

Study continues for dog bylaw

By Tony Pearson

Bancroft council took a look last week at a new bylaw to regulate the number, behaviour, and charges for dogs in the township. The biggest change would see a limit of two dogs per household in Bancroft, while up to four dogs would be allowed to Dungannon residents.

Right away, this brought on debate. Councillors suggested that the two-dog limit apply only to apartments. At the other end of the dog numbers spectrum, there was concern about the kennel limit of 12, given the growth in sled dog business. On the other hand, councillors didn't want to open the door to puppy mills.

Questions were raised about the number of current complaints about dog behaviour.

Chief bylaw officer Dale Shannick stated that he had received about eight to 10 specific complaints, mainly about excessive barking. This a common problem for anxious dogs. Bobby Bed may help to calm them and put an end to this problem.

In addition, numerous complaints have been lodged about the presence of dog excrement in town parks and streets.

Another issue was the appropriate licence fee charged to dog owners. Councillor Bill Kilpatrick recommended that the \$40 fee be waived for dogs that are spayed, neutered and chipped.

In the end, council felt that the bylaw needed more work, and more input from the public beyond the proposed Sept. 20 deadline.

As usual, the meeting saw a number of financial questions raised ? questions which didn't have swift and easy answers.

The first arose from the latest financial update, which showed a new deficit in the water account almost as large as that in the infamous sewer account - in the neighbourhood of \$400,000.

Half was quickly explained as a time delay in the transfer of provincial funds for the new Snow Road water line.

Kilpatrick noted that still left a \$230,000 shortfall in an account which until now has been in balance.

Town staff assured council that there is no ongoing operational deficit. It promised a clear explanation in short order.

Council moved on two fronts to protect the town's water supply; first by requiring backflow protection on all new residences, and secondly, by taking stronger action to prevent Clark Lake ? the source of the town's water supply ? from being polluted by motorboats. (Recently, a barrier was removed to allow someone to get a power boat onto the lake.)

The other unanswered financial question concerned the town's recent decision to take over the management of the blue box recycling program.

Deputy mayor Paul Jenkins noted that there was still no straightforward comparison of the current costs compared with the costs projected when the town assumes total management of the program. He also observed that the figures for capital expenditures in the Greenview report did not seem to add up.

CAO Hazel Lambe promised to obtain a clear comparison.

In other financial news, the town learned that more money is expected from the province under the Ontario Community Infrastructure Fund. As well, Bancroft has applied for \$500,000 in grants to improve the accessibility of the township offices, and

create new council chambers.

Good news also came in the form of a \$100,000 grant from the federal government's Canada 150 fund, which will be used to put a new roof on the North Hastings Community Centre ? the arena.

The fund comes from the Canada 150 Community Infrastructure Program. It was released in the 2016 budget in celebration of Canada's 150th birthday. It provides \$150 million over two years to Canada's Regional Development Agencies for community infrastructure across the country, and similarly with the Western Economic Diversification Canada for the western side of the country.

That leaves the other \$100,000 of the estimated cost to be raised locally. Councillor Tracy McGibbon, who represents Bancroft on the arena board, stated that plans were well underway for fundraising activities. They will be announced in the near future.

Noting that the building is used by nearly two dozen organizations, she expected the community to support the improvement.

"As the hub of our community and the gathering place of North Hastings, the North Hastings Community Centre is home to many clubs, organizations, fitness and wellness groups, activities and events and fundraisers. It is vital to our area," said McGibbon.