

Gravenhurst Ward Two - Spring 2021 Update

March 29, 2021

From: Jo Morphy, Town of Gravenhurst, Ward Two Councillor

Good day everyone and isn't it wonderful that the snow is melting and vaccines are underway. It is also pothole season so if you need to report that your road needs some work, go to www.gravenhurst.ca/reportit. A page will pop up listing the various areas of concern (animal control, roads, parks, facilities, invasive species) that gives you a quick way to identify your concerns!

Passenger Rail Travel:



“Miller says that \$5 million is being earmarked for planning and design work for Ontario Northland to bring passenger rail back to central and northern Ontario.”

It is exciting to think that we may have a chance to get rail back. I have twice now made a presentation to Minister Mulroney about the need to bring back the train. A lot of my calls come from folks who want to get back and forth from Toronto quickly, comfortably and cost-effectively but do not enjoy the drive up and down the busy 400. Fingers crossed!

Ellexicon and Hydro One Seasonal Rates:

I am being questioned on the recent announcement by Hydro One that they will be eliminating their seasonal rate. Here is a bit of the article below:

“The Ontario Energy Board (OEB) has determined that Hydro One Networks’ Seasonal Rate Class will be eliminated. Each existing Seasonal customer will be moved to one of Hydro One Networks’ other three residential rate classes. As FOCA has communicated in the past, with this change almost 80,000 low-use customers will see their monthly bills increase by \$50+/month.”

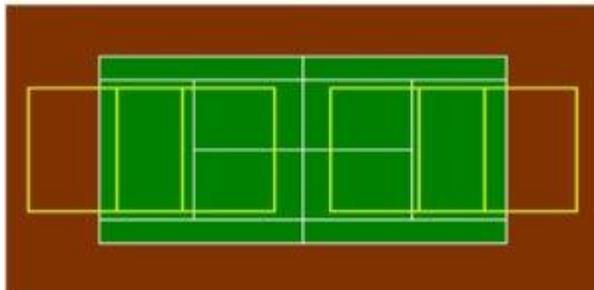
As many of us are Elexicon customers, with the help of Mayor Paul Kelly, I was able to get an update from Elexicon to see if they were following suit. Here is the answer I received:

“I’m told the elimination of the seasonal rate class only affects Hydro One customers. Elexicon Energy will continue to have a seasonal rate class for the foreseeable future. Our next opportunity to re-evaluate this class would be in our next rebasing, which may not be until 2029.”

Corporate Communications, Elexicon

Outdoor Pickle Ball Courts:

This is a growing and popular sport. The residents I have spoken with want the ability to play outside. As decided by Council back in October, one tennis court at Muskoka Bay Park will be converted into two Pickleball Courts. This is hopefully a temporary measure until we can find the right spot to build a dedicated set of courts for our pickle ballers. This is roughly how the conversion takes place:



New Muskoka Geo Hub Tool:

I have not spent a lot of time on this website, but it sure helps when someone calls and wants to discuss their property. You can enter the address, get air photos, water quality information, flood mapping, zoning ... I could go on and on about the many features available on the website. If you would like to play around with it, here is the website: www.map.muskoka.on.ca

MPAC Cancels 2022 Assessment:

“Yesterday, as part of the Ontario Government’s 2021 spring budget, the Minister of Finance announced the decision to once again postpone a province-wide property assessment update due to the pandemic. Property assessments for the 2022 property tax year will continue to be based on January 1, 2016 assessed values. In addition, the budget notes that the government will hold consultations on the timing and valuation date for the next assessment update and that outcomes will be communicated this fall.”

Muskoka Regional Centre:

Gravenhurst Council voted to sign a non-disclosure agreement with Infrastructure Ontario regarding the proposals being submitted to purchase the MRC. As you may recall, applications closed this past February 24th through CBRE. I wish I had more to report but the process is a slow one.

Hope is Growing - A Community in Blooms Initiative:

I love these kinds of community engagement ideas highlighted to us by Councillor Cairns:

“Across Canada and beyond, our goal is to see the land awash with gardens featuring yellow, the international colour of hope. Whether it is flowers, fruits, shrubs, or vegetables – just plant the seeds! From parks to playgrounds, front yards, back yards, balconies, baskets, boulevards, barrels, and planters, wherever there is an empty space to grow, there is room for a plant.

Throughout 2021, anyone and everyone, including municipalities, organizations, schools, churches, colleges and universities, clubs, businesses, and individuals can participate by planting a **Hope Garden**. Share photos of your gardens on CiB’s social media platforms with the hashtag **#hopeisgrowing**. Once you have entered your **Hope Garden**, you will become eligible for national and global recognition for your efforts! You will also receive a downloadable Hope Garden sign and information about hardy plants and growing tips for success.

For more information visit www.hopeisgrowing.ca or email communication@cib-cef.com

The Wharf Marina and Public Washrooms:

As per Director Andrew Stacey, “At this current time if we continue to be on target with our resourcing and the Pandemic restrictions allow, we are planning for the washrooms to be open including the marina. As in previous years we will be retaining a student work force to manage the gas pumps and have already started the methodical approach of opening the facility, and arranging for TSSA inspections, Covid barriers etc. with a targeted opening just after the May long weekend. As we discussed earlier in the week our slip rentals are almost entirely full, and we are already taking daily bookings into the summer.”

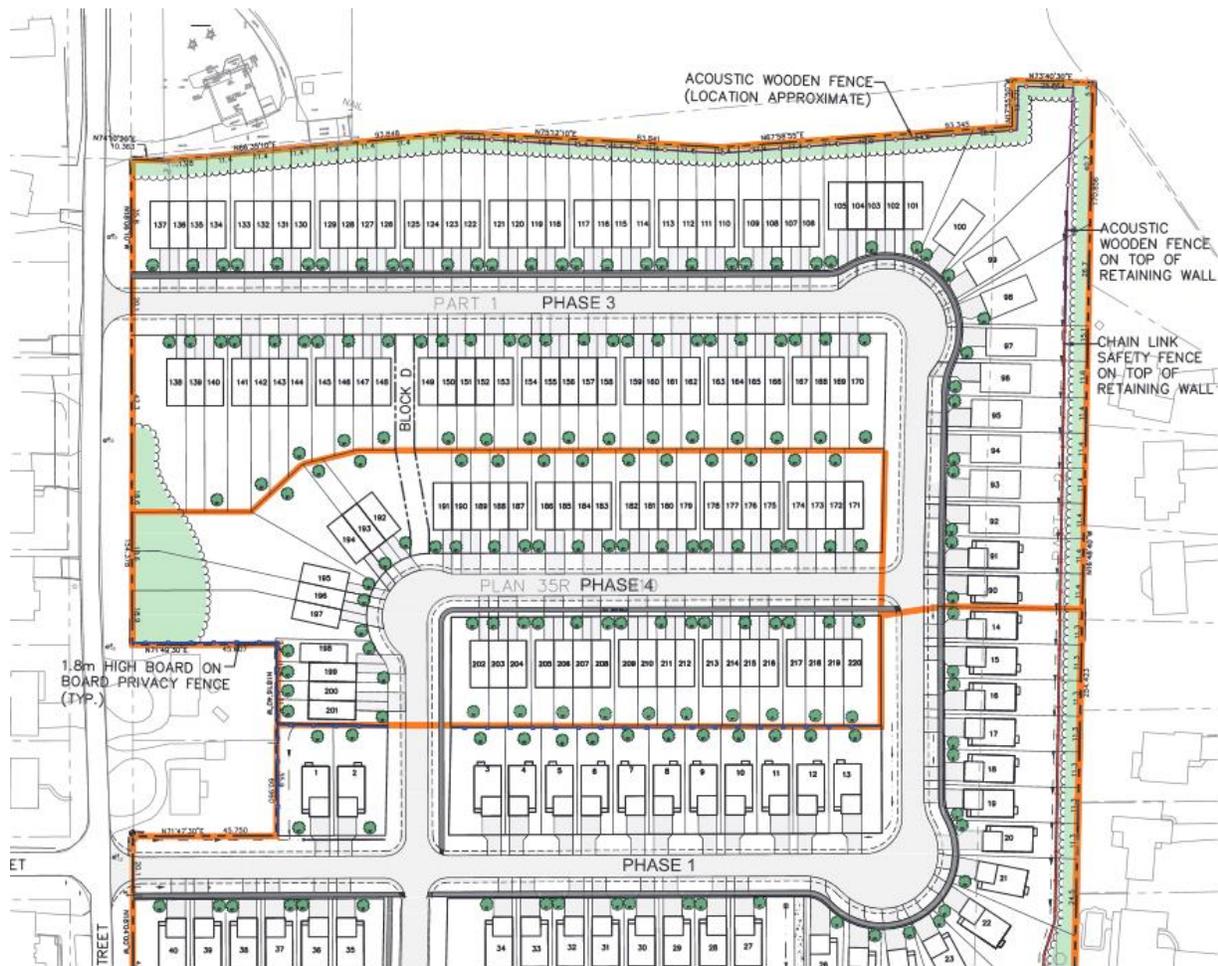
If you know of any high school, college or university students looking for a summer job, the Marina needs you! We can’t open if we can’t get staff! <https://www.gravenhurst.ca/en/town-hall/employment-opportunities.aspx>

The Search for a new Gravenhurst CAO and Fire Chief has begun

There is going to be significant change at the Town. Two members of the Senior Leadership team are leaving. The Fire Chief vacated his post this past January and has moved on to a role with the Ontario Fire Marshalls Office. We currently have an interim Chief until we can recruit a new one. The current CAO is leaving, and the search is on for a replacement. The search is being conducted by Waterhouse Executive Search and the job posting can also be found in the link above.

Phase 3 and 4 of the Loon Call Development:

Here we grow again! I heard on CFRB that Gravenhurst house prices are up 28%, one of the highest in the country. I cannot begin to tell you the stories on my own road of what cottages are selling for. Nonetheless, we have the SkyDev Development of rental apartments and a new hotel at the Canadian Tire/Sobeys lands still underway. We have the Muskoka Bay Creekside application to build 2 new condominium buildings and townhomes. Now we have phase 3 and 4 underway at Loon Call. They have changed their application from 80 singles to 120 townhomes in order to make them more affordable. Plans are below.



In closing, I would like to say it is still my great pleasure to be your local Councillor in Gravenhurst and I will once again end my update by saying:

We Live in a Special Place. Enjoy 2021