meleg, Visitor Experience Manager, Bruce Peninsula National Park. Parks Canada is hiring students for the upcoming season at the national parks. Children (or grandchildren) of your members may be interested in these great summer jobs, which are also good experience for those considering a career in the tourism and environment fields.

Job Poster – English Link: <https://emploisfp-psjobs.cfp-psc.gc.ca/psrs-srfp/applicant/page1800?poster=1548069&toggleLanguage=en>

Job Poster – French link: <https://emploisfp-psjobs.cfp-psc.gc.ca/psrs-srfp/applicant/page1800?poster=1548069&toggleLanguage=fr>

STUDENT SUMMER EMPLOYMENT continued

THE MUNICIPALITY OF NORTHERN BRUCE PENINSULA

The Municipality of Northern Bruce Peninsula is offering a number of varied and interesting summer positions for ambitious young people. Information is available at:



<https://www.northbrucepeninsula.ca/Modules/News/index.aspx?newsId=93219c35-c75c-44c1-9f1b-ecc5c7de212e>

MPAC 2020

The Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC) has further extended the moratorium on real property assessments during the Covid-19 Pandemic. Meanwhile, real estate sales have been active in The Municipality of Northern Bruce Peninsula paving the way for substantial assessed values on all properties.



Once again a reminder, that this is the time for you to check “About My Property” on the MPAC website to verify the assessed value of your property and how it compares to other properties in your neighbourhood?

COTTAGES



Cottages have been an integral part of the Bruce Peninsula preceding most of our birth dates. Close to a century ago, the typical cottage structures were characteristically small wood framed buildings that were only used in the summer. Outdoor plumbing, heat from a woodstove and no electricity were the norm in those early days. In contrast, today's seasonal property owners, in compliance with strict building codes, incorporate every luxury and amenity into today's often large and well-appointed dwellings that they often enjoy year round.

Municipalities in Ontario's Cottage Country customarily acknowledge and embrace seasonal properties and their owners as vital components of the local fabric and economy. In fact they welcome them while seeking to work collaboratively to the overall betterment of the community's health and prosperity.



Regrettably and for the most part, many seasonal property residents feel that The Municipality of Northern Bruce Peninsula's Mayor and some Council members regard them as "thorns in their sides" with the exception of tax collection time. A confrontational approach continues to prevail between seasonal property owners and the municipality.

In addition to being excluded from the earlier cited, annual municipal budget deliberations, the MNBP's arrogant approach to dealing with Short Term Accommodations is another example of disenfranchising the ratepayers.

This municipality continues to claim problems with cottages that are rented but fails to provide statistics supporting alleged complaints around noise, over-crowding, fireworks, septic system problems, fires, etc. Finally, after considerable persistence in 2020, the MNBP reluctantly released numbers for 2017 to 2019 <https://sepo.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/COMPLAINTS-RELATED-TO-STAs-RECEIVED.pdf>

Where are the MNBP statistics for 2020? What was the nature of each complaint? Was it owner or renter generated? What resulted following investigation? What was the outcome of all investigations?



Many Cottage Country municipalities, with larger permanent populations and comparable seasonal residences, experience and report the usual complaints associated with large numbers of people, including noise, open fires, fireworks, barking dogs, garbage, parking, etc. They collect and document complaints by following up with investigation and sanctions where applicable.

They report a low rate of complaints about cottages, investigation confirms few of the complaints were attributed to Short Term Rentals that were satisfactorily resolved. Owner occupied properties were equally responsible for bylaw infractions

Licensing of rented cottages is a Pandora's Box that will lead to regulating and inspections; how can you license without understanding and knowing what you are licensing? How would all cottages ever be inspected? Possible legal action against the municipality is always possible as a result of needlessly assuming responsibility for Provincial jurisdictions including building and fire codes.

On investigating the cost of licencing, many municipalities decide to maintain Zero Tolerance Bylaw Enforcement as a proven and cost effective alternate to licencing.



Licensing on its own serves absolutely no purpose other than creating a needless and expensive bureaucracy.

Consider traffic enforcement on Highway 6. Vehicles are licenced along with the driver; does that prevent the few irresponsible drivers from speeding, taking chances while passing, etc? Of course not, it's enforcement of the Highway Traffic Act. There may be some leeway with the speed limit; otherwise the Ontario Provincial Police will be strictly enforcing the Traffic Act. The same should apply to bylaw infractions in this municipality; **Zero Tolerance Bylaw Enforcement is the practical solution.**



ZERO TOLERANCE BYLAW ENFORCEMENT IS NOT ABOUT ONE FALSE MOVE AND YOU ARE OUT, RATHER IT IS ...

- Upon receipt of notification of a bylaw infraction the source of the complaint is investigated either by Bylaw Enforcement Staff or the Police (OPP)
- If a bylaw has been breached the situation is discussed with the offender(s)*
- A written warning is sent to the property owner and the offender(s).
- If there is a repeat offence, the offender is issued a summons that can be paid or challenged in court and an inspection fee is levied against the property owner. The owner can pay or it will be added to the property tax bill
- *Owners and renters are held equally accountable.*

*** Upon investigation, some complaints are unfounded.**

As with many municipalities, full time, 24/7, zero tolerance bylaw enforcement year round and especially during the tourist season would be a good starting point; practical examples exist literally on their our steps with Kawartha Lakes and Tiny Township.

Kawartha Lakes has Short Term Rental information at:

<https://www.kawarthalakes.ca/en/things-to-do/short-term-rentals.aspx> Links to two printable information posters are available towards the bottom of the page.

Tiny Township has Short Term Rental Information at:

<https://www.tiny.ca/Pages/Short-Term-Rental-Information.aspx> including a two page brochure by clicking at "[Short Term Rental Information](#)" on the webpage.

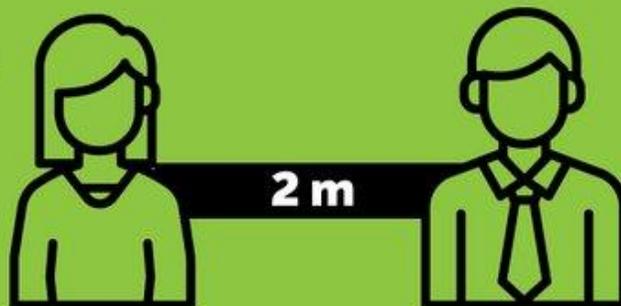
The SEPO Website has more information about Short Term Accommodations at <https://sepo.ca/responsible-renting/>

USEFUL AND IMPORTANT INFORMATION

The SEPO website <https://sepo.ca/> contains information that is frequently updated.

Practice physical distancing.

Stay 2 metres from other people.



FIRE PERMITS

NEW Fire Permits can be applied for and related information found online by following this link to the Municipality of Northern Bruce Peninsula website

<https://nbp.burnpermits.com/home>

SMOKE ALARMS AND CARBON MONOXIDE DETECTORS

It is a legislated requirement to have working smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors on every level of your home to give occupants the precious seconds they need to escape a fire. Please contact Fire Chief Wilf Barnes for further information – (519) 793-3522, X233

DELEGATIONS TO COUNCIL

Those wishing to appear as a delegation are required to submit a completed [Request for Delegation](#) form to the Clerk. Delegations are received on a first come, first served basis. Anyone wishing to view, discuss or provide written comments on any by-law (or agenda document) or submit Correspondence for the Council Agenda or submit a completed Request for Delegation form shall provide same to the Clerk no later than 12 Noon on the Wednesday preceding the scheduled Council meeting.

PARKING

A Paid Parking Program is in effect in Tobermory from May 15 to October 15 each year.

Please follow this link for more information:

<https://www.northbrucepeninsula.ca/en/municipal-services/parking.aspx>

For your convenience, parking tickets can be paid online at: <https://www.paytickets.ca/start>

WASTE MANAGEMENT AND RECYCLING

Waste Management information is available at this site.

https://www.northbrucepeninsula.ca/en/live/waste-management.aspx?_mid_=16304

Guide to what can be recycled:
<https://www.northbrucepeninsula.ca/en/live/resources/Documents/Recycle-Often.-Recycle-Right.-Fact-Sheet.pdf>

MUNICIPALITY'S FEBRUARY 2021 NEWSLETTER

Not available at this time

CURRENT AND PAST ISSUES OF THE BRUCE PENINSULA PRESS CAN BE VIEWED AT:

<https://brucepeninsulapress.com/category/archives/>

SEPO SPRING MEETING

ON HOLD DUE TO COVID-19

BENEFITS FOR SEPO MEMBERS.

- **Sparlings Propane** offers bulk rate pricing to members of St. Edmunds Property Owners, Inc. ***NEW MEMBERS MUST CONTACT SPARLINGS TO INITIATE THE AGREEMENT FOR THE BULK PRICING***
- 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 <https://sepo.ca/> *Recently, you received an email detailing access to the secure section of the website. Please contact us at info@sepo.ca if you need assistance accessing the secure section of the website.*

MEMBERSHIP

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

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

SEPO EXECUTIVE

President	David Almack	Directors
Vice-President	Udo Nixdorf	Kevin Doyle
Secretary	Udo Nixdorf	Dave Hartney
Treasurer	Carrie King	Tom McAfee
		Jack Schenk

Contact us at: St. Edmunds Property Owners, Inc.
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Tobermory, ON
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OR at: info@sepo.ca

St. Edmunds Property Owners, Inc.
*Representing property owners in the former Township of St. Edmunds and
the entire Municipality of Northern Bruce Peninsula*

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