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MUNICIPALITY OF TEMAGAMI**
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As this letter is being compiled, we are once again in a State of Emergency declared by the Province as a continuation of the COVID-19 pandemic response. We are into the second week of the Stay at Home order that was issued in support of this declaration. We continue to hold meetings using Zoom. As a reminder, members of the Public are welcome to attend Council meetings. The link you will need to access our meetings is available on our website in the meeting notification.

COVID-19 Response

Our Community Control Group continues to meet, typically biweekly, and continues to issue messages designed to get Provincial messages to you as well as helpful links as we all deal with the strains caused by this pandemic. We are also following guidance from the Province and Medical Officers of Health, both Provincial and Local. While the number of infections may be a little lower in our District than in other regions of the Province, our ability to handle those requiring hospitalization is also limited. While it may feel like this will never end, please know that you are not alone. Please continue to read our messages, follow the advice from the medical community, keep your physical distance, wear a mask, and keep washing your hands and eventually we will get through this. If you need a little boost, please contact one of the agencies we include in our messages, they are truly here to help.

Your Assessment

As noted in the letter that was sent with the final tax bill in 2020, the scheduled reassessment by the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC) that was to take effect in 2021 has been delayed. With the new Provincial Emergency Declaration, we have yet to hear if MPAC is delaying this further than the one year that was announced. As we get any updates from MPAC we will be certain to pass them along.

MPAC also has the aboutmyproperty.ca website where you can view details about your property as MPAC has them. If you have questions that aren't answered through their website, or if you need assistance accessing this information, please call MPAC at 1-866-296-6722. You will need your roll number – the one that starts with 4869 as shown on your tax bill – to assist MPAC locating your information.

Virtual Events

Especially over the Christmas Season, many activities that would normally be hosted in different locations in our Community shifted to be hosted virtually. We had 54 kids from 24 households participate in the 'Virtual Breakfast with Santa', 29 households registered for the 'Light Up Temagami' event, 16 entries with the 'Elf on the Shelf, Temagami Style', and over 2000 viewed our Memorial Tree Lighting with 9855 accessing the Christmas Loop. This demonstrates the ingenuity and creativeness of your Council and Staff. If you have ideas for further virtual activities, please share them with us through communicate@temagami.ca and we will do our part by keeping Community Spirit alive until we can have these events in person.

Official Plan and Comprehensive Zoning By-Law

In what may be an often repeated theme, the timing of the review of the Official Plan and Comprehensive Zoning By-Law has been delayed a little due to COVID-19 response. We have had the initial meeting with the Province of Ontario through their 'one window' access and there was an initial information gathering with an in person session in August of 2019, further public meetings have not yet been scheduled. We are working with our planners to arrange these meetings using the zoom platform as, at present, we are not certain when we may be able to host in person public meetings again. Providing information, especially related to the Provincial framework that municipal official plans must be within, and gathering information from our Public are vital to a well drafted Official Plan and to related Comprehensive Zoning By-Law that follows. Information will be shared through communicate@temagami.ca as it is known.

Service Delivery Review and Strategic Plan

The consultant's report for the Service Delivery Review was received in November and is available on our website for your information. There was an implementation guide provided with the report and that is guiding discussions at the Council table on the future of various services offered by the Municipality. Many of the discussion topics in the Strategic Plan report (also available on our website) are included in the Service Delivery Review document so the implementation process will include items from both documents as well the Waste Management Master Plan (see next item). Without question, there will be more opportunities for you to participate in this program whether by surveys, input, or possibly public meetings. Council is committed to ensuring our services and processes are a balance between what we are legislated to do and what you, our users, would like us to do. We look forward to your continued participation through this process.

Waste Management Masterplan

The Waste Management Masterplan final report has been submitted to Council and is scheduled to be reviewed with the consultant at a Special Meeting of Council on January 27th. From this report, there may be changes to how waste management is operated in the future. Again, as our discussion progresses Council will be reaching out for input. Especially with Provincial changes in how recycling is managed, now is an ideal time to ensure our waste management is ready for the next couple of decades.

Have you considered Volunteering?

Volunteers are vital to the health of any community. Prior to the restrictions related to the pandemic, we received many new Volunteers working on different events for our community. In Marten River and in Temagami we have Volunteer Firefighters who provide an invaluable service to our community. We have a standing call for individuals who would like to Volunteer for various committees and we welcome all who are interested. The Spirit of a Community does not necessarily come from 'official channels' but is a reflection on its Volunteers and people who want to be involved. Should you wish to be involved please let us know either through email, phone or through regular post.

From the Office

We have a number of ratepayers who have taken advantage of our preauthorized payment plans. These can be based on monthly payments or payments on installment dates. While a Canadian bank account is required, sign up is quick and easy and can be stopped at any time.

If you pay through online banking, please take a moment to ensure you have the correct account number. Three years ago we switched accounting systems and went from a 5 digit account number to using the roll number to identify tax accounts. There are still a number of ratepayers who have not updated their account numbers which requires additional time to search for the appropriate tax account. (roll number example 4869-123-123-12345 (without the dashes))

Until there are changes in the Province's Emergency Orders, our office will be closed to the Public. With appropriate screening, there may be the occasional need for a well distanced in person meeting but these are by appointment only. For those who wish to pay taxes at the office, we have a drop box at the west entrance to the office (which is checked often during the day) and we will mail you a receipt.

THANK YOU

We have many health care workers in our community. Whether they are our Paramedics, Doctors, Nurse Practitioners, Nurses or those who support our community health care, we all owe thanks to them and the work that they do.

Expanding on this, when you drive on a municipal road, or turn the tap on, or watch water go down the drain, we thank our Municipal Staff. While there are different protocols that are followed in our present state, Municipal Staff have ensured that services and assistance has continued.

We have Volunteers that with Staff have created and hosted virtual events to bring some normalcy to a very abnormal time.

And we have you, our citizens, businesses and community groups. Your generosity has allowed us to ensure that a gift was provided to families and children through our virtual Christmas events, provide treat bags for our 'at-a-distance' Hallowe'en drive by (64 kids well served) and ensuring that the more vulnerable in our community have been safely checked on. You have self-isolated and stayed at home when required which has helped the overall health of our Community. Finally, to those who are not able to be here, we cannot wait until we can gather and celebrate but until then, please be safe, save lives and dream about what this celebration can be.