

Wollaston deputy reeve resigns

By Jim Eadie

More evidence of disarray emerged at the Jan. 24 regular Wollaston Township council meeting. The resignation of Deputy Reeve Marilyn Brickles followed the day after the meeting.

"I took on this position because of my love for this community thinking I could offer some valuable input and make a difference," said Brickles in her resignation letter obtained by *Bancroft This Week*. "For people who truly know me I am a firm believer in following rules and guidelines, treating people with respect and always being honest. I have certainly been challenged over the past year and have truly lost my spirit."

In closing her letter Brickles wished the council her very best. "I can only hope that things will change and the energy and excitement that I experienced in my first year of council will emerge once again and bring peace and harmony back to this community."

"I have just had enough," Brickles told *Bancroft This Week*. "At this point I value my life and health more than this."

Wollaston council has had its share of conflicts this past year, such as mass resignations from the fire department, including the chief and deputy chief.

The Jan. 24 meeting again saw deeply divided and intense discussion, including participation from the floor on how to move forward with the Bear Ridge campground issues relating to compliance or non-compliance with development agreements. Also at issue is a controversial dock extension into Wollaston Lake. Discussion is hampered by legal action now underway by the municipality, the details of which cannot be discussed in public at present. Recently, there has been new push by several council members to suspend the legal action itself.

Reeve Graham Blair also agreed that a public meeting may help address getting information to the public about the Bear Ridge discussions, and allow questions from the public.

Karen Challinor, a local businesswoman spoke at the meeting, and urged council to do something.

"What is evolving has been rife with missteps and foot dragging," she said. "I urge you to have a dialogue where there are concessions. There is a wedge in this community...something needs to be done to turn it around. Start taking some steps toward turning it around. Keep it up, and we are headed on a very bad path."

"There is serious division on this council," Blair told the hushed room filled to capacity. "In my view, we do not need mediation between council and the fire department for example the conflict is between a part of this council and the mediation needs to start right here at this table."

Contacted several days later, Blair confirmed that with the assistance of the County of Hastings, he has made contact with a mediator "to give us a hand." This will be brought to council shortly.