**Resort Village of Cochin**

**Council Comments: 2021 – 3**

**March 10, 2021**

**Jackfish Lake Shoreline Ice Damage**

There cannot be one person who learns of this “once-in-a-lifetime” catastrophe that does not empathise with our lakefront neighbours and only hope for the best for them.

Residents experiencing this mess must obtain a permit from the Water Security Agency, (“WSA”), and a Development Permit from the Village before proceeding with restoration. Both processes generally are time consuming and time is not an available luxury.

Early on, Council decided that if the WSA issues a permit to pull ice back from the shore, the Village Development Permit would automatically be issued. This efficient process only contemplated pulling ice back from the shore and did not authorize “earth work” or other efforts to effect remediation.

Very shortly thereafter, it became notoriously apparent that any remediation steps could only be undertaken while the ice on Jackfish Lake can “handle” the weight of construction equipment and if one waits too long, the challenges of trying to fix the damage would be next to insurmountable. As a result, Council has decided that if WSA issues a permit to do remedial earth work before the ice goes out the Village will automatically issue a Development Permit covering the same work within the same time limit.

A cautionary note: All that is referred to above only relates to ice relocation and earth work. All other remediation efforts will be subject to the normal process of applying for a Village Development Permit. For example, rebuilding decks or repair of buildings must comply with current zoning bylaw requirements. Detailed information is available from the Village office.

**Provincial Disaster Assistance Program (PDAP)**

Council has submitted an application to have the Village designated an eligible assistance area under PDAP. If the application is approved, it will be up to each individual ratepayer, whose property sustained damage from the ice intrusion, to submit their own claim. Council will keep everyone in the loop with respect to this application.

**Employees**

With the departure of our former Assistant Administrator, Council has been searching for an Office Assistant.

Claude Paquette will be returning to our outside staff for the summer, on a part-time basis.

Russ Kennon is returning to the Village for the summer and has been hired as a full-time seasonal employee.

Shane Murphy will be returning as our summer student for the third year.

**We Regret Having to Report That ….**

There are a few people who come to the office who do not behave reasonably. They are frequently belligerent. They often use vulgar language. They frequently vociferously make unreasonable demands for service. Similar behavior is occurring on phone calls to the Village office.

Harassment and verbal abuse of our employees will not be tolerated. Our employees treat all persons with courtesy and respect. In addition, our employees provide polite and efficient service to all who attend at the Village office or on the phone.

To address these troublesome concerns, Council will be installing audio-video surveillance equipment at the reception wicket as well as a recording device on the Village phone. Should this type of behavior be recorded, the offenders will be told that they are no longer permitted to come to the Village office (in the case of an in-person event) or their phone number will be blocked (in the case of a telephone event). If an offending party promises to treat our staff with courtesy and respect in the future, the office attendance ban will be suspended and the phone block will be removed unless the offender repeats the same behavior.

In addition, if someone behaves in this unacceptable manner in a phone call, our office employees are authorized to hang up on the caller.

Amber has been the only person in the office for the last month or so and she has provided admirable service and Council’s appreciation goes out to her.

**Patience is a Virtue**

When a reasonable person phones the Village office and the call is answered by a pre-recorded message, they leave a message and wait for a call back.

All too often, there are callers who feel their call is so urgent that their call must be answered immediately, notwithstanding that no staff person is available to take the call. All too often, such persons do not leave a message but hang up and phone back a minute or two later and if the pre-recorded message is activated, they do not leave a message but hang up and phone back a minute or two later and they repeat this process until the phone is answered by a live person.

Apart from the ringing of the phone being annoying to our employees who are trying to complete the activity in which they are engaged, it is distracting and prone to extending the time to complete the task at hand.

Council’s instruction to our office employees is that phone messages are to be responded to before new calls are answered. Put another way, he/she who fails to leave a message falls to the bottom of the list.

**Beware**

Evil chickens lay deviled eggs.