

Ratepayers Meeting Update

Approximately 50 people came out to the Buckhorn and Area Ratepayers Association meeting Tuesday night at the Buckhorn Community Centre.

Chair Janet Clarkson opened the meeting and reported that the association has donated \$500 to Community Care. She read a thank you letter from Lynda McKerr, the Harvey Development Coordinator, who wrote that the gift helped them provide services to 284 clients.

The letter said that in the last year Community Care delivered 1,101 meals, drove individuals 734 times, and made 4,675 support phone calls and visits. This was all done by the 67 volunteers and two staff who provide these services in the Buckhorn area.

Association members also voted to donate \$1,000 to a project to upgrade the Buckhorn ball diamond to make it safer for young players. Organizers (who also hope to establish a local little league team) are hoping to raise \$10,000 for this project.

Janet also announced that Marlys Kerkman will be taking over as chair of the association in January, 2018.

MPAC

The first speaker of the night was Nathan Martin, an Account Manager for the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC). Nathan told the audience that provincial rules specify that assessors must look at the value of the 5.5 million properties in Ontario every four years.

Properties were last assessed in January 2016, and the next assessment will be in January 2020. The main factor in determining an assessment, Nathan said, is desirability.

There are five factors that determine 85 per cent of the assessment, he said, including:

- **Age of the building**
- **Location (particular waterfront)**
- **Lot dimensions**
- **Quality of construction**
- **Square footage**

Nathan said property owners should look at their assessment and determine if they could have sold their property for the assessed value on January 1, 2016 AS OF THAT DATE. If that value is too high or too low, owners can request a reconsideration of that assessment. Approximately 85 per cent of these reconsideration requests result in no change,

But he cautioned that you need to do your homework before making a request.

“You might be right that your waterfront is weedy, but maybe we didn’t know you had added a garage, a dock or a bunkhouse—all these things will make your assessment increase so the amount of taxes you pay will also increase.” he said.

Nathan suggested that homeowners should visit aboutmyproperty.ca to see information on how their property was assessed, to compare their assessment to others in their community and to learn more about property values.

There are also a number of short informational videos on You Tube that will help individuals understand how their property was assessed.

Here are the addresses for those videos:

How MPAC Assesses Properties - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uikghy2Yz10&t=2s>

How your property tax is calculated - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xgGbLotF_QQ

The Request for Reconsideration Process - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EPGN-THof5Q>

Understanding Phase-In - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DI57TJpDcz0>

How MPAC assesses Farms - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rT0cbmkjRtQ>

How MPAC assesses Businesses - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2zsfPIIDThU>

Buckhorn Dam

The final speaker was Paul Ernsting, Generation Project Manager for Peterborough Utilities on the Buckhorn Dam proposal.

Paul said that this project came about when Parks Canada posted a notice saying that a number of new locations were available for waterpower development, including Buckhorn.

Peterborough Utilities assessed the project and determined that it was possible to build a 2.5 megawatt project on federal land at the current Buckhorn dam. The

typical amount of time a project takes from start to finish is generally five or six years, and Paul said he expects this project will be completed in later 2021 or early 2022.

The company is planning two open houses in Buckhorn to present their plan to the public in January and May, 2018. There will also be a 30 day comment period following the May public meeting.

Peterborough Utilities manager Eric Prevost was also at the meeting, and assured residents that the existence of the dam will not impact the water levels either above or below the dam as they have to stay within the limits set by Parks Canada.

Eric said these limits are in place to protect boat navigation through the Trent Severn Waterway System, which is the deciding factor on how TSW staff determine and maintain water levels.

The benefits of the dam to the local area include taxes paid to the Municipality of Trent Lakes and the economic boost to the local economy of the workers brought in to build the dam during the 12 to 18 month construction period.

The downside, he agreed, will definitely be the impact on traffic in the area during the construction process, particularly following the issues that resulted from the recent repairs to the Buckhorn Bridge.

Although Buckhorn residents will not see a direct reduction in their hydro bills as a result of this project, the end result is more stability to the electric grid and the better quality power provided by waterpower.