



Bayfield Ratepayers Association

Annual General Meeting, August 4, 2012, Community Centre President's Report, Fall 2011 - Summer 2012

The priorities identified during our 2011 Annual General Meeting included in order of priority:

- Continue to hold the line on taxes;
- Main Street Revitalization and Tree Renewal;
- By-law Enforcement;
- New Library, Post Office, Public Washrooms and Archives;
- Election Readiness;
- Continuation of the Blue Flag Initiative;
- Integrating our Communities;
- Public Access to the Beach and Public Beach Safety;
- Condition of the North Pier.

Over the past year, these issues have occupied much of the attention of BRA Directors. Here's my update:

I. Continue to Hold the Line on Taxes

Past Director, Dave Nearingburg continues to advise us on this file. As he stated a year ago to a BRA member:

"...Shoreline wards rates have increased significantly compared to those that are inland.

The issue of an [un]equitable distribution of services and taxes has been contentious from the birth of Bluewater back in 2000. The distribution of the municipal tax burden has two components;

- *the replacement in 1998 by the Harris government of the provincially funded Ontario Farm Tax Rebate program with the Farm Tax Assessment Rate &*
- *The market value based assessment practises of the provincial Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC)*

The former downloaded the tax cost of this programme from the Province to the Municipalities. It has been an enormous bone of contention with rural Ontario and several resolutions and meetings between the Association of Municipalities of Ontario and various Premiers have failed to redress this wrongdoing.

At its inception, Premier Harris promised this change would be revenue neutral by providing Farmland Assessment Grants to equal the tax cost to the municipalities. This is not the case. In fact, an analysis done by the Bayfield Ratepayers Association in 2010 estimates the 2010 funding shortfall for the Municipality of Bluewater alone was almost \$2,100,000. This shortfall must be made up through local property taxes 62% of which falls on residential taxpayers living west of highway 21. We estimate it is costing a home assessed at \$250,000 approximately \$565/yr in taxes because of this.

The market value assessment principle shifts an enormous and unfair portion of service delivery costs to those Bluewater residents who make the least use these services. The difficulty is this is a provincially directed policy and has a material affect on all vacation areas within Ontario.

The Bluewater Shoreline Residents Association (B.S.R.A.) has an excellent website and one page of it details the unfair tax burden.

There is no doubt this continues to pit lakeshore & bayfield residents against residents east of 21..."

2. Main Street Revitalization and Tree Renewal - Members at the Spring General Meeting, told us that this project is their # 1 priority now.

Before Main Street can be revitalized, sewers and water mains needed to be constructed. That is now done. A Business Retention and Expansion (BR +E) report needed to be prepared to meet provincial grant requirements for funding a storm water drainage study. That was done and the storm water drainage study will happen in the very near future.

The 2012 Bayfield Revitalization Committee is made up of Paul Hill & myself representing the BRA; Roger Lewington & Ruth Brown representing the Bayfield and Area Chamber of Commerce; Roma Harris & Dave MacLaren, representing the Bluewater Heritage Advisory Committee; Councillor Geordie Palmer; and Douglas Barril, of Huron County Economic Development. The full Committee has met three times this year and worked together to find funding for improvements.

The Committee has applied to be part of the Municipality of Bluewater's application for a federal Community Infrastructure Fund grant, that was just announced. We are far closer to planting those trees and getting rid of the huge puddles on Main Street if there is money for implementing a drainage plan and streetscape improvements.

We currently have conceptual drawings and reports for two streetscape plans. One is the 2003 & updated 2010 London based Shearer report. The other is a 2011 Review Plan by resident architects and village experts including: Rob McCrea, Glenn Scheels, Paul Ferris, John Rutledge, Bill Rowat, Clair Soper and myself. We all volunteered our time and expertise to come up with a plan that is unique to Bayfield to showcase our heritage Main Street. The two Plans are similar in many ways but the Review Panel's is unique to Bayfield. There are no concrete sidewalks and the boulevards or bump outs face one another so they help people cross the street. The bump outs are accessible and trees can be planted on them close to the road. It has French drains, which are considered more environmentally friendly. It's this plan that the BRA Board has adopted.

We need to remember that it is only when we have a drainage plan that final drawings and decisions can be made.

The 2012 Bayfield Revitalization Committee has agreed that we need a “green” plan for a number of reasons including keeping costs down and reducing the impact on the environment, especially the Lake. My hope is that there will ultimately be a third plan that we can all celebrate that showcases Main Street. The Mayor has told the BRA that plans won’t move forward until the Village reaches consensus. All member of the Committee want to move forward so we are highly motivated to find that consensus. I’ll keep you posted.

You can take a look at the 2011 Villagers’ Review Panel report and conceptual drawings here in this room and they are available on the BRA web site. The same report, near the end, provides links to the 2003 & Updated 2010 Shearer Reports.

“Bayfield’s Heritage Main Street Renewal: Review Panel’s Recommendations and Conceptual Drawings”

Available on our web site. Go to: Reports and Position Papers Section:

Then under 2011 Letters & Reports - or click here:

**[http://bra.camp8.org/Resources/Documents/
BayfieldMainStReviewPanelSept.pdf](http://bra.camp8.org/Resources/Documents/BayfieldMainStReviewPanelSept.pdf)**

A big thank you to the Review Panel for donating their expertise and time to make Main Street a Heritage Showcase. It was a wonderful gift that these residents gave to the Village and I want to give them my sincere thanks and appreciation. Actually, it is typical of the talent and generosity of the people who live here and truly makes Bayfield a wonderful community to be part of.

3. By-law Enforcement

On behalf of the BRA, I made a presentation to a planning meeting regarding 75 Tyull Street where an applicant was trying to get a variance for permits to have three dwellings (a dwelling, is a building with water and sewer hook-up) on two lots when only one dwelling is allowed per lot. The original lot dates back to the 1930’s. This lot has already been to an OMB hearing and was allowed to be severed. But, the future of the building down the lake bank, that sits on both lots, was deemed by the OMB to be determined by the Chief Planner. He ruled that it was a “dwelling” as it had water and sewer hook ups. Consequently, there was already a dwelling on “both” lots and no building permit could be issued for either lot. In the end the owner agreed to remove the plumbing and sewer hook up, to move forward with building on the two lots.

However, we have just been notified that there will be an OMB hearing, in November, as a neighbour has objected. I will do my best to attend the meeting and comment as necessary.

4. New Library, Post Office and Public Washrooms & Archives

Carol Thornley-Hall will be formally thanking the Mayor and Council soon. I must admit I still can't believe that the walls are now up on the Library Complex.

I will say that we have written a letter in support of the Bayfield Historical Society expanding from the Archives Building into the current library. We are awaiting Councils decision on the future of the Archives Building and current Library. You all know how important these two buildings are to Villagers and the Heritage Conservation District.

5. Election Readiness

As the 2011 AGM was held in September the new Board was not ready to be active for the October 6th provincial elections. The next election is municipal and will take place in October 2014.

6. Continuation of the Blue Flag Initiative

In the past, Past President, Dave MacLaren, worked hard with the Municipality and other local groups to attain Blue Flag status for the marina and Bayfield beaches. It was awarded to the Main Beach, by the south pier, in 2008. And, later to the marina. There are separate criteria for beaches and marinas. To maintain these designations we need to ensure that we meet the provincial recreational water standard 80% of the time that regular testing takes place. Once you have the Blue Flag designation, if you don't meet their criteria one year, they do allow a some time to fix the "problem."

Presently, a number of factors, including the trees along our end of the River and the cold clean water flowing in from Trick's Mill/Creek east of Bayfield, have allowed us to keep the Blue Flag designation. The woods along the River keep e-coli from entering the river and filter it out. Trick's Creek dilutes any e-coli in the River. However, this summer's low rainfall and water levels has resulted in e-coli readings going up.

It is important to know that the forrest cover along the River further east of us is very sparse. This needs to be remedied.

The BRA is now focused on participating in formulating a Sub-Watershed Plan for the "Main Bayfield River." This name is used for planning purposes. It is the section of the larger watershed, that is focussed on Clinton and a large section of agricultural land west of Clinton, south to Varna and north to Tower Line Road, it then narrows down to a thin strip of wooded land on either side of the River from Goshen Line to the Harbour, ending at the Lake. It's ecologically important to improve water quality by working with the flow of the water. That's what a "watershed" is.

I sit on the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority and Bluewater Council's "Bayfield Main River Sub-Watershed Landowners' Committee." The goal is to meet with and mobilize residents and community groups in the Sub-Watershed to determine priorities and participate in implementing solutions. You'll be hearing a lot more about this soon. I'd be pleased to speak with you one on one after the meeting.

If you'd like to be part of an ABCA Sub-watershed tour please contact me (ainsliewillock@hotmail.com). It will take place on Friday, August 17th from 9 am to noon. You need to register to join us.

FYI: The BRA successfully applied, again this year, for a \$7,500 grant from the Municipality to continue ABCA's water testing of the River. We thank the Municipality for their support in these tight financial times. The water testing is critical to our understanding of how to improve water quality.

7. Integrating Our Communities - Sondra Buchner sits on the Communities in Bloom Municipal Committee and I sits on the Bluewater Heritage Advisory Committee. This helps us get to know residents and their issues across the Municipality. You'll hear more about Communities in Bloom when Sondra gives her report.

8. Public Beach Access and Public Safety - no update

9. Condition of North Pier - We now know that the best route to resolve this issue is for the BRA to write to the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) and request that he contact the owner, the federal government, to fix the pier before it collapses into the harbour and closes access to the Lake. This spring, the CAO got the Federal government to fix the Marine Gas Station they own which is important to the operation of the harbour. Now it's time for North Pier to get the same attention.

BRA Actions 2011-2012

10. Letters On behalf of the BRA Board & Members, President Ainslie Willock wrote to the:

- Municipality of Bluewater, to support and make recommendations regarding the building of the Library Complex.
- Municipality of Bluewater, to state our objection to the owner of 75 Tuyll Street's request for variances to allow three dwellings on two properties - another OMB hearing takes place this November, as a neighbour has objected.
- Municipality of Bluewater, to request \$7,500 for the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA) to continue water monitoring on the Bayfield River - Received.
- Municipality of Bluewater, to support the Bayfield Historical Society's proposal to expand the Archives into the current Library building in the new year - Waiting for Council's decision
- Province, to let them know of our two policies on Industrial Wind Turbines.

11. Meetings we've attended on behalf of the BRA Board & Members; President Ainslie Willock:

- sits on the ABCA and Bluewater's "Main Bayfield River Sub-Watershed Landowners Committee" to improve water quality
- sits on the 2012 Bayfield Revitalization Committee, along with VP Paul Hill to revitalize our heritage Main Street

- presented to Council in opposition to 75 Tuyl's Streets request for three dwellings on two lots and in support of the Library Complex
- attends Council meetings
- attended meetings on Source Water protection, installation of water metres (the Mayor has advised that our rate will be the same as other jurisdictions with water), and the implementation of the last phase of providing municipal water to the North side of the River.

12. Meetings we've held:

- Monthly Board Meetings and a Spring General Members Meeting,
- Two public meetings with the ABCA (to learn more about their water testing along the River) and one with Huron Health (tests water in the Lake where people swim) to better understand and improve water quality in the watershed and along our beaches.

It has been a very challenging year as we have had a very small board and major issues. We are also in a critical financial situation that you'll hear more about in the Directors Reports section of this meeting.

I encourage Members to contact a Board member to offer your help by becoming a member of the Board. There is no requirement that you be a full time resident. Just that you want to help represent the best interests of Villagers to the Municipality. All help sincerely appreciated.

August 4, 2012

Ainslie Willock