

Land Use and Ratepayer Affairs

By Cam Richardson

This year was quiet on the regulatory front with only a few requests for amendments to the Official Plan or Comprehensive Zoning Bylaw. It is heartening to see that we are all looking towards maintaining the standards set by our predecessors to ensure the future for our families to enjoy Pointe au Baril as we know it. We are lucky to have a place many of us call home in Pointe au Baril, so beautiful and pristine. We want to keep it that way and each of us is a stakeholder which makes us all responsible for this piece of Heaven on Earth.

As we look forward in the future it is important that I hear from you as to how you would like to see us work with our councillors to expand and better define the OP, CZBL, waste and other community issues of interest. The election saw our Ward 3 Councillors, Ken Williams and Gary French, continue in the role. They are readily available and welcome your inquiries on anything from the OP to the environment or how the TOA works while addressing the issues of the day.

The TOA (Township of the Archipelago) has a wonderful website with much information on tax assessments, building regulations, planning documents, waste management, recreation and culture, construction projects, the environment and more. The employees are ready and willing to answer your questions as they relate to the various departments and functions within the township. We are fortunate to have good government in our region. Below is a short history of its formation and the territory covered.

‘The Township of The Archipelago was incorporated on April 1, 1980, as the result of an amalgamation of the Townships of Georgian Bay South Archipelago and Georgian Bay North Archipelago. These townships were established on January 1, 1980, following the adoption of the District of Parry Sound Local Government Act by the Ontario Legislature in June of 1979.

Before that time, the area now covered by the Township of The Archipelago was entirely composed of geographic townships, with no prior history of local government activity other than the work done by several Local Roads Boards.

The Townships of Cowper and Conger (except the easternmost part near Highway #69) were the basis for the south municipality – now the south area of the Township. This takes in the islands and shoreline of Georgian Bay southwest of Parry Sound, from Twelve Mile Bay (at the Muskoka District Boundary) to Parry Island and up the South Channel almost to Parry Sound, and includes the principal inland lakes of the region. Almost a third of the population of the south section of the Township lives on the islands in the Sans Souci and Copperhead area, centered around Frying Pan Island.

What is now the north area – north of Parry Sound beyond Carling Township – was composed of the Village of Pointe au Baril on the mainland, together with most of the Townships of Shawanaga and Harrison. This covers the islands and shoreline of Georgian Bay from the Twin

Sisters (at the northern boundary of Carling Township) north to Charles Inlet and the Naiscoot River, a few miles south of Britt.

The distance from the southern end of the south area to the northern end of the north area is approximately 60 miles and the two are separated by Carling Township, whose southern boundary touches Parry Island in front of Parry Sound.

Boundaries of municipalities on the shore extend out to the centre of Georgian Bay; and The Archipelago Township, therefore, includes a substantial part of the famous Thirty Thousand Islands. **Indeed, providing for proper planning in the islands and waterways of the area was the original reason for its creation.**

The total land area of the Township of The Archipelago is approximately 85,000 hectares (Metropolitan Toronto for comparison purposes is about 60,000 hectares) and the many bays, rivers, lakes and water channels that constitute such an important part of the Township, cover an area about three times that size. Much of the land area is undeveloped and a large part is Crown Land. In the south, 83 percent of the mainland and 70 percent of the islands remain in the public domain and in the north, 96 percent of the mainland and 50 percent of the islands.

In a number of ways, the Township of The Archipelago represents a departure from traditional forms of local government in Ontario, but its establishment has provided an opportunity for many people who have a long connection with the area to make a constructive contribution to its development.

You can see that the main reason for its creation is to preserve the natural surroundings we all enjoy in and around the islands and waterways of Georgian Bay.

Please introduce yourself to me over the summer and let me know how you feel PaBIA is doing for you and the island community we live in. It is refreshing to get as much input as possible as it is your opinions and rational that help us make this, our home, a better place to live.