

Bancroft council hears from local residents

By Tony Pearson

There was an audience for the meeting of Bancroft council again. In fact, there were two audiences: one in the morning for a presentation against the possible sale or opening up of the Dungannon landfill, and one in the afternoon for the proposed re-zoning of Maple Street.

Mayor promises public meeting before any changes to dump

"Council didn't feel it needed to ask the public how they felt about the potential sale or opening of our dump," stated Wilma Brethour, leading a group from Dungannon Ward, "so I did." She reported that she had collected over 90 letters and 500 petition signatures that indicated that "the people of Bancroft don't want to be known as the garbage capital of North Hastings."

"We realize you face financial problems," she told council. "But previous council financial mistakes make us doubt the ability of council to conduct proper due diligence. We're now in an unsustainable position. People are being driven out by the levels of local costs. We are tired of paying and paying and not being listened to. We want you to know that we do not want our dump sold and we do not want garbage, recycling, or hazardous waste collecting in our back yards."

Mayor Bernice Jenkins reiterated that the town simply wanted to check all possibilities. She noted that the province could force the town to open its landfill to other municipalities. Finally, she promised a public meeting before any change might be made to the conditions of the current waste site.

Maple development approved

The residents of Maple Street turned out to proclaim again their aversion to changing their zoning to allow multiple family dwellings. Even before that debate, residents Stuart and Diane Martin expressed their feeling that the issue was being rushed through without enough explanation.

Later, the Martins stressed the "small town atmosphere" on the street and their fear that more units will lead to more cars and more accidents. Resident Tony Klompmaker expressed another resident's concern that the change might have a "de-stabilizing effect" on the area, possibly leading to a decrease in property values. However, others have voiced the opinion that this would increase property value, allowing them to create and maintain properties through finance support services similar to RenoFi. Other individuals have echoed this opinion for this development.

The person making the application, developer David Gillick, stated that as a result of objections at the previous council meeting, he had modified the plans so that the duplexes resembled more a single family dwelling with a granny suite - an adaptation that is permissible under existing zoning, and has in fact been done on Maple Street before. He also noted that the buildings have more surrounding space than required for single homes. Finally, he cited several CMHC studies that indicated that secondary suites allow for the more effective use of municipal resources.

Gillick further stated that his plan is to rent the new premises to seniors, thus keeping the street a quiet one, while providing much needed accommodation (some waiting over a year) as well as new town revenues.

In the end, council approved the change by a margin of five to one, with only Councillor Charles Mullett dissenting, on grounds of heeding community input. Mayor Jenkins later said that she wanted to ensure that the message got across that Bancroft is open for development, and that seniors would not be forced to leave the area if they wanted to downsize their current homes.

Rally presents to council

Rally of the Tall Pines is looking for a new two-year agreement. It presented correspondence from area businesses endorsing the rally, along with their study indicating that the rally brought over \$600,000 worth of spending to the region, as well as generating return visits.

Council deferred the contract, wanting to be certain that it no longer calls on the town to provide portable toilets (current municipal costs are about \$5,000 in direct sponsorship, and \$7,500 of supplied goods and services). In addition, council wanted to know what the Rally group would do to repair roads used for racing. Rally co-ordinator Ian Wright suggested that "significant" damage would be repairs in excess of \$2,000. Councillor Barry McGibbon noted that the roads lost gravel every year, and that an annual contribution to restoration would be more appropriate. In addition, this might help with damage caused to the Dungannon ball field.

OCWA presents annual report

The Ontario Clean Water Agency (OCWA) presented their annual report to council. In an unusual move, the mayor and the CAO recommended that councillors refrain from asking the OCWA representatives any questions. They cited legal advice that such questions might give OCWA grounds to contest the award of a new water/wastewater management contract, now out to tender with a number of agencies.

A number of councillors, including Mary Kavanagh, Barry McGibbon, and Bill Kilpatrick, questioned this request. Kavanagh asked for written confirmation of the legal opinions, and Kilpatrick, in protest, left the council table to sit in the audience.

Later in the meeting, council passed a motion from Kilpatrick, which picked up on a previous OCWA suggestion that they could save \$100,000 on the current contract. The motion directs the CAO to request that OCWA provide those savings to the 2017 contract year.

Garbage receptacles made mandatory

Councillor Tracy McGibbon's motion to bring in a bylaw to require all drive-through restaurants make garbage and recycling receptacles accessible to their customers was passed unanimously.