



Sinclair / Finlayson Ward Township of Lake of Bays Councillor Rick Brooks

BRCA AGM Report : June 26, 2021

For well over a year now, we have been saying “Covid – 19 still has us in its grip”, so whether you are one of the many now who have received your 1st and 2nd ‘jab’ or not, please do not let your guards down, stay vigilant out in public, continue to wear your masks and keep your social circles small.

Please continue to support our relatives and friends working as frontline staff in the healthcare systems, elder care and essential service industries throughout Muskoka....they don’t wear capes, but they truly are our heroes. We also need to remember those businesses, in Huntsville as well as Lake of Bays, where we have over 150...they need to keep the doors open and lights on as best they can so, please consider supporting them when ever you can.

‘Muskoka on the Rocks’...‘Tristan’s’ food truck at Tally Ho...Din’s at Lake of Bays Garden Centre, ‘Erika’s’...‘Henrietta’s’...and as I have shared recently, ‘Family Place & Pizza’, where for Wednesday and Saturday you can pre-order and it’s delivered for you right to US....how cool is that.

Some of you may have heard me speak on a few of these items already, some not so much as access to your cottages may have been restricted and one thing I’d like to ensure is that when e blast come out to the selected folks who have asked to be informed, it is expected that the associations do share that information with all of the membership, our world here is remote and communication is imperative...so here goes...

1) VOYENT ALERT!

Register for FREE! The District of Muskoka and its major players have collaborated to create a community alerting service. Its intention is to keep you informed during critical incidents such as fire, and/or floods. You can opt in or out at any time.

Please visit: www.muskoka.on.ca/alertmuskoka or better still, check out the **attached flyer**.

2) Updated Noise By-Law

Those who weren’t aware, as Council we approved the new by-law April 6/21. Upon review you will see many changes, some deletions, and where they were deleted that quite often noted that this issue has subsequently been addressed in a subject specific by-law.

Main issues for the public were the need to regulate better the use of fireworks, standardizing times of day when ‘noise’ was deemed inappropriate, construction equipment noise including generators with exemptions for off-grid locations and no-power occurrences where deemed an essential service. We also looked at ill-egal burning, off-leash dogs, ORV’s and dirt bikes.

All of which will lend itself to more frequent patrolling of staff and the OPP. **(Flyer Attached)**

3) Short Term Rentals (STR By-Law)

Staff were sensitive to this and over the past, nearly two years, resident consultation has been exchanged on this topic, so plenty of opportunities were there for folks to speak their mind.

Phase 1: A comprehensive community engagement process took place from January 14th to March 20th of 2020. The results from this public feedback showed significant support for the regulation of STRs. After being presented to Council in August 2020, Council directed staff to investigate options for STR regulation and to conduct additional public consultation.

Phase 2: Input on how best to regulate STRs was collected using a survey which was open from September 25th to November 9th. The data was analyzed and the findings were presented to Council in a staff report.

This brings us to Council, April 6, 2021:

I wish to be clear, directions were established, STR By-law and action items are going to follow, however nothing is in place at this point and no efforts will be made to deter any legal use of homes and/or cottages at this time either.

The direction of Council was for staff by resolution to develop an **STR Licensing Program** as well as amendments to the Development Permit By-law and Comprehensive Zoning By-law as outlined in the staff report [Short-term Rentals Regulation – Implementation of Options\(External link\)](#). The results of these continuing actions will be brought to Council in late Summer 2021, so concerned residents are encouraged to stay engaged.

4) Roads / Public Works

Staff have been doing the best they can given some of the continuing restrictions imposed due to Covid-19 and add to that our very unpredictable spring. The roads didn't all dry up at the same time so some would suggest why are we not grading and then again some would say how come the sand is not swept. The correct answer is a non-answer though as it all depends on the weather to cooperate.

Sweeping: The 2021 Sweeping program was completed here in the north first, as it is every other year.

Grading: Grading operations normally starts in May towards the end of half loads, which this year was May 20th. If its too wet, grading will be delayed. To be clear for all, the start time is determined using several factors; Roads dry enough to support the weight of the grader and grading operations; snow gone & ditches drained; frost completely out, no standing water and the forecast of dry weather, as rain makes the road too wet to properly grade.

There is always the issue of potholes and everyone is a road engineer, but really, the filling of potholes with gravel is only a temporary fix. Traffic will "kick out" the material as it cannot pack in the same as when graded, causing the same potholes to come back. Rain or frost melt often causes the same potholes to come back. Staff have shared that they are monitoring the roads closely and hopefully mother nature will continue to work with us and we will be able to get a head start on our grading operations before our usual start times. They cannot guarantee anything at this time as our road network currently ranges from partially frozen to extremely

wet. As it happens, this spring grading was done the week of May 11th and then we had a month of no rain, which was unexpected challenging staff because as normal, the calcium for the gravel roads was scheduled for the week of June 21st so until then it seemed like a dust bowl. The other issue was in that time the roads became washboard in some areas and so we called out the grader yet again to alleviate those issues BEFORE the calcium went down.

5) Township Communications: The Township office phone system has now been upgraded. To contact any extension, use the same numbers as before except ADD a "1" in front.

6) Parks & Playgrounds: As the weather warms and the playgrounds and parks around LOB are reopening in concert with provincial regulations, staff is providing some relief. Currently Dwight, Dorset and Baysville all have accessible washroom facilities, however more portable toilets have been brought in to key areas and I am pleased to say that at the Hillside Beach and South Portage dock we now have fully accessible portable toilets.

7) The Friends of the Muskoka Watershed: FMWC and their ASHMuskoka ash collection program is back again from a covid hiatus effective today, Saturday, June 26th, watch for their website to announce when you can participate again. www.ashmuskoka@fotmw.org . I encourage our residents to continue supporting the program by dropping off their ash at Rosewarne Transfer Station, Bracebridge.

8) Councillor Communication: I am Continuing to maintain contact with residents throughout the Ward and beyond, hopefully you have noticed the clarity with which we are able to see the road signs along Limberlost, that took a team effort to get it done. Kudos to DC Lacroix and Mayor Glover who were constantly in touch with me asking, "is it done yet", where I would have to say, "no". After 5 separate trips the District got it done.

I am currently working on concerns with residents at West Oxbow (speaking of which, STN 50...it is now repainted and cleaned up. I helped to facilitate that but all the credit should go to Murray Arnold with help from John Patterson doing the prep work) as well as roads issues on Walker's Glenn and Walker Lake. DC Peppard and I are working with a group wishing to engage us at North Tasso Lake, more on that as available as well as addressing some concerns at the transfer station.

Of interest to some of our members, I am working in concert with the land owners and John Patterson for a proposal of an enclosure for the mailboxes at Brooks Lake Road which would incorporate a community message board as well. If that interests you, please get in touch with me.

I will be attending the following other AGM events via zoom; **Oxbow Lake Assoc.** (July 3rd) and then **Walker-Pell** (July 21st) and if permitted, an actual face to face with **Walker's Glenn** (July 24th), as well as the **Tasso-Camp Assoc.** scheduled for Sept. 5th.

9) Sinclair Residents Committee Update:

It has been far too long since the group have been able to meet in person, and that truly is unfortunate. My wish is to be able to meet in person at Muskoka on the Rock's as we used to do, by September, so watch for that news. Until then, both DC Peppard and I are here and working for you. I will continue to provide e blasts when there are issues to share and welcome all to consider sitting in on our Council meetings and/or Planning Matter meetings as we continue to do those via ZOOM. All LOB meetings are posted well in advance and live streaming information is provided along with the agenda.

10) Brooks Lake Rd. Mailboxes: On an unrelated but somewhat related note, this is really only of interest to those who utilize the mailboxes at Brooks Lake Road.

I am giving you a heads up on the issue, which is the idea of an enclosure and community message board, singularly or together.

To give a 'coles notes' version, the lands the mailboxes are on is not the Township, nor the Billie Bear Corp. but actually a group of our residents, who after consultation have agreed that this could go ahead. I then floated the proposal with Canada post, Public Works and Building & By-Law and all were acceptable to our proposal of an enclosure over the boxes, but pushed back further off the travelled road even more and a community message board. More information on this is available for those who wish to contact me directly.

11) Contact Info: Again, as we remain respecting covid-19 protocols, Township staff are still mostly working from home, except for a few, the offices remain closed, except by appointment. I feel the need to reinforce the concerns of our staff over the excessive workload that continues to burden them this year. The Building& Bylaw as well as Planning Department in particular are dealing with unprecedented numbers of calls, applications and requests for inspections and are handling it admirably. They deserve our respect and patience as they get to everyone's needs. These continue to be difficult times and are handling it with professionalism. As always, I suggest to residents to go to the township website for updates.

For service, check the website www.lakeofbays.on.ca to get to the correct department and call (705) 635-2272 ... or <https://forms.lakeofbays.on.ca/Report-it>

That's it for now...

All the best,

Rick Brooks, Councillor

Sinclair / Finlayson Ward

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