

Karen Sliwkanich bio

I have just completed 4 years on the council of the Summer Village of South Baptiste. I have enjoyed the learning and the opportunity to “give back” to this community that I have enjoyed all my life. I am a retired elementary school teacher. I also taught for MacEwan University, worked 10 years with the provincial government and mentored numerous childcare staff, including at the three Athabasca Whispering Hills childcare sites. In addition to my professional career, I have been an active volunteer, primarily in governance levels of social services charities for the past 40+ years. I, along with my husband Terry, built a year-round lake home a few years ago, on the property my family has owned since the 1950’s. Our 11 grandchildren are the 5th generation of my family to enjoy our time at Baptiste Lake. I consider us as part-time residents, in that we can be at “the lake” at any time of the year, not only during the summer season. Although this is not our full-time home, I have a good understanding of the experience of both seasonal and year-round residents. Reflecting on the past 4 years on the summer village council, I am proud of improvements in public amenities such as public docks, safety for residents through traffic monitoring and proper signage, addressing local concerns for water quality, and municipal property maintenance such as removal of dead or dangerous trees and water run-off damage control. We are working hard to ensure we utilize available grants and maximize the skills and knowledge of those on council along with our CAO. I feel that, as a small summer village, it is important to listen to and balance the needs of all residents and the local or regional needs that also benefit South Baptiste. We all want the best experience we can during the times we are here, whether as full-time residents or seasonal or part-time. This means we need to compromise and collaborate with other regional summer villages, the county and town of Athabasca to accomplish joint goals. It also may mean that we can’t always, immediately satisfy everyone’s needs and desires all at once, or that sometimes events or circumstances are beyond the control of our “small, but mighty” council. We also need to ensure that we are managing our financial resources prudently so we can maintain what we have without needing to raise taxes for residents. I believe I have contributed positively to the Summer Village of South Baptiste in the past number of years so I hope you will support me so I can continue in this role for the next 4 years.