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Allowances rate debate to return

By Sarah Sobanski

Hastings Highlands council is looking to reopen discussions on its increases to shore road allowance rates.

Mayor Vivian Bloom has filed notice for council to reconsider its increase of purchase prices for shore road allowances to $2,000 for the first 150 feet that passed Jan. 18. This could be discussed at council's next regular meeting Feb. 22.

Bloom originally voted to pass the increase in a split vote four to three in favour of the increase.

?I was told we did not have all the pertinent information,? said Bloom. ?[I] just want to be sure we have all the latest facts to make [a] proper decision. I was asked to do this while away, and as I could not do it from Toronto, decided to put notice that we might revisit.?

Hastings Highlands approved five shore road allowance sales at its regular meeting Feb. 9. Each application was filed before the increase and was approved at the previous rate of a $500 administration cost and $3 per foot ? previously there was no flat rate for the first 150 linear feet. The last increase in rates was in 2011 when the administration fee was increased. The rate of $3 per foot has remained the same since 2004. It was made $2.50 per foot shortly after amalgamation.

When the increase was passed, council was provided with comparison of shore road allowance rates by surrounding municipalities. Algonquin Highlands charges a $300 administration fee, $0.40 per square foot. Faraday charges a $250 administration fee and $4 per linear foot. Highlands East charges a $350 administration fee and $1,000 for the first 150 feet and $3 per additional foot. Madawaska Valley charges a $500 administration fee and $8 per linear foot. South Algonquin charges a $595 administration fee and $4 per linear foot.

This means that by comparison if the buyer was to buy 150 feet by 66 feet of road shore allowance across each municipality he or she would pay $3,960 in Algonquin Highlands, $600 in Faraday, $1,000 in Highlands East, $1,200 in Madawaska Valley, and $600 in South Algonquin. Originally, they would have paid $450 before the rate increase in Hastings Highlands; now the buyer pays $2,000.