March 2019 - Council meetings took place on March 28 and 29th, 2019.

**Council Update**

***Council focus on Environmental issues now and in the future as guided by our Official Plan …***

1. **The Fight Against Phragmites**

Georgian Bay Forever (GBF) presented to Council their on-going efforts and plans to support community ‘Phragbusting’.  In conjunction with municipalities and cottager associations, the program involves the mapping of Phragmites locations by Ward, the training of local ‘Phrag Busters’, organized cuts and monitoring.

Through PaBIA, the Ward 3 community undertook its own mapping efforts several years ago, established scientific support with GBF and organized local response to Phragmites infestation. Seven locations were cut last year including Pointe au Baril Station.

We are pleased that Council has included financial support in its Budget for on-going GBF support of this community support initiative. In particular, your Ward 3 Councillors are focused on practical measures to support the partnership of community and municipal government in the fight against Phragmites. This is critical to prevent Phragmites from gaining critical mass in our area.

However, the fight against Phragmites is Ontario-wide as it is moving along highway transportation routes throughout the Province. Council has arranged for the Minister of Transportation and staff to visit the TOA this fall to see first-hand the impact of Phragmites on roads and highways and encourage the Ministry to commit to eradication measures and best practices to stop the spread of Phragmites.

**2. Micro-Plastics Diversion Pilot Project**

It is now fact that micro-plastics and micro-fibres are measurable in the Great Lakes including Georgian Bay. It can be found in our drinking water and in the wildlife around us. The primary source of micro-fibres is laundry machines. It is noteworthy that a single synthetics-heavy load of laundry can send as many as 700,000 particles into our water and slip through water treatment plants and our cottage sewage systems.

The GBF has established a two-year, community pilot project with the Town of Parry Sound. Project ‘Divert and Capture’ will add filters to over 100 individual home washing machines and monitor the impact on effluent water at the water treatment facility. Requests for volunteer household participation are open and more households are required to begin the trial.

Should you be interested to add a filter to your laundry machine, please contact GBF and the filter being utilized is Wexco’s 160 Filtrol.

<https://georgianbayforever.org/microplastics-impacts/filter-for-microfibers/>

**3. Community Action Day Plastic Removal from Water & Shorelines Action Plan**

The TOA Environment Committee is developing a proposal for a community action day this summer involving local associations and volunteers to pick-up plastics from our waters and shorelines. Your Ward 3 Councillors identified dock foam on our shores as a key part of plastic or artificial waste on our shore-lines. The GBF indicated enthusiastic support for the effort and initiative. More information and consultation will be available and initiated prior to the summer.

**4. Community Energy and Climate Protection Plan**

After consideration of the February Council Meeting presentation by the GBBR regarding potential financial support through the Federal Canadian Municipalities Partners for Climate Protection (PCP) program (described in our February Bay Notes Report), Council passed resolutions to become active participants in a Georgian Bay initiative to combat climate change. Partnerships across Georgian Bay municipalities and First Nations will play a significant role in meeting the Government of Canada's commitment to the Paris Agreement and limit global temperature increases by achieving the milestones set out in the PCP framework.

**5. Potential Septic System Pollution - Addressing Concerns**

The GBBR provided a report summarizing past and current TOA septic inspection programs and explored the best and available options for mitigation of septic system risks. From 1999 to 2005, the TOA participated in a provincial pilot project for a full re-inspection program across the Township.

A total of 3,247 properties were reviewed of which 415 were found with major deficiencies, 292 with minor deficiencies, and all were subsequently corrected to standard. High risk systems were identified and between 2006 and the present, most were reduced through upgrades and building permit applications. For example, between 2005 and 2018, 971 new systems (classes 2, 4, and 5) were installed which represents 28 per cent of the total number of sewage systems.

GBBR review of available research suggests that the risk assessment for coliform and E.coli is ‘low to medium’. GBF water testing for potential septic contamination in the Honey Harbour area (Township of Georgian Bay) found that "No Human, Dog, or Bird DNA was detected in any of the samples collected". While the risk may be low, vigilance in septic maintenance is the first line of defence against coliform or E.coli in our water. Common maintenance issues include: lack of pumping septic tanks, septic field overgrown or planted with shrubs/rooting systems, effluent filters not cleaned regularly and inappropriate materials put into septic including grease and lint. Phragmites is now a risk in new installations where fill from the mainland is utilized for septic beds.

Many of you would ask the following, including your Ward 3 Councillors: Why not simply inspect older systems of 20 years or more? Why not work cooperatively with property owners?

Provincial septic re-inspection regulations constrain municipal programs in this type of practical approach. It is either ‘all the properties within a specific time period’ or none. Next steps in the important dialogue include:

1. TOA will raise the matter with provincial ministry officials at our next delegation.
2. GBBR was asked to review potential water quality research projects for pilot implementation in the TOA.

However, our own oversight and education are the first-line of defence in clean water and the TOA Staff has provided an effective on-line septic quiz for property owners to self-review their own sewage system. Staff is happy to advise you on your sewage system health.

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdoB23VqYdeCbGYI8c1YnuMu8qlmbj5MM-kp3WNDhUiruIEVw/viewform>

**6. Priority Places for Species at Risk**  
 GBBR asked TOA for a letter indicating support, in principle, for a collaborative application of coastal partners for a federal application to support enhanced knowledge of species at risk, conservation and threat mitigation.

**7. National Broadband Strategy**

The TOA along with other West Parry Sound (WPS) municipalities is sending a joint letter to provincial and federal politicians to raise the importance of a national broadband internet strategy. Further, the WPS municipalities are jointly requesting support for a local broadband initiative from the Northern Ontario Residential Broadband Program.  The TOA is finalizing the purchase the MNR Tower and surrounding lands to maintain and potentially expand internet and cellular coverage in the TOA.  This action was necessitated by the MNRF plans to decommission the Tower. Excellent work by the TOA Staff on this initiative to better serve students, businesses and the residents of the Township.

**Community Brief**

**Skerryvore Update**

**Road Construction**

Positive news for the community now that Skerryvore Road upgrades have been approved by the MNRF.  Tendering of contracts can now begin.

**Pointe au Baril Update**

**Pointe au Baril Community Centre**

The Pointe au Baril Community Centre maintains the only potable water system in the TOA, and it serves the Nursing Station as well. Under provincial regulations, the Health Unit is now directing that sampling and analysis for microcystin be conducted.  Microcystin is associated with blue-green algae and the sampling is intended to mitigate any potential impacts of blue-green algae outbreaks in the future.

**Did You Know … ???**

Our municipality does its own septic inspections and also for other areas up to the French River?

Did you know that our Building Inspection staff travel over 3000 kilometres by water every year to perform inspections, enforce building code regulations and work with our community in building permits?

The Township of Archipelago provides leadership in the West Parry Sound area in many ways. We are the blueprint to serve coastal communities on Georgian Bay!