



Sinclair / Finlayson Ward Township of Lake of Bays Councillor Rick Brooks

Oxbow Lake AGM Report 2022

We are all still having mixed feelings of just how fast everything is getting back to 'normal', but it is what it is. Use your own judgement, stay vigilant out in public and continue to wear your masks if you wish, that too is your right. Our businesses are trying to be coming back, the next epidemic is holding things up now – the lack of qualified staff, so although we encourage you to consider visiting our stores and restaurants, but be patient as they get back up to speed.

Here's some of the issues we have been working on;

1) Short Term Rentals (STR By-Law) UPDATE

As you should be aware in 2021, Council approved the Short-Term Rentals By-Law. We hired **Granicus-Host Compliance** as our Short-Term Rental Compliance Company and then added **Ann Tapley** as our **STR Coordinator**. This company is supplying the Township with a data base of STR, identifying civic address, nights rented, number of bedrooms, number of persons that can rent the unit and what sites they are advertising on. Ann's role is to then collect all the applications, conduct site visit and issue STR licenses.

Given the beta testing we have done on the system, we believe that it is going to work extremely well, but we will be prepared to adjust as situations arise if needed and folks need to realize that this is a living document, it's a huge task and a huge township, so the support of our residents is imperative. Should you have any concerns, refer to the attached page on *Short Term Rental* reporting procedures.

2) Roads / Public Works

The subject matter around our dinner table quite often comes back to roads and the perceived ability or inability to maintain them to an acceptable standard.

At the recent Resident's Committee Meeting, I shared the real issues plaguing not only us but many municipalities right now...the inability to get staffing levels where they should be. We are seeing long-standing contractor's we hire having similar issues, which ultimately affects our scheduling and the perceived performance. Without staffing, our service level suffers and the anxiety levels go up, so we continue to ask for your patience.

Our staff have continued to perform at a high level despite these obstacles. As with every year, the removal of sand from our road's alternates between the north and the south of the Township, this year it started in the south. As of this past week the roads of Limberlost have begun to get done and brushing is also underway. The challenge for this work is always the weather as they are unable to do an effective job until the roads dry up, so again patience.

Concerns? Contact **Steve Peace, Superintendent of Public Works 705-635-2851**

3) Municipal Election: October 24, 2022



Residents (permanent and cottagers alike) need to be aware that the information used for a provincial election is gathered by Elections Ontario, whereas Municipal elections comes from MPAC. Having said that, just because you received a form for the June 2nd Provincial election does not automatically mean you are registered to vote municipally....please check yourself, be sure to be able to vote.

4) Update from the District on Transfer Stations;

For those who have visited the Sinclair Transfer Station of late you will know some changes have occurred and yet more are coming. We now have composting of organics and that has been getting some big thumbs up from residents.



Given the influx of new and seasonal residents and visitors utilizing the station, we need to revisit some station etiquette;

- Upon entering the site, please obey the signage, it is a requirement that all vehicles WAIT at the stop sign to be hailed forward and advise the attendant what you are there for, including if you wish to be dropping off anything at the re-use building. It's an MOE requirement.

- Do NOT skip the scales, everyone is required to go over the scales.
- Cardboard is required to be broken down - not larger than 24" x 24".

The Re-Use building is OPEN, albeit over to the west side at the lower level which is not ideal but residents could help by following the directions of advising the attendant upon entry that you are going there and what you wish to drop off as well as upon leaving cross the scales and share what it is that you have picked up, if anything. Please do not be trying to leave environmental waste or food products, this may seem obvious, but that has been an issue. The bag limit has gone from 3 bags per week to 2, but that should be no real issue, especially if you are practicing composting. As for the recycling, we are about to be going to single source, so all recycling will be going into one compactor and separated off-site. The date for that was to be June 6th but we continue to await further direction on that actual date here in Muskoka.

5) Spring....means 'Turtle Season' in Muskoka;

This is a topic near and dear to the hearts of most, or it should be. The future of turtles in Ontario starts with conservation and an awareness of the dangers **we** as people present to the turtle population. Turtles are on the move as soon as the weather starts to warm up in the spring. Usually, the males are the first out and about – on their way to find mates, to find their 'hangout' spots for the spring and their favorite wetlands. As many males as females are found crossing roads, but their movement patterns tend to be spread out over the whole warm season. On the other hand, females are most frequently observed in June, during the height of their nesting season, crossing roads to reach traditional nesting sites or laying eggs in the gravel along roads. Turtle nests are laid in soil that is easy to dig and provides the correct amount of moisture so the eggs do not get too dry or too moist during incubation.

Turtles are nature's custodians and our wetlands rely on them as much as they do humans....

in fact, WE rely on them more. Check out this local site: <https://ontarioturtle.ca/turtles/>

For more information on Ontario's turtles, visit the [Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry's](#) site, or [Ontario Nature](#).

6) Sinclair Residents Committee Update:

Our recent gathering was June 2nd at **Muskoka on the Rocks**, thanks to owners **Lisa and Tom Walsh**. It was extremely well received with 22 joining me along with some special guests; **Cathy Hurst, Dwight Library, Matt Young, Spy Underground / Algonquin Fibre** as well as **LOB CAO Bryan Brown and PW Superintendent Steve Peace**. **DC Peppard** and I are here and plan to be here to continue working for you. I will continue to provide e blasts when there are issues to share and welcome all to consider sitting in on our Council meetings and/or Planning Matter meetings as we continue to now be doing those in a hybrid format using Facebook Live as well as Council and staff actually in Council Chambers. Our next Sinclair Resident's Meeting is tentatively scheduled for Friday, September 2, 2022.

7) Huntsville/Lake of Bays Fire Services – Update:

The Fire Department has had its share of shake-ups of late, resulting in some good news stories, Training Officer **Paul Calleja** is now **Deputy Chief Calleja** with longtime fire fighter and Deputy Chief, **Gary Monahan** as the new Chief....so congrats to both – excellent choices!

I have had several chats with **Chief Monahan**, speaking clearly about our concerns regarding the future of fire fighting in Lake of Bays, and more specifically at Station 3 (Sinclair). He has assured me that the station is secure, it's not going anywhere, in fact there may be some expansion plans coming soon so stay tuned for that. The updated Fire Services Review Report is scheduled to be on the August Council agenda.

I can also give you a 'good news story' from **Matt Young**, Chief of Station 2 & 3 regarding staffing being almost to full complement with the average age coming down as those recently certified have been talking it up among their friends and so the forecast is positive.

8) Indigenous Awareness Training:

I have completed my second two-part training session on Indigenous Awareness taught by **Kelly Brownbill**. **Kelly** currently resides in Simcoe County and is a member of the Three Fires Midewin Lodge. I continue to recommend our residents to consider taking part in her courses when available again, it is via zoom and done in a series of manageable 2-hour sessions. Consult the District of Muskoka website for the registration window for the next sessions.

9) To control Mosquitoes or not:

This has been a topic of conversation for decades and while there continues to be a plethora of companies wanting to take your money, some do a much better job than others and the one losing out is all of us with the unintended consequences of sprays. The attached is an educational article originally drafted by **Caroline Konarzewski** of LOBA, copied with permission and added to by Councillors Peppard and Anderson among others....I encourage you to take the time to digest its message.

(See literature attached)

Final Thought:

I will apologize in advance if I am not able to attend your entire AGM on July 2nd as I must make an appearance at the Bella/Rebecca AGM, unfortunately being held at the same time.

I really enjoy attending these gatherings, listening to our residents and catching up so please ensure I have an opportunity to attend other gatherings throughout the summer months.

As I have shared before, I am proud to continue to be your Councillor for Sinclair/Finlayson, I truly believe that even through an unprecedented term, this Council has accomplished some amazing things. It is my wish, with your support again, to continue to represent you at the Township of Lake of Bays as your Ward Councillor after the election of October 24th. Let's keep it going!

All the best,

Rick Brooks, Councillor

Sinclair / Finlayson Ward

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