

Bancroft leadership on goals for 2016

Last year saw many new faces on council, all trying to get up to speed. Change also occurred at the federal level, with a new government with new promises.

We were able to take action on a number of fronts, notably the development of a new Community Safety and Well Being plan.

We were also able to replace our street lights with energy-saving LED lighting, which will save us money in future.

Thanks to a great group of volunteers, there was a lot of progress on the York River boardwalk. Also, it felt gratifying to dedicate our Station Street bridge to Bancroft's first police officer, Thomas Kehoe.

Finally, we learned a lot from the 'First Impressions' visit of the Deep River delegation, and we're already at work on their recommendations.

Although it's a new year, we have to keep working on an old problem, getting our debt load down.

We also have to finish our study of the water and sewer system difficulties, and come up with solutions.

We need to upgrade the town office heating system, and in general, make more efficient use of our township buildings.

If the funding comes through, we also need to construct a new water main along Snow Road, from the plant to Hastings Street.

I remain excited about the proposed Earth Sciences Centre, which can help our economic development so much.

I look forward to the completion of the feasibility study and business case, so we can start to make it happen.

I expect us to pursue funding to make progress on the 'connecting link' and the North Sewer. I also hope to see better Internet connectivity.

In 2016, we will look for more opportunities to share services with other municipalities, and to work with our neighbours in urging action to benefit small-town Ontario on the part of the provincial and federal governments.

After all, not everyone lives in the GTA or other large cities.

Unfortunately, like other smaller municipalities, we are faced with a shrinking financial resource base, just as the need to upgrade infrastructure and services grows.

We must be creative in seeking growth, while husbanding our finances, and getting the most for each dollar we spend. Therefore, my big hope for 2016 is that we are again equal to this task.

- Bernice Jenkins

Bancroft deputy mayor's hopes for 2016

In 2016, our main goal has to be to generate more assessment, leading to more municipal revenue without an increase in the tax rate. That means growth - new residents and new businesses. Growth also means that we can reduce the 'tax gap' with neighbouring townships.

In the years ahead, we need to attract more 'junior seniors' - people 55 to 70 who have retired from one career, but remain active, and quite possibly interested in a new endeavour.

To encourage such people, in 2016 we need to make sure that all of Bancroft has access to true high-speed Internet. Our business owners need to be able to work at the same speed as people in the big cities.

In 2016, we also need to find a new location for our public works operation, so we aren't hit by crippling rental increases. We also need a solution to our sewer deficit.

An important consideration in deciding where to live, especially for those who have just retired, is the quality of life in a community. So we need to look at our recreational facilities, such as our trails network, and the facilities available in our parks. Here I applaud the efforts of groups like Bancroft Community Transit, who are doing so much with Riverside Park.

Finally, we need to look at every potential revenue source which might be available in 2016; there can be no 'sacred cows.'

- Paul (no relation?) Jenkins