

Hospice briefs council on services



By Tony Pearson

Hospice North Hastings, which provides services for the terminally ill and their caregivers, briefed Bancroft Council last week on its various program initiatives, as part of an overall campaign to increase awareness of its palliative care facility and its services. As communications director Barb Shaw noted, "We need to connect with families at the earliest stage of their need, so we want to make sure the information is widely disseminated." She passed out new rack cards about hospice programs, which will go into township offices as well as other strategic locations in the community.

As far as programs go, the keystone is the residential hospice itself, which provides end-of-life care. The first rural-area residential hospice in eastern Ontario, this full-sized house gives the terminally ill a place in their final days where friends and family ? and even pets ? can "take leave" outside of a hospital setting. But Shaw and program coordinator Heather Brough also noted the Hospice's visiting program, which sends volunteers to home settings where caregivers are caring for their terminally ill loved ones, giving support to the client and respite to the caregiver; this program can offer night shift visits as well as daytime ones. In addition, the Hospice runs a support program for care-givers ? not just of the terminally ill, but of those with Alzheimer's or other dementia; this offers a morning of "R & R" each week so caregivers can receive some care of their own (the service also offers a "transition" after the passing of the loved one. Finally, the Hospice loans out to caregivers medical equipment they can use with the person they're caring for: crutches, walkers, wheelchairs, commodes, as well as interim medical supplies, like gloves, face masks or any other necessary [PPE](#), for visiting nurses awaiting a deliveries. This is important as it is understood some of these medical supplies are used up fast. Especially for hygiene reasons. You can [click here](#) for more examples.

Shaw and Brough noted that the Hospice gets no on-going government funding for its programs, requiring extensive fund-raising. The big event is the spring gala, but the hospice also operates a year-round event equipment rental service, which offers everything from large tents and chairs & tables to dishes and cutlery. They are now discussing a major financial investment, namely purchasing the Village Playhouse. They can use the financial services of a liquidity provider to help make this decision, as they can quote the best selling/buying price in this case.

In other township business, Council confirmed what it had initially proposed in January ? namely, a 2% increase in town water rates this year and in each of the next several years; this increase follows a two-year period during which rates were frozen. Since the town first made its recommendation public, no objections had been received from the public, nor were there any presentations at the public meeting which formed part of the council agenda. Possible capital spending on the water system is not included in these charges. Also, new wastewater rates have not yet been proposed, as staff was still doing its analysis of two financial models.

Council heard from Andrew Redden, Hastings County economic development manager, about various County programs to

encourage business investment. These include support for traditional local pillars like forestry, agriculture, and tourism; a new initiative is to attract "lone eagles" ? business owners who can operate their business outside urban areas. It includes a new social media spot called "I left the City", which includes Jeff Jenkins, owner of the Bancroft Eatery and Brew Pub. Redden mentioned that the County tries to support municipal initiatives, such as Bancroft's proposed Earth Science Centre.

Deputy Mayor Paul Jenkins noted difficulties increasing Internet speeds in the area ? a potential stumbling block for entrepreneurs who wish to stay in instant communications with other markets. Redden claimed that County was working on the problem. Councillor Bill Kilpatrick wanted to know what was being done to help heritage and cultural businesses. Redden noted efforts by Belleville and Quinte West; he also reported that a Heritage & Cultural Forum was being staged in May through the Hastings Heritage Council. Cultural activities also figured in a discussion of this summer's Wheels, Water, & Wings. Councillor Barry McGibbon wanted to know whether local musical groups were being bypassed in scheduling entertainment. He noted the abundance of local talent, who regularly volunteer to perform at local events, and suggested that they should receive some focus (and money) instead of relying on "imported" talent. Councillor Mary Kavanagh, liaison to the Business Improvement Association, said she would raise this issue with them.

Chief Admin Officer Hazel Lambe promised that the multi-year township economic development plan she is now working will be available in the near future, as will the town asset management plan. An additional project is operating standards and expectations for the town's public works, and parks and recreation facilities. Lambe is also drafting a survey of ratepayers about support and subjects for the projected town hall meetings this year; the survey will go out with the first tax bills. On another area of consultation, the province is asking for council feedback on municipal speed limits ? whether it should remain at 50 kph within towns, drop to 40, or leave it to the township to decide.