**Bluewater Shoreline Residents’ Association**

**Minutes of the Spring General Meeting held June 4th, 2022 at St Peter’s Church Hall**

Present: Jim Hall, Deb Griffin, Sue Haskett, Dick Masse, Mike McCormack

The meeting was called to order by Jim Hall at 9:30 am.

1. **Welcome and Introductions**

Jim welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced the BSRA Directors. He also welcomed Deputy Mayor Ferguson and Bluewater councillors George Irvin and Alwyn Vanden Berg.

1. **Regrets**

Jim Moore has resigned for personal reasons.

Robin Glenny has stepped down from the Board as he has moved out of the BSRA area. Robin will remain as a special advisor to the board so that we retain his knowledge and experience.

Both were thanked for their years of service.

Don Jackson is unable to attend due to scheduling conflicts.

1. **Approval of the agenda / additions (Jim Hall)**

The agenda was sent out last week and copies have been made available today. There were no additional items.

Approved (Irene Hall / Greg Lamport)

1. **Approval of the minutes of the 2019 Spring Meeting (Mike McCormack)**

The 2019 Spring Meeting minutes were previously approved at the 2019 AGM. Likewise, today’s minutes will be approved at the 2022 AGM in August.

1. **Treasurer’s Report (Deb Griffin)**

The Balance Sheet and Profit and Loss statement for the period ending March 31st was sent to the membership earlier.

Deb reviewed the statements with the attendees.

A discussion ensued regarding the matter of dues in arrears and the potential impact non-payment may have on access to BSRA benefits (eg. Insurance).

Approved (Ron Anderson / Irene Hall)

1. **Municipal Election 2022 (Jim Hall)**

Jim reminded members that Bluewater has a municipal election this year – on Monday, October 24th.

In the May e-bulletin – BSRA indicated that questions would be developed for candidates, emailed to them and when answered, face-to-face meetings would be held so that responses can then be communicated to shoreline residents (website and mailchimp).

Jim also asked for the dates of each BSRA association’s 2022 annual general meeting so that a BSRA board member may attend and list key electoral issues that are important to residents and respond to questions.

Important dates to keep in mind regarding the election –

* August 19th – nomination day, nominations can only be filed between 9:00am and 2:00pm
* August 22nd – nominations examined and certified by 4:00pm and declaration of candidates elected by acclamation
* August 22nd – first day for a voter to appoint a voting proxy. Proxy applications must be filed at the clerk’s office and/or other designated location
* August 24th/25th – additional nominations may be filed if the number of nominations is less than the number of persons to b elected to office. Certifications/acclamations on the 25th
* September 1st – last day for reproducing the voters’ list (candidates get a copy of voters in their office area)
* September 24th – first possible day to hold an advance vote
* October 24th – voting day
* October 25th – declaration of the results of the election (asap)
* November 15th – new term of office commences (assuming a quorum is present)
* December 16th – deadline for the newly formed council to host their first meeting.

1. **BSRA Associations Insurance coverage (Jim Hall)**

Jim, in Don Jackson’s absence, briefly summarized the status of the ongoing BSRA insurance policy needs review.

BSRA has an umbrella insurance policy with Intact Insurance (Exeter). BSRA associations have been able to take advantage of cost savings and liability and property protection under this collective policy for some time.

BSRA is reviewing our policy with the carrier to make sure it is what is needed for current exposures – legal, municipal policy, other governmental agencies. Further, it may be that certain associations along the lake that are not part of the BSRA family will no longer have access to the umbrella policy.

Jim requested each association’s input in accordance with the 4 questions included in Don’s message in the recent e-bulletin. This information is key to being able to provide our insurance broker with what is needed for a new quote.

Jim also requested each association’s up-to-date contact info for officers / directors.

1. **Beach access on Municipal property (Sue Haskett)**

Sue reported the following:

“It should not be a surprise to anyone that with so many ravines and beach accesses in our membership area, and with multiple possible scenarios, that ownership in some of our subdivisions has not always been clear to residents and understandably so, neither was it always clear to the Municipality.

The highwater levels of recent years have left many beach accesses unusable and stairways unsafe or destroyed bringing many questions to the surface such as who does own the land, who is responsible for repairs or replacement, who can proceed with work, who will pay for it and of course who is liable.

Early in 2021, Council agreed to a recommendation from staff to complete a comprehensive review of all beach accesses and beaches owned by the municipality. This was most certainly a time consuming, ambitious, and probably long overdue project that will serve the municipality well as a resource in the future. It was presented to Council at a special in camera meeting early in May 2022.

Seven parcels owned by the Municipality of Bluewater have been identified as parcels that may be considered for disposal. You as a property owner and ratepayer have been invited to comment or share knowledge that you may have regarding each of these individual parcels before August 31st.

Information is on the Municipality’s website, with a link to the Beach Access page where you can find a brief background and description of the goal summarized.

* Identify parcels that are not needed for municipal purposes and therefore are suitable for disposal.
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What you need to do as individuals

It is important to read all the information available, especially clicking on the link to the Council Portal link where you will find in more detail the much broader scope of the review to better understand the original recommendation, the principles, the criteria, and the inventory of beach property owned by Bluewater. The issue of the possibility of divesting of any of these parcels is really a small project within a large project. Read about the process, in the event the decision be made to dispose of any or all the parcels once the comment period has ended.

Note that the remaining inventory of beach access parcels will be determined by the Municipal Recreation Master Plan.

Individual cottage associations may have received notice of the invitation to comment via a letter that does outline a better description of the location of these 7 properties and suggests you can find a map on the Beach Access page. I personally have not been able to find the mapping and contacted Aaron Stewardson from Planning and Development with that concern. While I received a quick response that he would gather more information and have a response as soon as he can, I have heard nothing further.

What we need to do as individual cottage associations

Determine if any of these parcels, or the possible sale of any of these parcels impacts your association. This is a good opportunity to do your own review keeping in mind that there is no common formula regarding beach ownership between neighbouring subdivisions and sometimes within subdivisions, even from one neighbour to the next.

Encourage everyone to participate, making sure each property owner is familiar with the review, by sharing through whatever form of communication and remind them to comment.”

A question was raised about who might buy or receive property that might be disposed. Deputy Mayor Ferguson advised that the municipality has a surplus land disposal policy and that such disposal would need approval at council. Typically, such land could be expected to go to an Association or adjacent landowner.

Councillor Irvin referred attendees to By-law 127-2020.

Question was asked that if sold, do the parcels become private land? Councillor Irvin responded that the parcels in question are small, not passable, are overgrown and would generally be unidentifiable to the public.

A discussion regarding private vs public access ensued. Councillor Vanden Berg reminded attendees that if the municipality owns the property, public access is guaranteed. Further, the parcels that will be considered for disposal are property that the municipality does not need.

1. **ABCA and Water Quality and testing (Sue Haskett)**

Sue reported the following:

Background: BSRA initiated the water testing in the beginning and requested that the Municipality each year provide funding in form of a grant to pay ABCA to do testing. Through grants available to ABCA, they also subsidized the program cost to collect the data and prepare a yearly report.

Eventually, the Municipality decided to ask the ABCA to include this water testing in their budget and when introduced to the ABCA Board, the directors understood it’s value, and expanded it to include locations beyond our membership. Testing was reduced from 4 locations to two in our membership area, selecting Wildwood towards the north and Ridgeway towards the south, but one can assume these are really examples of many ravines coming into the lake.

The compromise in that funding, removed the report however having the data gathered consistently year after year is most important and will be a resource at some point, when a research project does move forward.

Current program

This year, 2022 ABCA will have someone on the road Monday mornings testing the water for ecoli that comes into the lake from ravines at 4 locations along the lake. They gather a sample from the ravine at each location and 5 lake sites taken about 50 feet from the shore.

1. 100 feet north of the mouth
2. 50 feet north of the mouth
3. The mouth
4. 50 feet south of the mouth
5. 100 feet south of the mouth

The data includes rainfall, sunlight, wave action, clarity water temperature, air temperature and wind and is posted on our website once available.

CFU/100 ml. *CFU refers to number of living bacterial cells in a water sample*

2021 data much the same as recent years.

Both ravines exceed the level 100% of the time.

10% of Wildwood samples exceeded the acceptable limit.

24% of Ridgeway samples exceeded the acceptable limit.

Looking back we might think there has been improvement based on the number of days exceeding the limit, however the criteria changed a few years ago, reducing what is described as an acceptable level of ecoli. Clearly, we see patterns related to weather events, that affect all locations. Change over time is so slow, it could take years to be noticed.

During the past 2 years Covid restricted ABCA staff from riding together so BSRA volunteers acted as the second person in the testing, basically to be able to call for help should the person in the water get into difficulty. In 2022, a student will replace us.

The key take away from this report is that the ravines are full of E.coli and never a healthy place for your children to play, and it should be remembered that the area right where the water laps at the shore and sand is also where there is most likely to be higher concentrations of E.coli.

This research is not intended for determination of whether or not it is safe to swim. The Huron Perth Health Unit is your source of information on a beach that may be closed for example. Always remember, and also educate your children and any guests that when standing in water waist deep you should be able to see your feet.

As an additional point of interest, ABCA are planning to have an “Ask the Botanist” morning at the Ridgeway testing site during one of the testing dates.”

Question was asked if the testing can identify the source of pollutants and include a plan to address water pollution. A discussion ensued and Bill Dinney provided information regarding efforts to address pollution in the Great Lakes. Irene Hall advised that testing is done upstream of the drain at Turnbull’s Grove (East of Hwy 21) to identify sources.

Sid Huff informed attendees that Lambton (unclear if it is the County or municipalities) uses a predictive model to predict E coli levels, backed up by physical testing to confirm the predictive model. This avoids the usual delay in obtaining results from testing and provides guidance that is more current for users.

1. **Short Term Rentals (STR’s) (Mike McCormack)**

Mike reported the following:

“Since July 2020, council has been discussing a system of licensing and regulating short term rentals within the municipality. The matter stems from the impact of STR’s on parking, noise, occupant loads, occupancy of accessory buildings and absent landlords / owners and complaints / concerns received by Council and Staff regarding those items.

Numerous municipalities have, or are developing, similar regulations to address similar concerns

The purpose of this presentation today is to provide an overview of some of the key points of the proposed STR By-Law as well as the status of the proposal before council.

**Highlights (as of May 16, 2022 council meeting)**

* Licensing required / issued by municipality
* Licenses may be restricted to maximum of 5% of residential units per council ward
* License applications require a parking plan, Fire Safety plan, septic maintenance, proof of insurance (among other things)
* STR to operate for no more than 30 consecutive days with a maximum 91 days per year
* Owner occupied STR not allowed
* Licensees to be individuals only (no corporations)
* Max occupancy of 8 persons at any time
* Responsible person to be able to respond to site within 30 minutes
* A demerit point system for infractions that would progress towards license suspension
* Fines range from minimum of $500 to max $10,000 with a $50,000 max per day for continuing / multiple infractions

**Status (as of May 16, 2022 council meeting)**

* At the May 16 Council meeting, council directed staff to conduct public consultation through the municipal website. As of today, there is nothing on the MOB website.

I would encourage anyone who has an interest or may be impacted by this topic, to educate themselves further and to participate in any opportunity to provide input to council.”

In response to comment / questions, Deputy Mayor Ferguson provided an explanation of the thought process behind the By-Law and how STR’s and cottage rentals have changed over time. The matter is global in nature, not just within Ontario or Bluewater.

One attendee (name not provided) commented on their need to provide STR’s in order to afford to keep their family cottage and also provided an overview of their efforts to ensure their renters are not disruptive.

1. **Ontario Corporations Act (ONCA) (Jim Hall)**

The BSRA May e-bulletin had a piece on Ontario’s Not-for-Profit Corporations Act (ONCA). BSRA cannot provide legal advice – but do encourage associations incorporated under provincial legislation to review - or have a lawyer review - their articles or letter-patent to ensure compliance with ONCA.

BSRA will find out whether or not ONCA has any effect on our umbrella insurance policy and revert with the answer once we have it.

1. **Hay West and Stanley West ward’s tax distribution (Jim Hall)**

This year Jim attended all 4 of the council meetings that dealt with the MOB’s 2022 budget. It was an enlightening experience – and he was impressed by the diligence of council and capability of MOB staff throughout the sessions.

BSRA has asked but not been able to obtain 2021 actual or 2022 budgeted mob taxes by ward. Fortunately, 2020 numbers are available and represent a proxy for last and the current year.

Jim provided attendees with some statistics :

* First – total residential taxes represent ~70% of total taxes - with Hay west at ~26% and Stanley west at ~19% meaning ~45% of total residential taxes are paid by “us”. Bayfield – btw – is at ~26% to take us up to the ~70% total of residential taxes.
* Second - in terms of total taxes – Hay west and Stanley west make up ~37% of total taxes and when Bayfield is included, that ~37% climbs to ~57%.

All of this goes to a few points –

* Bluewater gets ~37% of total taxes from Hay West and Stanley West -that is – out of our pockets
* Therefore – it is important that shoreline residents vote
* Lack of concern about representation – who we elect to fight for taxpayers along the shoreline – means we are nothing but a cash cow for the municipality.

Unfortunately, the MOB does not produce statistics for where – in what wards – the tax money is spent. The BSRA will continue to push for these percentages notwithstanding the political issues that might arise by such transparency.

Deputy Mayor Ferguson indicated a hope that the information would be available for comment at the August AGM.

Hay West councillor, Alwyn Vanden Berg, commented that the statistics do not tell the whole story as the lakeshore wards have a greater population than other wards. As a result, it impacts the percentages.

1. **BSRA director search, August AGM (Jim Hall)**

Jim reminded attendees that in August we have nominations for the BSRA board of directors. We continue to look for new candidates – to replace Jim Moore and Robin Glenny.

Jim encouraged attendees to speak to one of us after the meeting if they had any interest or know of someone that would make a good representative of shoreline residents.

Also, a reminder was provided of the BSRA annual general meeting (AGM) coming up in August. The date hasn’t been set yet – but is more than likely a Saturday morning towards the end of the month. The July/August e-bulletin will provide the date.

1. **Adjournment**

Meeting adjourned at 11:15 a.m.

Approved (Ed Morris / Jeff Moorehead)