



# Wasaga Beach Council Highlights

## From the March 26, 2019 meeting

### **Wasaga Beach council approves budget for 2019**

Members of Wasaga Beach town council approved the 2019 budget, a financial road map for the year ahead.

“It is my belief the 2019 budget represents a responsible and prudent use of public funds,” Mayor Nina Bifulchi said. “We have done our utmost to ensure we are tackling projects that matter to the residents of our community. We are investing in all areas of our town and I am proud to say that we are moving Wasaga Beach forward.”

For 2019, the tax rate increase is 2.91 percent on the municipal portion of the tax bill. The impact of the increase on the average assessed home in Wasaga Beach is \$51.92. The overall tax increase may be less once the county and education tax rates are included.

The total operating and capital budgets is \$64 million, an increase of \$9 million when compared to the 2018 budget.

The budget for operating expenditures is \$40.1 million. The operating budget earmarks funds for the hiring of additional staff in strategic areas across multiple departments to improve the level of service provided to our residents.

Funds are also set aside to work with developers in building projects in our community that meet council’s priorities of providing more affordable housing and diversifying the tax base.

For full details on the budget see here: <http://bit.ly/2V2SvJQ>.

### **Detachment commander presents overview of local policing**

Detachment commander Phil Brown spoke to Committee of the Whole on Feb. 21.

Mayor Nina Bifulchi provided council with a report of Brown’s presentation to committee.

His presentation highlighted the role of policing, core services, civilian governance,

detachment composition, partnerships, and other aspects of OPP operations.

The inspector then took a variety of questions from committee.

The report was received for information.

You can watch the presentation here: <http://bit.ly/2U3n4D1>. It starts around the one-minute mark.

### **Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corporation presents information on operations**

Representatives from the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corporation spoke to Committee of the Whole on Feb. 21.

Mayor Nina Bifulchi gave council a synopsis of the presentation.

Jake Pastore and Tyjondah Kerr from OLG gave an overview of the crown agency's operations.

This included background regarding the corporation, legislative framework, OLG's modernization efforts, its sponsorship work, and operations regarding casino gaming.

The presentation helped outline the role the OLG plays in casino operations throughout the province.

Committee then asked questions and received the presentation for information.

You can watch the presentation here: <http://bit.ly/2U3n4D1>. It starts around the 52-minute mark.

### **Gateway committed to setting up shop in Wasaga Beach**

Rob Mitchell, director of communications for Gateway Casinos and Entertainment Ltd., appeared before Committee of the Whole at the Feb. 21 meeting, Mayor Bifulchi said.

Mitchell noted that Gateway is committed to Wasaga Beach and they hope to make an announcement on the casino site soon.

During his presentation, Mitchell provided background on Gateway's operations. The company has grown across several provinces since its inception.

Gateway offers four casino brands with each including different restaurant amenities.

New facilities – such as the one slated for Wasaga Beach – are state-of-the-art and put forward the best that engineers have to offer, create jobs, and local business relationships.

The committee received the presentation for information.

You can watch the presentation here: <http://bit.ly/2U3n4D1>. It starts around the 1:22-mark.

### **Work continues on new tourism brand for Wasaga Beach**

Staff and outside partners continue to work on the creation of a new tourism brand, Mayor Bifulchi informed council members.

She noted that economic development officer Ellen Timms presented an update on the exercise during the Feb. 28 Committee of the Whole meeting.

The town is working with marketing group Cundari, the County of Simcoe, and RT07 to create a new brand that will help grow Wasaga Beach's tourism economy.

Committee received the report for information and directed staff to develop the brand to the final creative stage.

### **Ensuring Wasaga Beach has a solid foundation**

Mayor Nina Bifulchi noted that at the Feb. 28 Committee of the Whole meeting progress was made to advance development at the beachfront and downtown.

At the meeting, committee members reviewed and discussed a staff report on possible changes to planning policies that apply to the downtown and beachfront areas.

Specifically, these policies are part of what is called Official Plan Amendment 52 (OPA).

Adopted by the previous council in June 2018, the OPA established a policy framework for the creation of a strategic growth area for Wasaga Beach. Referred to as the "downtown node" this area includes revitalization of Beach Areas 1 and 2.

Last year, council also approved a zoning bylaw to create development standards.

And they approved urban design guidelines for the downtown too, providing guidance to private interests for the long-term development of Beach Areas 1 and 2 and the Main Street area.

The new council wanted the opportunity to review all of this information to ensure it properly reflects the community's vision for these lands.

Council members provided staff with several comments. Based on the feedback, staff will provide council with recommendations through the Official Plan review process, which is currently under way. No changes were proposed to the implementing Zoning By-law or Urban Design Guidelines.

Council approved the direction taken at committee.

### **Environmental assessment work continues at beachfront**

Mayor Bifulchi said that work continues on the environmental assessment for the downtown and beachfront road network.

She noted that at the Feb. 28 Committee of the Whole meeting director of public works Kevin Lalonde updated committee on the work.

Committee directed staff to proceed with the EA, but asked that a broader look be taken so that council is provided with road alignment and streetscaping options as well as other tools that would ensure that road,

pedestrian and bicycle features are incorporated in future designs.

Council approved the direction given at committee.

### **Town positioning for development at beachfront**

Mayor Bifulchi told council that CAO George Vadeboncoeur presented a report at the Feb. 28 Committee of the Whole meeting that examined the town's future role at the beachfront.

During the discussion, committee indicated it does not believe the town should continue to own property at Beach Area 1 and in turn be responsible for the expense, maintenance, and operations of the properties. The general feeling is this does not reflect responsible use of taxpayer dollars.

Committee recommended staff consider options to divest the property.

They also directed staff to look at creating parcels of land "significant in size" so that development is not piecemeal. The town will retain land for Festival Square.

Committee also directed staff to define a request for expressions of interest process for the disposal of the properties and to provide council with timelines.

Committee confirmed that it wishes to retain the Beach Area 2 property. Staff were also asked to provide a report on options to improve amenities at Beach 2.

As well, they were directed to start the process to explore public parking at the beachfront and how best to deal with this need.

Also, committee directed staff to provide an update to the list of technical studies that would have to be completed to ensure the beachfront properties are development ready.

Council approved the recommendations.

### **Beachfront relationship with province changing**

The town will advise the province that it wishes to terminate the Wasaga Beach Provincial Park Agreement.

Council approved the direction on Tuesday night after receiving recommendations from the Feb. 28 Committee of the Whole meeting.

The notice will inform the province that the town wishes to terminate the agreement at the end of October 2019.

The basis is the high cost of the agreement. The total cost for 2018 is almost \$500,000.

Council also directed staff to discuss the continued delegation of authority to approve special events at the beachfront and the provision of assistance with maintenance. This may lead to a new agreement to cover these elements.

## **Locations short-listed for new arena and library**

Building a new arena and library continue to be one of town council's top priorities for this term.

Council approved a short-list of sites for a new library and twin pad arena. The lists were determined at the March 7 Committee of the Whole meeting.

There is now a list of seven potential sites for a new library. The town already owns one of the sites.

For the arena, there is a list of six sites, of which two are town-owned.

The sites identified on each list are located in the central, east and west parts of the town.

Staff will develop tools to further evaluate the sites on both lists and report back to committee.

## **Town launching trial run with community engagement platform**

As part of an ongoing effort to have better engagement with the public, council approved a three-month trial with "Bang the Table".

The company offers an online community engagement platform.

The town will use the platform to provide information about a variety of projects.

The platform can allow stakeholders to provide feedback, ask questions, share ideas, and participate in polls and surveys.

The information gathered can help council when making decisions about policy, programs, and services.

During the trial period, one key project the town will use the platform for is to engage the public on the Official Plan Review.

The cost of the trial is \$4,500. See here to read a staff report about the platform: <http://bit.ly/2Flci24>.

At the end of the trial, staff will report to committee and seek further direction.

## **Town supporting fundraiser for Canadian Cancer Society**

Council approved providing a portable stage to Collingwood Collegiate Institute (CCI) for its Relay for Life event on May 31.

The event is a fundraiser for the Canadian Cancer Society.

Students from Jean Vanier Catholic High School and CCI will take part, along with staff and school family members.

## **Wasaga Beach Transit numbers steady in February**

Council received Wasaga Beach Transit statistics for last month.

A total of 6,396 rides were taken in February, compared to 7,209 in January.

February 2019 numbers were down slightly when compared to the same period a year ago, when 6,745 rides were taken.

### **Community outreach program gets the thumbs up**

Town council approved a community outreach program.

Councillor Stan Wells noted a report on the program was presented at the March 14 Coordinated Committee meeting.

The program will involve two formats. One, dubbed Coffee with Council, will take place indoors at municipal venues and the other, called Conversation in the Park, will take place outside.

Both formats will allow council members further opportunities to connect with residents in their neighbourhoods.

The sessions would also allow, when required, the opportunity to convey specific municipal information.

Staff are currently working on a schedule and list of venues. This will be brought to Coordinated Committee for consideration in April.

### **Town council investing \$39,500 in community grants for 2019**

Members of council OK'd community grants totalling almost \$40,000 for this year.

The grants were approved based on a recommendation at the March 14 Coordinated Committee meeting.

### **Tourism initiatives implemented to support business community**

Council directed town staff to begin addressing recommendations in the Tourism Destination Management Plan.

They also approved setting up a tourism advisory committee.

Council also directed staff to report back with a work plan, including costs, to implement the following Community Improvement Plan incentives:

- Residential/Mixed-Use Development Incentive Program;
- Tax Increment Equivalent Grant program;
- Planning and Development Fee Rebates;
- Exemption/Reduction from Parking Ratio Requirements.

### **Council taking steps to address affordable housing**

Council directed staff to put together a work plan, inclusive of costs, to implement a Community Improvement Incentive town-wide for affordable housing.

Promoting and facilitating the construction of affordable, attainable, and safe housing is one of council's 11 priorities for the 2018-2022 term.

Council also directed staff to report back with the specific policy amendments to the Official Plan that would be required to implement the incentive.

## **Town gets behind local business owner planning to host parachuting championships**

The 2019 Canadian National Parachuting Championships Flight Festival will take place at the Wasaga Sports Park from Aug. 31 to Sept. 6.

Council members approved hosting the event at the municipal site.

The festival is in its 60<sup>th</sup> year and more than 100 skydive participants are expected for the event.

Leslie Farkas and Richard White, representatives of Skydive Wasaga Beach, appeared before Coordinated Committee on March 14 to present information about the festival.

Council approved use of the sports park for the championships based on a recommendation from committee.

## **Truck rally gets the nod for July**

The F-Series Truck Rally will take place in the First Street Parking Lot on July 27.

Council approved hosting the event after receiving a recommendation to do so from Coordinated Committee.

The rally will run from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

The town will provide in-kind services of \$93.50. This represents the application fee, as well as the use of tents, tables, and chairs.

## **Wasaga Beach the place to be for good music**

The Georgian Triangle Music Festival will run Aug. 23-24 in Wasaga Beach.

Council approved the event after receiving a recommendation to do so from Coordinated Committee.

The town will invest sponsorship dollars for live entertainment at a cost of no more than \$1,500.

Venues for 2019 include Boston Pizza, The Beach Bar, and the Wasaga Beach Youth Centre.

This marks the seventh year for the festival.

## **Volleyball fun happening at the beach this summer**

The Not-So-Pro Volleyball Tournament will run July 19-21 at the main beach.

Council approved hosting the tourney after receiving a recommendation from Coordinated Committee.

This marks the 19<sup>th</sup> year for the tournament.

The event averages 1,000 to 1,500 people.

## **Spikeball returns to Wasaga Beach for 2019**

The second annual Spikeball Tournament happens July 13 to 14 at Beach Area Two.

Council approved hosting the event based on a recommendation from committee.

Spikeball is a sport gaining in popularity. The sport can be played by most people and can promote active living.

Spikeball is played in two-player teams, using a ball and round hula-hoop sized net.

The 2018 event was a success.

### **Housing study received for information**

The South Georgian Bay Tourism Industry Workforce Housing Research and Business Case study was received for information.

Council received the study following a presentation on it by Andrew Siegwart of the Blue Mountain Village Association and Josh MacLeod of NBLC Consulting.

In a related report to council, town economic development officer Ellen Timms said the study identifies the lack of affordable housing as the most pressing obstacle to workforce attraction and retention in the region.

She noted the study suggests municipalities and partners develop frameworks to create diverse forms of attainable housing development through land use and zoning bylaws, development charge incentives, property tax incentives, and innovative housing models.

Facilitating the construction of affordable and attainable housing is one of council's priorities for this term.

Tuesday night, council directed staff to look toward housing approaches taken in other jurisdictions to serve needs.

Staff were also directed to look for opportunities to work with the private sector to recruit developers or operators who can meet the demand for housing.

### **New procedural bylaw approved**

Council passed a new procedural bylaw that governs meetings of council and its appointed committees.

The last procedural bylaw was implemented in 2016.

To review the new bylaw and an explanatory note about some of the changes see here: <http://bit.ly/2FrPkFb>.

The new bylaw is inline with one of council's priorities for the term: Implement changes to council's governance structure to improve accountability and transparency.

### **Town council passes new business licensing bylaw**

A new business licensing bylaw was approved by council on Tuesday night.

The new bylaw is simplified for ease of use and the licensing process is easier.

For a list of other changes see here: <http://bit.ly/2FrPkFb>.

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**-Wasaga Beach Council Highlights is produced monthly by the town's Communications Department.**

**-For the official record of council's meeting, please see the minutes at [www.wasagabeach.com](http://www.wasagabeach.com).**

**-You can watch the meeting here:**

**<https://www.rogerstv.com/show?lid=12&rid=72&sid=5800&gid=310813>**

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