

## Hello Belair Properties Owners Association Board and Members

So very sorry we cannot meet in person.. it has been a really different kind of summer for all of us but I hope you are still able to come out to your cottages and enjoy the wonderful warm weather we are having.

Because of the COVID situation, I have been asked to send you a report as an in person meeting is not prudent. As many of you know, I kind of do that anyway with my occasional newsletters, and I will be re-iterating some of that here. But if there is something here that I have not addressed, or you would like questions answered, I am always here to do that.

Due to COVID-19 we have had to make some changes. Some of the projects that we had all ready to do have been superseded by projects that require immediate attention, so you may see things done a little differently this year. Our staff has been very busy often working short-handed trying to get things done to make your stay in our community healthy and safe. Our offices are now open to the public on a restricted level. Our Public Works department is doing the always needed road maintenance and repairs, lawn mowing and cleaning of ditches. We are holding our meetings in person now, with the 6-meter rule being respected, and the bottom line is that we are getting things done!

**We are Manitoba tough and we will get through this!!**

Some of the issues that have come up this year include:

- 1) **Fire Ban:** Just to clear some questions up, earlier in the summer we had imposed a fire ban and people were unsure whether the fire ban included the beaches. It is Alexander Policy to impose a fire ban when the Province does but sometimes our neighbours impose bans and we don't, and that is because on the whole, our conditions are different from our neighbours. We have a very strict by-law with regards to fires and fireworks that seems to work well:
  - You must only burn in an approved pit with a screen on top – not in barrels and not in the open.
  - NEVER leave a fire unattended.
  - Fireworks are **not permitted at any time** unless a fireworks permit has been issued by the East Beaches Fire Department.

Therefore we didn't believe it necessary to impose a ban in May. However, by June we had those pesky seeds floating around that last year caused a tragic fire up in the Traverse Bay area, and we also had very little rain, so we imposed a ban on the East Beaches area, but not in St. Georges and Bird River as they were not in any danger. This is something new for our RM to recognize that the terrain varies from Ward to Ward and therefore we should impose bans only where there is danger.

This Council made an agreement with Conservation this year to put up a Fire Awareness sign at Highway 59 and PT304 to let those coming out to the beaches what the fire conditions are, and hopefully that will be up for next summer. At any time, if you are concerned about a fire, please report it to the RCMP (204-367-8728) or Prairie Bylaw (204-809-3231) or our offices at 367-6170. If it is an emergency call 911. **Disregard of fire safety rules can result in fines up to \$10,000.**

*We can prevent these fires if we act responsibly!*

- 2) **Parks and Playgrounds:** We did not close our parks and playgrounds down completely, but we are still advising you use them at your own risk. It is enormously expensive to properly clean everything like play structures, picnic tables, benches etc. 2 or 3 times a day which would be necessary. Social distancing will have to be maintained for your own safety in these areas of course, and at the boat launches as we ask your patience in allowing one boat at a time. But I know you don't want to get sick and ruin your time at the lake, so you will want to take the necessary precautions.
- 3) **Beaches:** enjoy the beaches.. but again, at your own risk and practice social distancing. With regard to policing the beaches: although the RM puts up signs along the beach requesting no dogs, etc, these are guidelines suggested to educate and inform the public because the Beaches are Crown Lands and as such are under the control of the Province. If you see issues (boats/seadoos too close to shore, etc.) please contact the RCMP and register a complaint. We understand that the RCMP is understaffed and cannot patrol regularly, but if they get several complaints about the same issue, they will act immediately.
- 4) **Traverse Bay Boat Launch:** The long-awaited planned Traverse Bay Boat Launch is still on hold. We are hoping for some word from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans soon, so we can start work to ensure the opening of the launch for summer 2021. They are still in talks with Sagkeeng, and until that process is completed we just wait.
- 5) **Municipal Building in East Beaches:** This is a project that both Jack and I have wanted for the area for a long time. It is in the preliminary stages now, and I believe a small survey was sent out to you by your association. Thank you to those who answered and I do believe another will be forthcoming from the RM as we have hired a Consultant to do a ways and means survey to find out what people want the building to encompass. It became very clear to us last year when we had the fire in Traverse Bay that we needed somewhere to set up for emergencies/communication and evacuation of people. Other things that have been brought to our attention is the fact that our community is growing - more and more people are retiring to their cottages and we are seeing more people

buying recreational property. We aren't the little recreational community with a few permanent residents anymore. We are growing and have needs that cannot be shuffled off onto other municipalities. We need a building to accommodate us: a place to vote; a place to hold classes; a place to hold special events; a place to hold association meetings, etc. It would be nice to have a community garden. It would be ideal for having our Council meetings out at the Beaches in the summer so everyone could attend. There are lots of reasons for having such a building including future expansion to accommodate Seniors Housing and Day Care. We are looking to the future as our community grows and we hope you will join us as we take small steps to that end.

Many of our traditional events have had to be cancelled or considerably altered this summer but the Boards of various associations are working on alternatives. The Beaches have other events like the Dog Walks, Trail Hikes, Soccer Camp, Trail and ATV get-togethers and other activities in and out of the water. Keep in touch with B.P.O.A. to get all the latest updates.

And remember – go to the RMAlexander FaceBook page and RMAlexander.com webpage for information about all the services and events in Alexander.

Council too has had to adapt to this new environment. It was my greatest desire to get started on our campaign to **reduce the usage of single use plastics** and to hopefully eradicate unnecessary use of them by the end of the year, but sadly this virus has created a need to not only use them, but to increase the use of them. However there are ways you can help:

- Try to cut down on the use of plastic bags provided by the stores.. take your own freshly cleaned bags and pack them yourself.
- Enjoy the take-aways being provided by our local restaurants, but use your own utensils.

If you're taking your food home, you won't need plastic cutlery. If you're taking them to picnic, bring your own utensils. Camping departments in stores, or camping section of On-line shopping have stainless steel personal use cutlery that you can take with you. I got mine on Amazon for \$5.

**Our landfills are running out of space** and Traverse Bay has maybe 7-10 years left. What will we do after that? The cost of setting up a new landfill is astronomical for a small community. It is my hope that you, like me, will want to make that landfill last as long as possible. So remember; your garbage should **only** go into the landfill if you **can't recycle, re-use, compost or burn it.** And please don't dump aluminum cans and plastics that can be re-cycled.

As we enter this new cycle of life, we must be ever aware of our actions and the impact it has on our community. So – Remember the Three W's: **W**atch your distance

**W**ash your hands and

**W**ear a mask.

**Be aware, be kind and please enjoy your summer at the beach!**

**Cheryhl Corrie**

Councillor Ward 1



*"We work best when we work Together"*