

Mayor Report
February 18, 2021

As restrictions imposed by Alberta Health Services continue in place, it is noted that all meetings attended in recent weeks were either via telephone or a video platform such as Zoom. I thank my Council colleagues for supporting my attendance via telephone.

Joint Lagoon Committee

Deputy Mayor Harney will have a more complete report as he is Chair of the Lagoon Committee as well as of the Steering Committee for the wastewater transmission line.

It is noted that there is no legislation prohibiting our communities from operating a lagoon and to potentially expand the current lagoon it is suggested we forward design plans to Alberta Environment and Parks.

Alberta Environment

Initiated by the Council of Lac Ste Anne County, a video meeting with the County, summer village of Lac Ste Anne East and Alberta Environment and Parks was held on February 9, 2021. The concern expressed by the County was potential environmental damage to lakes within their jurisdiction as a result of possible leeching of septic fields/septic holding tanks, and further, the lack of Provincial legislation to ensure that lake property owners hook up to a force main sewer system where available.

It was indicated by one attendee that Alberta Environment has little legislative authority to monitor lake quality or authorize the removal of invasive weeds.

In the case of the Summer Village of Sandy Beach there is no proposed force main sewage system and the proposed wastewater transmission line is a very different design altogether.

At this time, in accordance with a 1999 SV By-Law, properties in Sandy Beach are required to have a septic holding tank as well as a holding tank under their outdoor biffy. Where a septic field was previously permitted, under the 1999 By-Law such a field may be repaired once only and if it fails a second time it must be converted to a holding tank system.

Although there is no prohibition in this Summer Village, or indeed in Alberta, lake property owners are encouraged to not fertilize their lawns and not use phosphorous based soaps. Other helpful hints and practices can be found in various brochures regarding lake management and may be obtained in the SV office.

Regional Emergency Management Committee

This Committee met via Zoom on February 8, 2021.

The current Regional Director of Emergency Management has stepped down. The Committee ratified the Agency's recommendation that Jan Christiansen and Marlene Walsh, Director and Deputy Director, share the vacated position, including the currently contracted administrative position/duties.

The Chair of the Committee has also stepped down. Richard Martin was elected as Chair and Marge Hanssen as Vice Chair.

It was reported that in the most recent auditing of the Agency by Alberta Emergency Management Agency (AEMA) our regional agency was given high marks for the level of completed training by members, as well as for the preparedness plan.

It was noted that the Agency needs to develop more detail with respect to the recovery plan and how to get residents back in the community following an evacuation. Also it was suggested that a pet care plan be added.

The Committee approved a 2021 budget and the cost per SV member will remain the same as in the past two years. It was asked that for summer villages that received MOST grant monies to consider allocating the sum of \$250.00 to the Committee/Agency for additional costs incurred as a result of the pandemic.

Cabin Fever

I spent three long winters in the Yukon Territory, where for months you remained inside in the cold and dark. We are not past a full year of the pandemic where many of us have not visited family members or been visited by them and have not visited inside a neighbour or friend's house, and vice versa.

This social isolation coupled with job/income loss and fears of contracting Covid-19 result in increased stress, anxiety and depression and may lead to unhealthy practices, such as increased alcohol consumption.

There are services available at no cost and confidential sessions via a secure telephone or internet platform are available. The Alberta Health Services website also offers useful tips on maintaining mental and emotional health. I urge anyone with concerns about surviving the pandemic to reach out to one of these services.

Respectfully submitted

Gordon Drybrough, Mayor