

Communique - The MMRA's e-letter -Vol 4.1 (August 2009)

Hello fellow Mississippi Mills resident,

After a fine weekend of Puppets Up, current toasty temperatures and the upcoming [North Lanark Highland Games](#) (Aug 22) it's hard to believe that summer is retreating rapidly! This also signals that Town committee and council agendas are starting to fill up. Time then for residents to, perhaps, focus on the final year of this current Council before the November 8, 2010 election. Some local pundits believe that Town finances (tax increases!) are going to be the main theme over the next year. Here are some things that point in that direction...

Public Meeting August 19, 7:00 pm, Pakenham Arena: Rural residents start a "Just say NO" campaign.

A plan by the Town of Mississippi Mills to apply a new tax or levy to rural residents has run into stiff opposition from three community groups - the [Canadian Property Rights Coalition](#) (CPRC), the [Mississippi Mills Residents Association](#) (MMRA) and the [Appleton Community Association](#) (ACA). At a public meeting, scheduled for August 19 at 7:00 p.m. at the Pakenham arena, speakers will explain the Town's plan to treat rural septage in a new sewage treatment plant (STP), point out potential problems with the plan and discuss alternative funding options. The current estimated total cost of the septage component is 10% of the \$28 million total cost, or \$2.8 million, according to town staff. Of this amount, two-thirds is funded by senior governments, bringing the balance to \$933,333. "The whole notion of taxing rural residents for a portion of the sewage treatment plant is unfair," according to Shaun McLaughlin, MMRA Treasurer. "We need the new plant to service the new Almonte subdivisions; so the plant should be paid for completely through development charges. Instead, the Town plans to reduce development charges this year. It sounds like we are expected to subsidize the developers." Existing residents in Almonte, Pakenham and Ramsay should not have to pay any capital costs related to the new sewage plant. We have already paid for our sewage infrastructure. Don't ask us to do it again. The full cost should be paid for by development charges on homes in the new subdivisions. All residents (rural and urban) are encouraged to attend the August 19th meeting. Mayor, Council and senior staff have been invited to attend, but the 19th hole may pose an obstacle!

How much are you willing to pay for the Almonte Sewage Treatment Plant (ASTP)?

Vol 3.3 (October 2008) Communiqué we estimated \$21M. Latest Town estimates are \$28M. Nothing tendered yet so likely could go to \$37M by completion. \$18M committed from your left pant pocket through federal and provincial funding...the rest comes out of your right pant pocket as what Almonters will bear directly (whatever that may eventually be). Environmental (e.g. OCWA monitoring of the lagoons will continue) and Consulting fees (Engineering Reports, etc) are coming out of general revenues, and not part of the above. Water and Sewer fees are likely to hit \$1000 per year on average. In April Council approved a 2009 water and sewer rate increase of 6.25%. Almonte Hydro users will be subsidizing the ASTP as all hydro profits are being put towards the ASTP. However, with delays in construction of the new hydro generating plant, and likely cost overruns as a result, these profits may be smaller than expected anyhow.

How much are you willing to pay for the Almonte Old Town Hall (AOTH)?

How about \$12M (\$2,000 per household)?

Total capital costs (to remediate): In Vol 3.3 (October 2008) of the Communiqué we estimated \$3.2M, excluding roof work. The current MMRA guesstimate is \$4M. Some insiders are saying \$12M! Will

provincial and federal dollars keep the pain at bay? Your guess is as good as ours! This is a Mississippi Mills building, so all taxpayers get to pay towards the AOTH. Some figures to ponder:

- AOTH Annual Operating cost: approx \$100,000 (MMRA considers this to be lowballed)
- AOTH Annual Revenue: approx \$50,000
- AOTH Annual loss: approx -\$50,000

How do Mississippi Mills residents get information about their community?

It's not molecular neuro-chemistry, but we contend that Mississippi Mills taxpayers, and Almonsters in particular, are about to see some dramatic increases in their municipal taxes and user fees. We believe some of these increases are preventable. Remarkably, there seems to be very little public comment about these impending hikes. We are puzzled ... mayor and councillors are relieved. In the current context, however, without any real local newspapers, finding balance and generating informed opinion is not easy. The Communiqué does not pretend to fill the void... we just try to raise the occasional alert. The rest is up to you. Until some enterprising individual comes up with an electronic tool that can involve and engage local people there certainly is a vacuum. In the interim YOU can help. *Citizen journalism*... discussion sites, RSS feeds, ... etc... Post an item to a local Facebook site (MAAP, MMRA, etc) and/or the MMRA's Yahoo Discussion Group. It may not have the rigour of first class journalism, but it does demonstrate that residents are informed and concerned.

The Board of the MMRA

Mississippi Mills Residents' Association (MMRA)

"Striving to promote a shared vision for Mississippi Mills"

www.mmra.ca

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