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Boat launch shut down for now

By Jim Eadie

The following are brief reports of items discussed at the April 13 meeting of Bancroft council.

Bancroftians can't launch their boats on Clark Lake anymore ? at least not from municipal property.

?A letter we received last week was very symbolic of a lot of confusion,? Mayor Paul Jenkins said at Bancroft council's April 10 meeting. After a brief discussion, council unanimously approved a bylaw prohibiting boat launches from municipal property on the lake.

?We are not banning watercraft on Clark Lake,? he said. ?We would have to go to the federal government for that. We are limiting access to what is an unofficial boat launch on the lake.?

In making the motion to pass the bylaw, Councillor Mary Kavanaugh noted that the introduction of invasive species, particularly zebra mussel, must be avoided as a first step.

?Clark Lake is our water source,? she said. ?To deter boats that have been fishing in other lakes, we also require signage and education.?

Council's infrastructure committee chair Councillor Wayne Wiggins said his committee is tasked with preparing a detailed plan for changes to the launch site, including signage. Wiggins noted they'd consider details on a barrier or gate that can be opened for emergency services access.

Municipal planning co-ordinator Robin Tait told council that the bylaw would be enforced by the municipality's bylaw enforcement officer. Infractions of the bylaw carry substantial fines.

Council requests to be notified about development in Bird's Creek

During her monthly report to council, CAO Hazel Lambe noted that on March 21 Hastings Highlands provided a concept plan approval for the Bird's Creek Forest Subdivision.

Her report read: ?The plan provides for 18 residential lots and eight rural industrial lots with a total net developmental lot area of 54.6 ha. The layout offers some flexibility for small industrial lots to be consolidated into larger lots, or larger industrial lots to be subdivided further, so that the concept plan can be responsive to the needs of future industrial development.?

?This is development in close proximity to our border,? she said. ?We should be aware if it fits with the new provincial policy statement on development and know the impact on our municipality. The Town of Bancroft has an interest.?

Lambe noted that the province has stated that, going forward, growth should happen in established areas by infilling and making the most of expensive services such as water and sewer that are already available.

?Through the process, development must be directed toward urban areas,? she said. ?We are the rural urban hub? We provide a lot of services that are a high cost to maintain, driving our taxes up. There have already been attempts made to push urban boundaries in the county, and the province has kicked them all back.?

Lambe has already contacted the County of Hastings planning department. She learned that Hastings Highlands has not yet submitted any planning application affecting the lands in the Bird's Creek concept planning area.

Council agreed with a motion to notify Hastings Highlands that Bancroft officially requests notification of any application of such development.

?The wellbeing of the Town of Bancroft relies heavily on the provincial policy statement to protect it against the application of poor land use planning that would have a negative effect on the town's future,? the report said.

?It is normal practice in other places to notify neighbouring municipalities of development plans near their borders,? said Lambe.

Response to fire shows strength of community

Ruth and Scott Kelusky attended council to make a delegation expressing their thanks for and pride in the municipality's response to the fatal fire at the R J Brooks Living Centre on March 15. Residents were evacuated to the Bancroft Bible Chapel.

?There was an immediate response by fire chief Pat Hoover and his crews, public works, police, paramedics, County of Hastings, social services ? without confusion,? said Scott Kelusky. ?They all came together in a time of great need with high professionalism.?

?There were so many volunteers came to the church to help,? Ruth Kelusky added. ?People cooked breakfast, came to visit with the seniors, council members came to the church, helped co-ordinate finding family and places to go ? some had no family. We got calls on the phone offering help and leaving their number. Some people offered bed space in their homes. There is a very giving core in this community ? a really good heart here ? people really pull together.?

?It shows how strong the community is,? said Scott Kelusky. ?People have different ideas and opinions, but in a crisis, people jump together. That is the sign of a strong community.?

Jenkins thanked the couple, as well as the Bancroft Bible Chapel elders for their hard work.

Love locks tradition coming to Bancroft

Bancroft is soon set to be a destination place for sweethearts.

Council has approved a recommendation from the community development committee that a ?Locks of Love? initiative be put in place on the Millennium Park bridge by May 1.

?A chain will be placed on the bridge and young couples lock their love by placing a lock on the walking bridge,? said Wiggins. ?The cost is covered by two sponsors backing this ? it is all donated except installation.?

According to Wikipedia, Love Lock locations have become a popular destination for lovers to place a padlock on a public fixture, usually a bridge, fence or gate to symbolize their love. In some areas of the world these locations are so popular that locks had to be removed as their sheer weight compromised the bridge's structure.

Wiggins hopes this attraction will bring new people to town in the future.