

Limerick looks at proposed AMPS system

By Mike Riley

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Limerick Township council discussed adopting an Administrative Monetary Penalty System at their meeting on April 20. The proposal and bylaw were brought forward by bylaw enforcement officer Cindy Fuerth. After talking about some possible revisions to the proposed bylaw, with regard to parking infractions especially, council asked that Fuerth and staff bring the bylaw back with revisions for consideration at the May meeting, which Victoria Tisdale, the clerk and treasurer, confirmed they would be doing.

Mayor Carl Stefanski introduced Fuerth's bylaw report to council at their April 20 meeting. Fuerth said that she'd been working on the AMPS proposal as they could see in her report.

‘There's going to be more to go with it but it's a lot to bombard all of you with. So that's fairly extensive,’ she says.

Council had a discussion about the facets of the proposed bylaw Fuerth had presented them with, especially with regard to parking issues at places like Steenburg Lake and other places within the township where people were parking where they weren't supposed to and how this proposed bylaw could help to remedy this problem.

In the end, council decided to leave it with staff to implement some revisions on the bylaw and return with it to the next meeting on May 16.

The AMPS bylaw provides a way for municipalities like Limerick to deal with parking and other bylaw infractions within the township, pursuant to section 434.1(1) of the Municipal Act S.O. 2001. If an infraction occurs, a warning is issued, and a penalty notice will be issued with a subsequent infraction. The person will have 15 days to request a review by a screening officer or pay the fine. If not satisfied by the decision of the screening officer, the person can request a hearing and have the penalty reviewed by a hearing officer. The decision of the hearing officer is final.

After 15 days, if a penalty is ignored, additional administrative fees will be charged. For parking penalties, after 30 days, unpaid notices will be sent to Service Ontario/Ministry of Transportation, which will result in the refusal of new vehicle plates and the renewal of existing plates being issued until the penalty is paid. For all other infractions, after a month any unpaid notices will be forwarded to the municipal treasurer and will be added to the resident's taxes.

The AMPS bylaw's schedule A sets out fines for a myriad of bylaws regarding regulating noise and use of fireworks, regulating parking, licencing and regulating trailers and tents, regulating the erection of signs, billboards, posters and other advertising devices, and prohibiting or regulating the littering of garbage, refuse and debris within the township. The fines range from \$15 for an offence like parking facing the wrong direction to \$1,000 for an offence like setting off fireworks during a fire ban or extreme conditions.

Tisdale told Bancroft This Week on May 2 that the AMPS bylaw, once passed will allow Limerick to collect fees and fines for breaches of specific bylaws rather than going through the provincial court system.

‘I want to clarify that this is not to be used as a revenue generating source but rather the hope that it will be for preventative measures. There are other municipalities in North Hastings that also have this in place. I have brought this to two council meetings already and will be bringing it back to the May meeting,’ she says. ‘As always, we are happy to answer any questions regarding this bylaw at the meeting, where [Cindy Fuerth] and all of council are present to address any questions, during question period for the public.’