

## 2022 Ratepayers Year End Summary

### Bayfield Secondary Plan - How much should Bayfield Grow?

The Bayfield Secondary Plan is designed to recognize that the Bayfield Settlement Area has distinct attributes that need to be considered for land use planning purposes. The Bayfield Secondary Plan will formally recognize these attributes in a “made for Bayfield” zoning by-law for the settlement area.

Three members of your BRA Board participated as part of the Secondary Plan Citizens Advisory Committee that was appointed in March 2020. They participated in face to face and Zoom meetings, reviewed various planning documents and proposals, and made recommendations as the draft plan moved through several phases including public meetings, on-line surveys, and an open house.

### Provincial Planning Legislation

In the last 3 years, the Provincial Government has passed several bills significantly impacting the planning and development processes, and general land use principles, including the removal of over 3000 hectares of previously protected areas of the Green Belt they promised to save from development, with the objective of providing 1.5 million new residences by 2031. This legislation will have a significant affect on the Bayfield Secondary Plan, as the County planners and the Municipality must abide by the Provincial rules. The legislation effectively removes any local control over land use.

### Wastewater Treatment Plant Expansion

In parallel with the secondary planning process, Council is considering expanding the existing WWTP to accommodate current promised capacity that can't be delivered with the existing plant and projected future growth in the settlement area. Growth forecasts being used for the plant expansion (and for the Secondary Plan!) are directly dependant on how much sewage capacity is provided – the current “Phase 1” proposal before Council suggests an increase of 371 new dwelling units (705 people). Bayfield currently has 717 residential units – a growth rate of over 50%! How quickly this growth will be realized is dependant on the developers and demand for housing in the settlement area. From 2008 to 2019, Bayfield added 224 residential units,

about 18 per year, so the expansion would support growth over 20 years. However, if the capacity is there it will be used up quickly – “if they build it, they will come”.

## Municipal Election

2022 was a municipal election year across the province. In Bluewater, only the Deputy Mayor and two ward councillors were elected; the mayor and five ward councillors, including Bayfield, were acclaimed. Turnout – perhaps because of the acclamations – was only 31% – a disappointing showing of interest in Municipal politics!

The BRA hosted a candidate meeting for the position of Deputy Mayor, the only position Bayfield residents could vote for. Your Board assessed the qualifications of the candidates and made a recommendation to Bayfield voters. Unfortunately, the preferred candidate lost by just 22 votes!

## Short Term Rentals (STRs)

Bayfield businesses have long benefitted from families renting properties in Bayfield for their summer vacations and other visitors needing short term accommodation. Indeed, families who got to know Bayfield through a rental property have become full time residents. Bluewater has a specific zoning requirement for bed and breakfast businesses, but with the advent of on-line services like Airbnb there has been a significant increase in short term rental businesses like B&B's but not zoned accordingly. There have also been numerous complaints of noise, parking etc. from neighbours of these businesses. BRA supports the Municipality's efforts to better control these businesses with a specific by-law governing the operation and licensing of the businesses like the one recently adopted in Grand Bend.

We would like to thank all our members for ongoing support. We wish you and your families a happy and safe holiday season and look forward to representing your interests on the ongoing above issues and the upcoming annual municipal budget. If you are not already BRA member, we encourage you to join and become part of supporting how your tax dollars are spent.