

# The VIEW from BLUE

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Box 405, Collingwood, ON L9Y 3Z7

The largest ratepayers' association in The Blue Mountains

February 2012

## Board of Directors for 2012

### President

Michael Seguin  
519-599-7179  
mpseguin@rogers.com

### Vice-President & Social Media Advisor

Lester Posen  
705-445-3528  
lbposen@rogers.com

### Secretary (Newsletter)

Catherine Sholtz-Seguin  
519-599-7179  
mpseguin@rogers.com

### Treasurer (Membership)

Peter Sharpe  
705-446-0825  
pesharpe@rogers.com

### Directors

Denis Fennessy  
705-445-5679  
djf@rogers.com

Paul Mitchell  
599-519-7793  
mitch@bmts.com

Bill McKetrick  
705-888-4108  
b.mcketrick@rogers.com

Kim Posen  
905-445-3528  
kposen@rogers.com

Dorothy Healey  
705-445-5447  
dihealey@bmts.com

### Web Site Advisor

Neil Carscadden  
519-599-5006  
ncarsca@prodigy.net

Please share this newsletter  
with a neighbour and suggest  
they join our Association



## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

### Town's spending is out of control!

By Michael P. Seguin

In my last newsletter, I warned everyone about the prospect of higher taxes and utility rates in 2012.

Despite the poor economy and an expectedly slow recovery, despite rising and uncontrollable utility rates (hydro, phone, gas, etc.), despite a high percentage of residents on fixed incomes and, most of all, despite any of your concerns, our Council is preparing to approve large tax and utility increases that are unimaginable during these difficult times.

The Director of Finance has convinced Council that this is a "year of lost revenue" requiring "no restraint." We, the taxpayers, appear to be their great source of funds!

During the Budget presentation we were told that "the objective of the 2012 Budget is to balance the ability of a community to pay, while ensuring long-term financial stability/sustainability." That apparently means no cuts to bureaucratic growth and we had better tap into that "great source of funds" while we can, at least before the next election (2014).

Are huge tax levies in the 6+% range and utility increases in the 5+% range sustainable in this community? This is not just a one year hit. Next year will even be worse as the land-fill costs increase. I can't imagine how some of our residents will be able to afford to live here any more. If they are lucky, they may get by as a result of spending less in this community. This should make the business community happy?

A Statutory Public Meeting on the Budget was held on Jan. 23. About 75 to 85 concerned and confused taxpayers attended to voice their opinion of the Town's proposed high tax and utility rates. In addition, the Town received about 15 email/letters.

My statement to Council identifying and criticizing a list of very specific discretionary expenses and

padding was well-received. The audience demanded that Council debate these concerns – or at least give us some sort of explanation. Only Councilor Halos spoke up on behalf of the ratepayers and was applauded for his sincerity and his concerns for the community.

The rest of Council ignored our pleas for more understanding and responsible leadership.

One of the big issues regarding the proposed 2012 budget is a "full

### Mark your calendar

#### Annual General Meeting of the Blue Mountain Ratepayers' Association

- Saturday, May 26<sup>th</sup>, 2012, beginning at 8.30 a.m.
- Auditorium at The Marsh Street Centre, 187 Marsh Street, Clarksburg, Ontario
- Member(s) of Town Council are expected to join us to report on Town projects and current issues and will be prepared to answer your questions of concern. This year we hope to have a special guest speaker to be announced in our April *View from Blue*.

☛ Reserve this date

## President's Report

*Continued from page 1*

user pay" garbage proposal. The taxpayers are upset – not so much about costs but about the audacity of this Council to proceed without public consultation. There has been no open and transparent public meeting to discuss this proposal and the town staff have provided no business plan regarding administration time and costs to provide tags and enforcement.

There are many options for waste collection services and our residents are demanding that this Council consider these options and discuss them with the taxpayers.

I have read a number of emails and letters sent to the town by irate taxpayers and I can say that most are shocked and have expressed disbelief and, most of all, disappointment in their elected officials.

In my opinion, if this Council votes for a town tax levy of anything greater than 5.0% (2.0% operational and 3.0% landfill) and utility rates greater than 4.0% (2.0% operational and 2.0% for infrastructure reserves), then the reality will set in for most taxpayers that our Council cares nothing about the hardships and ability of many members of the community to pay.

Council should also be reminded that the taxpayers are the constituents they have been elected to represent, and that they must show more respect for these taxpayers' concerns. When it comes to respect, they should get what they give.

### Share the road . . . we're on it together

Cycling today is evolving from an occasional recreational activity to an obsession with health, fitness, fun, the environment and transportation. The Blue Mountains has great scenery, fresh air, interesting destinations and vistas and an extensive road system for traveling by bicycle.

If you participate in this activity, remember that cyclists, motorists, agricultural equipment operators, horses and riders and pedestrians often share the same road. Do your part by being a good ambassador for bicycling: drive with care and courtesy – it's easy to share the road!

For more information, please visit The Blue Mountains Website at: [www.thebluemountains.ca/share-the-road.cfm](http://www.thebluemountains.ca/share-the-road.cfm).



If you want to read more on my budget comments, I direct you to the Current Articles' section on our website: [www.bluemountainratepayersassociation.com](http://www.bluemountainratepayersassociation.com)

One announcement: Our 2012 AGM has been booked for May 26<sup>th</sup> at the Marsh Street Centre in Clarksburg. This is an opportunity for our organization to branch out to other areas within The Blue Mountains and to strengthen our membership base outside the Craighleith area. Our mission is to continue providing a stronger and equal voice throughout our entire community.

This will also be an opportunity to deal with the 2012 budget and provide some direction for future budgets to our Town Council before the next election.

If you have any comments regarding my statements in this Report and throughout the newsletter, please do not hesitate to contact me through our website ([info@bluemountainratepayersassociation.com](mailto:info@bluemountainratepayersassociation.com)), or send me a message via the Association's mailing address.

As I have always said and will continue to say: "You are the heart and soul of our Association and we value your opinion."

In closing, my rating of Council's performance in 2011 is: **C-** This is based on numerous Council and Committee meetings and poor decisions, continuing secrecy of closed meetings and lack of transparency, non-willingness to debate, general attitude toward public concerns and failure to recognize and address the concerns of the taxpayer.

### Emergency & Information

**Immediate response:** 911 (Do not call unless it's an emergency or you will be assessed a response charge of \$300)

**OPP** (Collingwood & Blue Mountains): 1-888-310-1122; (Administration): 705-445-4321. Blue Mountains Resorts Security: 705-445-0231 x8281/8911 (24 hours)

**Fire Department:** Thornbury Fire Station # 1, (519) 599-5411; Craighleith Fire Station #2, (705) 444-2244

**Municipal Offices:** Thornbury (519) 599-3131. Troy Speck, Chief Administration Officer, x234; Robert Cummings, Treasurer, x245; Corinna Giles, Town Clerk, x232; David Finbow, Director of Planning and Building x246; Reg Russwurm, Director of Engineering, x260.

### Please pass it on . . .

When you have finished reading this newsletter, please pass it on to your neighbours and encourage them to join our association!

**A Strategic Planning issue:****Municipal staffing and economic development:  
Is there a subtle but important interrelationship?**

By Ron Hartlen

**Background and Perspective:** In recent years there has been some hiring into permanent positions that, to the Public, seems to be unnecessary bureaucratic growth. The BMRA Newsletter of December 2010 included an article titled: "Things we need from Council and from BMRA."

That article said, in part: "... we need an explicit staffing policy designed to nip bureaucratic growth. Any bureaucracy will grow naturally even if there is no additional real work to be done. It happens everywhere. There should be an explicit policy of never making permanent hires for work that could be done satisfactorily by contractors."

The following is an extension of that main theme. It is suggested here that making permanent hires into what are non-core functions could actually impede economic development.

**Baseline scenario and fundamental question  
(for a point of reference)**

A Municipality has the need for some work to be done. This work is *not part of the core services* provided by the Municipality to and on behalf of Ratepayers, Residents and Businesses. This requires a decision to either add staff or to purchase from a contractor.

**The hidden negatives of adding staff**

At first glance it might appear that adding staff is the preferred course. The staffer would always be available, and the Administration would have full control.

One potential negative is that a single staffer brings only one person's expertise and skill.

Also, if the role is one which might require "right-now" service, there's the potential for requiring an assistant to cover absences for illness, training, vacations, etc. That's a step toward unnecessary bureaucratic staff growth in a non-core area.

**The "Competent Contractor"**

A fully-competent and responsive Contractor could meet any demand, including "respond-right-now" scenarios. Also, if the Contractor had a staff of even just two, broader expertise would be available.

Such a Contractor could provide services not just to one Municipality but to other Municipal and non-Municipal Customers as well. Thus, it could be or become a Small Business.

A highly-competent and responsive Small Business *could grow and add local staff*. That's economic growth and would benefit the Municipality.

**The subtle interrelationship**

Hiring Municipal staff for non-core work preemptively reduces the probability of a new Small Business getting started. *Thus, such staff additions would actually impede the Municipality's Economic Development!*

**A strategic-planning cornerstone?**

If the above argument were to be judged sound, and

were to be accepted, a possible cornerstone component of Strategic Planning emerges immediately.

The Strategic Plan could contain an element stating that the *Municipality will never hire permanent staff for any non-core function that could be provided by a competent, responsive contractor*.

Such a step would have three benefits:

- First, it would head-off unnecessary and unjustified bureaucratic staff growth.
- Second, the Municipality would not be an inhibitor of its own Economic Development.
- Third, the Municipality would have opportunities to contribute to developing Small Businesses.

**Local residents still concerned  
about new Telfer proposal**

By Brian Nelson\*

Telfer Homes Inc. has submitted a revised plan to the Town for their proposed "adult lifestyle village" on the 10-acre site at the southeast corner of Napier and Victoria Streets in Thornbury. The plan calls for 86 semi-detached and townhouse units aimed at seniors and retirees, and marketed through a lease arrangement whereby occupants would own their units and lease the land.

The original plan provoked strong criticisms from planners and residents, based in part on a very crowded, enclosed and linear layout with reduced setbacks and back yards facing surrounding streets. The new plan attempts to address these concerns by locating lower density units along the perimeter of the site, turning these units to face the street, and adding some open space. The current unit count of 86 was reduced from 97 in the original plan.

Many residents feel that the proposed density is still too high – it would represent close to three times the density of the single-detached neighbourhood

\* Note: Brian Nelson is spokesperson for approximately 90 residents and concerned citizens in the area

across Napier Street – and that the plan lacks the open space, trees and buffering found around nearby developments such as Applejack. Residents also see Thornbury as a village, and can't see how a self-contained, special-purpose enclave in such a central location could fit into a diverse, highly integrated community.

There are also a number of neighbourhood planning issues that were raised when the first plan was introduced but remain unresolved. These include everything from traffic and pedestrian safety, to overflow parking and storm water management.

Despite several requests from residents, the Town has yet to produce a neighbourhood plan that would show how the Telfer site would connect to adjacent vacant development lands and existing streets, how the necessary service upgrades can be built and paid for, and how the impact of a large-scale project located close to so many homes and properties can be minimized. Questions about the proposed land-lease arrangement also remain unanswered.

All of these concerns were raised at the Statutory Public Meeting on Jan. 16, which was attended by more than 50 area residents. Town planners are reviewing the many verbal and written submissions and will report to Council at an upcoming meeting of the Planning and Building Committee.

## BMRA wants more responsible land use in planning and development

By Michael P. Seguin

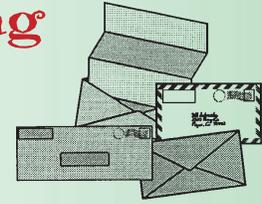
*I attended a Statutory Public Meeting on Jan. 16<sup>th</sup> regarding a new Telfer proposal called the "Thornbury Meadows Adult Lifestyle Community." The following is an excerpt from my written statement to the Planning and Building Committee on behalf of the ratepayers in our community.*

As President of the Association, I'm not questioning the owner's "adult lifestyle" concept and whether it's a viable one that has merit in these market conditions and in the community of Thornbury. This high density residential land-lease proposal is obviously unique, but comes with certain "development risks" – not only to the developer but also to the Town and ultimately the taxpayers. The neighbourhood residential group has outlined a number of these concerns regarding maintenance responsibilities and ratepayer protection, and it is important that everyone on the committee and staff carefully review them before making any decision on this proposal.

Our major concern is that this development is an isolated or self-contained one that provides no connectivity to the surrounding vacant lands as well as the

## The Mailbag

### Subject: Closed meetings



In the 2003 Municipal Election our current Mayor had as one of her issues, and I quote: **"Too many closed meetings."** Little has been said since those days about closed meetings.

During the period Dec. 6<sup>th</sup>, 2010 through Nov. 30<sup>th</sup>, 2011, there were 49 regular and special Council Meetings held. Of those 49 meetings, 26 had closed sessions.

This record shows that 53% of all Council meetings in 2011 held in the Town of the Blue Mountains had closed sessions.

Now I ask: Is that open and accountable government?

The Municipal Act is quite clear about what can be discussed behind closed doors, and one subject that must be discussed in public is the Budget. Why, then, did the Mayor have a two-hour closed meeting on Nov. 28 to discuss the 2012 Budget?

Since all closed meeting minutes remain secret, we will never know what was discussed. Is that good government?

At least, that's the way I see it.

Paul Mitchell

surrounding improved low-density residential lands.

Allowing this development to proceed is not what we can call "community development" and certainly cannot be considered as an appropriate way of "planning a community."

Deferring a development like this one is not a statement that "we are not open for development business." No – it's one that says that we have a lot of respect for the character of our town and want to plan it in such a way that both present and future residents can visualize and feel it as a "sense of place" – the theme of the existing Official Plan.

I request that you consider deferring this development until a more comprehensive Community Plan or Secondary Plan can be designed. This will ensure that all issues relating to transportation, servicing, parkland and open space, land use, phasing and environmental protection are dealt with in the area at one time – not in isolation or over long periods of time. If the developer of this proposal has any interest in our community other than profits, then you should invite him to the table to help with the process of developing a Community Plan for the area.

Remember, should you decide to allow this proposal to proceed, then you must be prepared to support the statement that **"this proposal represents good land use planning."**

# Developments pose potential threats to our watersheds

## Georgian Gate (now known as Windfall)

THIS ENORMOUS development proposal for 609 residential units west and south of Le Scandinave Spa was approved by the municipality after securing some useful improvements in protection of natural features. Another 291 units proposed on the south-easterly portion of the property have been deferred.

The designated environmentally protected areas are supposed to be deeded to the Town. The Blue Mountain Watershed Trust will continue monitoring this plan to ensure that:

A: The conditions of approval are upheld,

B: The deferred portion is not resurrected, and

C: Plans for trails are consistent with conservation objectives.

## Havens Development

THE DEVELOPER is seeking Draft Plan Approval for 16 residential units on property that is accessed from the east side of Brophy's Lane and is situated between two sections of significant wetlands of the Silver Creek Watershed. An OMB hearing is scheduled for May 15 to resolve outstanding issues. However, there also will be attempts to resolve these issues prior to that date.

The main issue involves setbacks of the lots from the Wetland. The Town seems satisfied with a 10 metre setback, but the Grey Sauble Conservation Authority and the Niagara Escarpment Commission have recommended a 15m minimum.

The Trust is adamant that protection of the Wetland should be a minimum of 15m or equivalent to what was obtained for Consulate East in Collingwood and was approved in that location by the OMB. Pressure will continue to be applied on the municipality to meet this objective.

## Terrasan

SITUATED IN the northwest quadrant of Highway 26 and Long Point Road, this approved "Craigleith Village

Community" development will comprise about 211 residential units plus a large commercial and institutional component on 13.65 hectares of land.

There has been no change or activity since the Official Plan Amendment was approved by the OMB on Feb. 18, 2011; i.e., the developer has made no attempt to move forward with the development since then. The final setbacks from the Silver Creek Wetlands were not settled and can still be a matter of dispute at the Draft Plan of Subdivision stage.

## Castle Glen

THE PHASE I Water Supply Class Environmental Assessment was submitted for comment in December of 2011. The interim water supply must have sufficient capacity to service the existing Thunderhill community and a 70 hectare development area east and south of County Road 19, just west of Osler Bluff Ski Facility.

Given the number of potential environmental threats, comments were made by the Trust and the response is being reviewed. A Permit to

Take Water has been submitted by the owner to Ministry of the Environment, which is waiting for the final approval of the Class EA. Prior to each phase, the owner is required to submit Environmental Impact Statements. They will be monitored.

If you have questions/comments or wish further details on the environmental concerns being expressed by the BMWTF on any of these proposed developments, you are welcome to contact Don Kerr at [bmwt@bmts.com](mailto:bmwt@bmts.com)



By Don Kerr  
Director of the Blue Mountain  
Watershed Trust Foundation

The Blue Mountain Watershed Trust Foundation is an independent grassroots and volunteer organization of more than 140 members who are committed to ensuring the continued environmental health and integrity of our watersheds. Its mission statement is to "preserve and enhance the Blue Mountain Watershed Ecosystem." The BMRA supports the mission and goals of this organization. Here are their thoughts on current developments and the threats and issues facing watersheds in the Blue Mountains.

## INFOLINE: 211

Need help? Got a question?  
Simply dial the INFOLINE at 211  
anytime – day or night.

## BMRA outlines concerns with Phase 1 of the Official Plan 5-year review

By Michael P. Seguin

ON SATURDAY, Jan. 28<sup>th</sup>, 2012, Meridian Planning Consultants Inc. presented their Draft Directions paper outlining 13 Guiding Principles for the new Official Plan and 34 proposed Direction Statements. The draft document is quite lengthy and can be reviewed on the Town's Website under Planning and Development Projects. The following comments highlight only some of our concerns, and we want you to provide either us or Cindy Welsh at the Town ([cwelsh@thebluemountains.ca](mailto:cwelsh@thebluemountains.ca)) with your comments and other concerns you may have. Remember, when completed this will be a living document that could impact your enjoyment of life in our community – assuming you can still afford to live here.

### 7.0 Residential Hierarchy

THE BMRA GENERALLY agrees that there are too many land use designations but we *disagree* with the statement that “they apply to the resort recreational area of the Town” (page 45). All six of the previous designations include the word “residential” and this new proposed designation “Recreational Resort Area” does not reflect the true character of our established residential neighbourhoods.

First and foremost, the word “resort” is not properly defined in the document and secondly, it will encourage a lot of problems, including a number of commercial and recreational activities that are not compatible with the character of established residential neighbourhoods, i.e., the Town has spent over \$600,000 and counting on defining and protecting our residential neighbourhoods from uncontrollable STA commercial establishments, and this resort designation will continue to encourage operators to expand into our neighbourhoods.

The BMRA supports protecting the quality and character of our residential neighbourhoods and retaining a “Residential” designation. We will oppose this Proposed Direction 10 to consolidate into one Resort Recreational designation.

### 8.2 Natural Areas, Features and Hazards

WITH REGARDS TO new developments and significant redevelopments, the BMRA supports the Natural Heritage set-back widths recommended in the Natural Heritage Resource Manual (NHRM) prepared by the Ministry of Natural Resources, and does not support the reduced standards adopted by the County. Therefore, we will oppose the proposed Direction 15 adopting County standards.

The County, using a limited peer review system, has shown poor judgment in approving new developments with significantly reduced setbacks that provide inadequate protection for our wetland areas. These decisions do not instill public confidence that they are acting in the best interests of the residents of the Blue Mountains.

### 8.3 Housing

THERE ARE NO proposed Directions given for Housing and there are discrepancies between Town and County housing studies. There is still a lot of uncertainty regarding the design, location and implementation of affordable housing projects. The document should also state that no affordable housing project is to be given approval unless an appropriate business plan is presented to the public for debate before Council.

We also note the unsupported comment on page 84 of the document with regard to increasing the maximum height of buildings in the Town to 15 metres (four storeys) in settlement areas, and the County wanting to further include proposed Recreation Resort Areas. The BMRA does not support four storey buildings without establishing proposed and adequate locations, and does not support inclusion of affordable high and medium density housing projects in established Residential Areas, or these so-called “Recreational Resort Areas.”

### 8.4 Transportation

WE REGARD TO the Proposed Direction 23, we do not support the proposed road classifications identified in OP Amendment No. 24 and they should not be considered until a full detailed secondary or community plan has been drafted and approved for the areas impacted. We might also mention that it was Council, led by the Chairman of the Steering Committee and not by the residents, that asked for the reclassification issue to be deferred to the Town's Official Plan Review.

The residents adamantly oppose these reclassifications and believe that 20-metre corridors can be designed to provide adequate “places for people.” Also, any road being proposed as a new Collector Road, must have a defined width in the document so that property owners can determine the future impacts on their property frontages and any loss in value.

### 8.7 Economic Development

THE TOWN HAS continuously attempted to include “Special Events” as being part of Economic Development and has tried to justify spending monies on these type of events. Will the OP Review attempt to recognize these events as contributing to tourism within the community and will land use designations be required to recognize these events and where they can be located?

*See BMRA concerns page 7*



## ABOUT TOWN

With Michael Seguin

### Blue Mountain Village Association makes pitch for an OPP office

Don Braden, President of the Village Association, made a presentation to Council in December, 2011 (supported by the Police Services Board) requesting a municipal/private partnership in renovating an existing Village building for a satellite OPP office. Mr. Braden argues that “obviously there’s some concern for public safety” at the village which has six bars with a total capacity of 1,600 customers.

The Association currently spends \$270,000 a year on security, which includes employing security agents and paid-duty police officers. Although the office will be on private lands, Mr. Braden states that the village pays substantial tax dollars and that a satellite office would serve the whole community.

Mr. Braden requested the town either pay for half

the cost of renovating an existing building, or \$20,000; the Association would cover all the monthly operating costs of the building including the rent, utilities, telecommunications and a computer. These costs are estimated to be around \$2,500. The renovation cost would not affect the Policing Budget (i.e., new officers) but would affect the 2012 Town levy if paid from taxation.

Inspector John Trude, detachment commander for The Blue Mountains OPP, expressed his support for the satellite office and increased OPP presence, especially with regard to signage and a home base for officers on patrol in the Village.

The question on everybody’s mind: Will this help control “hooliganism” that spreads outside the village and into residential neighbourhoods?

*Source: Courier-Herald 12/20/2011*

### The old Town Hall awaits its fate

The Mayor’s so-called “money pit” met its demise in November and we can thank Anderson, McKinlay, McKean and Martin for this decision. A preliminary environmental audit has now been conducted on the site and the extent of any contamination might not be known until after the demolition.

On Jan. 25<sup>th</sup> a request for tender for the demolition, removal of debris and site restoration was advertised in the local newspaper, with a deadline date of Feb. 23, 2012. Costs are expected to be in the \$125,000 range, with demolition to be completed sometime in late spring or early summer.

What should be interesting is: where do they plan to dump all the commercial waste?

*Source: Courier-Herald 01/25/2012*

## BMRA concerns

*Continued from page 6*

There also is no mention of the word “resort” in this section. The word “resort” implies potential for Economic Development – or are proposed designated “recreational resort areas” excluded from Economic Development?

### 8.8 Deferred Development Areas and Phasing

PART OF THE BMRA Mission Statement is that “The Association strives to promote responsible government . . . and responsible land development . . .” Therefore, the BMRA considers this section as the most important one in the document.

Proposed new developments must incorporate the future *vision* of a healthy, vibrant and sustainable community and one that also blends in with existing communities. The Secondary Planning or Community Planning process is a *must*, and should be implemented almost immediately in deferred development areas to ensure that all issues relating to transportation, servicing, parkland and open space, land use, phasing and environmental protection are dealt with at one time, and not in isolation. Therefore, we support proposed Directions 32, 33 and 34.

### Cedar Run owner cries foul in Pan Am equestrian choice

Local horse park owner Peter Lush complained to the Games Organizing Committee (TO2015) that the Pan Am selection process was never fair to Cedar Run and that the decision on the Caledon Equestrian Park (Palgrave) was made over four years ago. Lush argues that the upgrades to Cedar Run horse park (cost to bring the standard up to Pan Am Games quality) would only be in the \$4 million range and it could easily host the anticipated 50,000 to 60,000 people, compared to the \$11 to \$12 million required for upgrades to the Palgrave horse park.

Members of the committee argue that the Caledon bid “. . . provides the games with a venue that is proven and experienced in hosting international equestrian events and endorsed by Equine Canada.” Lush countered that Cedar Run recently hosted an A-level, Gold-sanctioned, week-long show and competition event (Hunter Jumper Classic) involving \$45,000 in prize money and drew more than 400 horses from all over Ontario, plus one from the Bahamas.

*Source: Courier-Herald 02/1/2012*

### Grey County passes new DC bylaw

County Council passed a new DC bylaw increasing residential charges from \$2,315 per unit to \$4,183 per unit to be phased in over the next two years. The bylaw excludes charges on new commercial properties but includes a new wind turbine charge of \$5,000 per turbine.

The majority of Council agreed that the new DC charges are required for future servicing requirements caused by growth, expected to cost about \$70 million over the next 20 years. This should put added pressure on any potential growth in our Town, which has the highest DC charges in the entire County.

*Source: Courier-Herald 01/09/2012*

### Fire Safety Commission decision backs closure of 195 Tyrolean Lane

On June 30, 2011, the Town's Chief Fire Prevention Officer, bylaw staff and OPP attended to a complaint about the property at 195 Tyrolean Lane relating to bylaw issues, including noise and camp fires. It was reported that "in excess of 50 people" were staying at the property and many were unlawfully occupying the basement area. The occupants were removed from the STA property and an order by the Ontario Fire Marshall was issued to close, preventing the owner from renting the chalet.

The owners appealed to the Ontario Fire Safety Commission concerning nine matters of compliance that required attention in order to make the building safe for multiple occupancy use. On Oct. 17 the Commission ruled in favour of the actions of the Fire Department saying that "The tribunal believes that the existing situation, with up to 16 persons occupying each of the basement levels is a clear fire safety hazard, with potential for the loss of life."

The Commission also ruled that it was reasonable for the Prevention Officer to compare the short-term rental to a rooming house (a major issue in the case), and ordered an occupancy limit of two persons per bedroom for the chalet. In addition to fines and costs in excess of \$12,000, the owners of this rental unit will have to install walk-out exits in all three basements in addition to nine other fire safety-related items before the chalet can again be open and available for rent.

*Source: Simcoe.com 12/08/2011*

### Real Estate News - What happened in 2011?

According to the Georgian Triangle Real Estate Board's MLS statistics, there were only 1,869 transactions in 2011, down from 1,906 transactions in 2010 (2.0%). Sales volume was up slightly in 2011 at \$548 million, compared to \$545 million in 2010, with an average price of \$293,205 (\$285,852 in 2010). What does this mean? Very simple: our local market remains steady considering a volatile financial

market both in Canada and the rest of the world.

A breakdown of the 1,869 total sales: 584 (31.2%) were under \$200,000; 686 sales (36.7%) were between \$200,000 and \$300,000; 422 sales (22.6%) were priced between \$300,000 and \$500,000; almost 68% of all sales were below \$300,000; 177 (9.5%) were over \$500,000, representing the top tier of the Georgian Triangle marketplace; there were 29 sales over the million dollar mark, including seven over \$1.5 million.

The average price for single family homes in 2011 by area: Collingwood, \$289,747 (303 sales); Blue Mountains, \$552,280 (153 sales); Meaford, \$288,991 (88 sales), Grey Highlands, \$325,521 (77 sales); and, Wasaga Beach, \$276,400 (385 sales).

Condominiums represent a large part of the market, especially in Collingwood and the Blue Mountains, where 93% of all area condo sales take place. In fact, 40% of all dwelling units sold in Collingwood in 2011, and 45% of all dwelling units sold in the Blue Mountains were condominiums.

The total number of units sold in 2011 was 352 compared to 329 in 2010, reflecting an average price at \$241,998 (\$240,296 in 2010). The largest growth in demand in 2011 was for two-bedroom units with an average price at \$212,941 (139 sales).

This information was abstracted from newsletters prepared by the Marg Scheben-Edey of Remax ([www.collingwood-bluemountain.com](http://www.collingwood-bluemountain.com)) and Karen Poshtar of Clairwood Real Estate Corporation ([www.collingwoodhomes.ca](http://www.collingwoodhomes.ca)).

You are welcome to visit their web sites to see more links or to share with them some of your interests in the real estate market.

### Collingwood News of interest to Blue Mountain residents

■ The Town of Collingwood has sold 50% of Collus Power – the town-owned electrical distribution business – to PowerStream, a municipal owned company that serves 335,000 customers in 11 Central Ontario municipalities. The purchase price is expected to be in the \$14-\$15 million dollar range plus other considerations (closes in April, 2012).

■ Two local residents want to turn the "honeycomb-like" environment of the Collingwood Grain Terminals into a specialty mushroom harvester. These individuals made a pitch to Council in January, 2012 stating that if the silos in the terminals provide the right environment then they could grow about 13 million pounds of mushrooms having a value between \$33 and \$45 million and employing up to approximately 40 people. The individuals want to lease the facility for a year at \$1 per month to inspect and to test their idea before looking at a long term lease or buying the facility.

**Dear Member –**

**YOUR RENEWAL IS IMPORTANT TO US**

Our records show that several people have not yet renewed their 2012 Family Membership. If you have forgotten or misplaced *your* application form and wish to renew, then please fill out this application form and mail it, along with your cheque, to the address shown below ( ignore this message if you have already renewed).

Your membership fee is important to us. It enables us to publish our Newsletter on a quarterly basis, to hold our Annual General Meeting every spring and, most of all, to maintain our Web Site so that we can reach out to as many people as possible in on an ongoing basis.

If, for any reason, you choose not to renew, then we will remove your name(s) from our mailing list shortly after the AGM, which is scheduled for Saturday May 26<sup>th</sup>, 2012. We thank you for your past support.

If you have any questions, please contact Michael P. Seguin at 519-599-7179 or [mpseguin@rogers.com](mailto:mpseguin@rogers.com). Information also is available at [www.bluemountainratepayersassociation.com](http://www.bluemountainratepayersassociation.com)



**BMRA MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM – JANUARY TO DECEMBER 2012**

Please enclose a cheque for \$25, payable to **Blue Mountain Ratepayers' Association**, as your annual family membership fee. Mail your cheque and this application form to:

**Blue Mountain Ratepayers' Association, Box 405, Collingwood, ON L9Y 3Z7**

Last name: \_\_\_\_\_

First names(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Your Residential Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone No: \_\_\_\_\_ Blue Mountains Phone No: \_\_\_\_\_

Blue Mountains address \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing address (if different from above) \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you know anyone who may wish to join? \_\_\_\_\_

Would you prefer to receive your newsletter via email? If yes, please check here

Comments? (Use other side if necessary) \_\_\_\_\_