District Council Highlights

Planning for Climate Change in Muskoka

Dr. Peter Sale, Past Chair of the Muskoka Watershed Council presented to Council to share a recent report on planning for climate change in Muskoka. His presentation highlighted local research that illustrates how Muskoka’s climate has changed and predicts what our mid-century climate would look like without taking action.

Full Presentation: https://muskoka.civicweb.net/filepro/documents/27577?preview=27580

In response to this research, the Muskoka Watershed Council has developed fifteen recommendations to address climate change in Muskoka. These recommendations are broken into four focus areas for action:

- Build understanding
- Mitigate environmental impacts
- Preparation of infrastructure for climate change
- Leadership to keep climate adaptation on track

The presentation concluded with a Call to Action for the District to convene a Climate Adaptation Steering Committee that could bring all affected parties together on an on-going basis to monitor climate change in Muskoka and help move these recommendations forward.

For more information visit: www.muskokawatershed.org

Muskoka Lake Water Quality Update

The District Municipality of Muskoka carries out a recreational water quality monitoring program with approximately 193 sample locations across Muskoka. The purpose of the program is to identify water quality trends by maintaining a long-term record of key water quality parameters, including water chemistry and nutrients, clarity, temperature, biological information, and land use. The annual report, containing an overview of the 2015 program and results, is available on the DMM website at http://www.muskoka.on.ca/en/live-and-play/Lake-System-Health.aspx.

Generally, the health of Muskoka’s lakes continues to be very good to excellent. Phosphorus concentrations in the 70 lakes sampled in 2015 continue to be stable. The shoreline land use surveys carried out on 5 lakes last surveyed between 2003-2005 indicate very little shoreline alteration has occurred, though there was a loss of between 5% - 20% natural cover in the 30 meter buffer area around each surveyed lake. On all lakes surveyed, the number of structures along the shoreline (including docks, boathouses, sheds, etc.) increased. Continued stewardship efforts from all levels of government will be required to ensure that Muskoka’s recreational water quality continues to be protected and, where possible, enhanced.

Note: The District Clerk’s Department maintains the official record for all District government proceedings. This publication is intended to identify highlights of Council and Committee meetings only.

www.muskoka.on.ca @districtmuskoka
District Drinking Water Achieves 100% Quality Ratings!

Muskoka’s drinking water plants received the highest possible inspection rating from the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change for 2015. A report to the Engineering and Public Works committee members in February highlighted that all nine drinking water systems in the District passed with a 100 per cent mark. This is an excellent achievement by District Water Operators considering the very strict measures in place. Read staff report PW-2-2016-10 for further details.

The Ministry rigorously inspects all municipal water systems annually focusing on the water source, treatment, and distribution components. The Ministry produces an inspection report for each water system and the 2015 reports for Muskoka can be viewed at: www.muskoka.on.ca/en/live-and-play/Water-and-Wastewater-Compliance-Reports.

Strict Guidelines Set for Animated Sign Exemptions

Council approved an amendment to the District Sign By-law 2015-66 in December 2015, giving the Engineering and Public Works (EPW) Committee the ability to grant permission by way of exemption for the installation of animated signs. At their February meeting, the EPW committee approved exemptions for three applicants - Lakeland Energy Ltd., Rotary Club of Bracebridge and McDonald’s Restaurants in Bracebridge and Gravenhurst.

District outlined very strict guidelines in granting the exemptions, including:

- Permitting only the use of text with the text being refreshed no more frequently than once every (3) three minutes (except where current time and/or current temperature is displayed—which may not be changed more frequently than every 15 seconds)
- Strictly prohibiting the animation of any image.
- Prescribing that all content changes must be achieved within one second and prohibiting transition effects (i.e. fade in/out, sliding, pixilation, etc.)
- Limiting daytime brightness and requiring signs to be turned off at 11:00 pm and not turned back on until 7:00am. (Staff to provide future recommendations on night time illumination levels)

See page 3 and pages 20-21 of Committee Minutes PW-2-2016 for full details of the exemption guidelines.

Road Closures And Load Restrictions

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Road</th>
<th>Road Closures - Dates and Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MR 13 (Southwood Rd)</td>
<td><strong>GRAVENHURST</strong>: Oct. 13, 2015 up to May 15, 2016 (Note: extended date) for replacement of Jevins Creek Bridge. The bridge is located 0.1km south of Muskoka Rd19</td>
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**SPRING LOAD RESTRICTIONS BEGAN MARCH 14, 2016**

Every spring, the District imposes a weight restriction on vehicles of 5 tonnes per axle to ensure protection of certain District roads. This restriction is in place from early March until the end of May as detailed in By-Law 2016-4. Interested parties are encouraged to make appropriate arrangements before the weight restrictions are in place. For restrictions on local Area Municipal roads or Ministry of Transportation highways, please contact the appropriate jurisdiction. See www.muskoka.on.ca/en/live-and-play/Road-Closures-
Responsible Commitment to Environment Principles in Road Salt Management

The District is responsible for winter maintenance operations to ensure public safety on its 630 kms of roads and 54 bridges across Muskoka. The District has a Salt Management Plan which is carried out by the Area Municipalities and Contractors on our behalf. This plan demonstrates our commitment to best environmental practices and will be updated in 2016.

A key strategy in place to reduce salt use is the application of a de-icing agent to the salt and or sand, a process known as pre-wetting. Pre-wetting helps the material to ‘stick’ to the surface of the road, which ultimately means more material on the road and less in the ditch. This method is more effective than applying dry salt or sand and results in the use of less material.

Other salt management strategies include:

- road patrols to closely monitor weather and road conditions
- use of advanced technology (including tables in trucks) to monitor application and equipment performance
- weather monitoring and forecasting
- route optimizations
- careful salt storage protocols

All of these strategies are in place to balance public safety with costs to the taxpayers and protection of our natural environment. For more information visit: www.muskoka.on.ca/en/live-and-play/Winter-Maintenance-Operations The District also partners with the Muskoka Watershed Council on research into the effect of road salt on Muskoka lake water systems. Unfortunately there are few alternatives to salt/sand that are as effective or affordable but the District will continue to explore and evaluate options.

Land Ambulance Transition Update

The District announced in March that it will officially transition to direct delivery of land ambulance services on September 4, 2016. Notice has been provided to the current external service provider Medavie EMS Ontario Ltd. (Medavie EMS), who has provided the service under contract with the District over the past seven years.

The change to direct delivery will have no impact on patient care services to the public.

In transitioning to direct delivery, Medavie EMS paramedics currently delivering ambulance services in Muskoka will join the District staff team. Updates on next steps will be provided as they are confirmed in the coming months. Recruitment has begun for the position of Chief of Paramedics Services & Emergency Planning.

Subscribe to receive updates and alerts by email: www.muskoka.on.ca/subscribe
Muskoka Community Health Hubs

Mobile Unit

MOBILE SCHEDULE IS SET!

Tuesdays: Port Sydney Fire Hall (387 S Mary Lake Road)
Alternating Wednesdays:
Severn Bridge Community Hall (1035 Southwood Road)
Vankoughnet Village Square (1198 Vankoughnet Road)
Thursdays: Ryde Community Co-op (1624 Barkway Road)
Fridays: 100 and 200 Oakwood Heights in Bracebridge (meeting the needs of Seniors living at Oakwood Heights)

Visit: www.muskokahealthlink.ca
Call To Book Appointments: (Toll-free) 1-866-545-0811

Who Can Use The Health Hubs In Muskoka?

If you do not have a family doctor/nurse practitioner, you can access the health hubs sites or mobile hub for:
- Care of minor illnesses or injuries
- Regular physicals, immunizations and cancer screenings
- Chronic disease care (e.g. diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, COPD, asthma, heart disease)
- Preventative health teaching

If you already have a family doctor/nurse practitioner* OR you are a seasonal visitor*, you can access the health hubs or mobile hub for:
- Care of minor illnesses (e.g. fever, cough, sore throat, bladder infection, diarrhea, etc.)
- Care of minor injuries (e.g. minor cuts, scrapes, insect bites, falls, strains, sprains, etc.)

*NOTE: IF ALREADY HAVE A DOCTOR OR NURSE PRACTITIONER: PLEASE CALL YOUR LOCAL DOCTOR/NP FIRST

Hospital Task Force Update

The Muskoka Algonquin Healthcare Task Force met in March to review a proposal for future delivery of acute (hospital) care made by the Towns of Bracebridge and Huntsville and to discuss other recent activities.

The Task Force noted that the Muskoka Health Link has been working on future planning for a Muskoka-wide integrated and sustainable health system, and acknowledged that plans for acute care need to be linked to broader system planning that is already underway.

The Task Force agreed to collaborate with the Muskoka Health Link’s Our Health Our Future group at their meeting on March 8, 2016 to discuss how to move forward collectively. It was noted that all stakeholders working together presents a great opportunity for a significant win.