

Fall Update 2023

Annual Meeting

The BRA Annual General Meeting was held on August 5, 2023. At that meeting, the proposed amendments to our bylaws were approved. Our revised Bylaws are now available on our website www.bayfieldratepayers.ca. At the meeting your new Board of Directors was elected. Please welcome the new board:

Don Schafheitlin–President
Anette Christensen Kalm–Vice President
John Van Ogtrop–PastPresident
Robin Glenny–Treasurer
Brian King–Secretary
Directors:
Godfrey Heathcote
Pat Heffernan
Denise Rishworth

Council Meetings

A representative of your BRA is now attending all Bluewater Council meetings and will be lobbying on your behalf on important issues. We will also provide updates from the Council meetings in our quarterly newsletter where appropriate. Please let us know if there are issues you are concerned about that you feel the BRA can monitor and lobby for as appropriate.

Short Term Rental (STR) By-Law

As previously noted, Council adopted by-law 68-2023 to license, regulate and govern the operation of short-term rentals (STR). The short-term rental by-law came into effect on June 19, 2023.

As of the end of August, there were approximately 100 STRs licensed and an additional 150 new applications in progress. Based on the original estimate of over 290 STRs in Bluewater, it is clear that a large number of existing STRs have not applied. A key component of the STR program has not been implemented, which is the implementation of licensing and scouring software to scan all social media and rental sites to identify existing STRs.

As this was initially understood to be part of the scope of the STR program, the BRA made representation to Council regarding the importance of implementing the scouring software. It is essential to ensure all existing STRs are licensed to guarantee sufficient fees are collected to fund the program and to ensure that the 15% limit per street of STRs is enforced for all new applications. Our representation helped generate councilor support, which resulted in a motion passed at the September 18 , 2023 Council meeting to purchase the scouring software. The Municipality was instructed to complete its selection and implement the chosen software ASAP. We anticipate the use of this software will enable the Bylaw Officer to identify existing STRs not licensed and ensure they become licensed. The BRA will continue to monitor this and update our membership.

Further information and all details regarding licensing and the new by-law and the application can be found on the Municipality of Bluewater website. www.municipalityofbluewater.ca/municipal-office/by-laws/short-term-rentals/

Expansion of Commercial Zone North on Main Street

The BRA was involved in lobbying against the expansion of Lot 165, Plan 147, 29 Bayfield Main Street North by 15 feet. While a small increase, this change was converting residential property from 31 Main Street North into commercial property, expanding 29 Main Street North. The BRA made representation to Council supporting the Heritage Advisory Committee and local residents against this expansion. Our support was based on the Secondary Plan that among other recommendations was to ensure that the north part of Main Street remained residential. While gaining support of two councilors and the mayor against the change, it was unfortunately still approved. The BRA will continue to fight to prevent any further expansion of the Main Street commercial property.

Sidewalk to Foodland

The contract to build a sidewalk from Cameron Street to Foodland has been approved and issued. The estimated completion date is May 2024.

Bedrock Energy

Your BRA continues to monitor the proposed Bedrock Energy Corporation project. Bedrock Energy Corporation recently introduced a plan to develop a

Compressed Air Energy Storage (CAES) facility in Bluewater. The principle of CAES and the proposed project is to support the Ontario electrical grid by compressing and “storing” air in two unique underground formations (“reservoirs”) during periods of low energy use and to be released to produce power and add capacity to the system as needed during peak usage periods. Currently, the proposal includes using two reservoirs for purposes of storing the compressed air (the Bayfield reservoir and the Stanley reservoir). The two reservoirs would be connected by a large pipeline that would move the compressed air between the two facilities and run below farmland properties between the two locations. This kind of project at such a large scale has never been attempted anywhere before and would be a “first of a kind” and the risks associated with such a large scale project are significant and should not be underestimated.

Bedrock’s plan is to build a main facility in Stanley Township east of Goshen Line at Blue Bluff Road and this proposed facility will be built on approximately 120 acres of existing farmland. Concrete “Well pads” and large holding tanks will be built over the reservoirs, the larger of which is between Centennial Road, Staffa Road, Bronson Line and Goshen Line. The smaller reservoir is located north of Mill Road between Bayfield and Varna. The facilities are projected to be completed in 2028, employ over 800 people during the construction period and providing approximately 40 sustainable jobs when completed.

It has recently been identified that Bedrock went through the Unsolicited Project Process and as such has gone directly to the Ontario Minister of Energy looking for a letter of direction to IESO asking them to engage in a technical review of their project. To date, this direction has not happened and our understanding is that IESO is only reviewing two projects that did not get through the RFP process and neither of these is Bedrock. We believe Bedrock is now looking at the long standing RFP process on energy storage. The proposed project will be complex and disruptive, particularly during the construction period which is proposed to span over at least a 3 year period. Public input will be critical to Council’s deliberations and therefore it is very important that residents of Bayfield and Bluewater continue to stay informed.

We encourage our members to follow this proposed project carefully and express their concerns as appropriate. More information is available on the

Bedrock website at bedrockenergycorp.com and bedrockenergycorp.com/community/questions.

Annual BRA Membership Fees

As a reminder, the BRA annual year is from July 1 to June 30. If you have not paid your 2023 annual dues of \$20 please pay them by sending an eTransfer to bayfieldratepayers@gmail.com or on our website. www.bayfieldratepayers.ca