



MMRA Watchdog

Spring 2005

The Watchdog is the newsletter of the Mississippi Mills Residents' Association

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Attend a MMRA Board Meeting

The board meets monthly and welcomes all input. All meetings are open to members. For information or to be put on the agenda phone Marnie Bruce at 256-0412.

Upcoming meetings: 22 June, 27 July, 28 September. MMRA meetings are held in the Hyla Board Room, at the Thorburn Mill, at 7:30 PM.

Want to know what's going on in Mississippi Mills and help make positive changes within your community?

The Mississippi Mills Residents' Association has openings for New Board Members. Call Marnie Bruce before May 16th to learn more: 256-0412.

Find out more about what's going on in Mississippi Mills. All are welcome at:

The Mississippi Mills Residents' Association Annual General Meeting

Wednesday, 25 May 2005
at the IronWorks Restaurant & Pub
79 Little Bridge Street, on the river, Almonte
7:30 PM, in the backroom

The MMRA AGM gives members and the public an opportunity to hear what has been happening lately with the MMRA (and in the Town), to choose the organisation's new directors, and influence the organisation's direction for 2005/06.

On the evening's agenda:

- Local organic farmers, Janet and Bruce Duncan, will give a short presentation about Organic Farming in Mississippi Mills and the International "Slow Food" Movement.
- year-end-report from MMRA board President
- election of new board members
- membership renewal & social gathering

Come to the AGM and join the MMRA. See you there!

Support your local farmers...

Food means survival. So is it really such a good idea to depend on other countries, or even our own large corporations, for our food? Food production on a large (supposedly efficient) scale comes with many hidden costs. To name but one: transporting food pollutes our water and air which is detrimental to our health.

We have skilled farmers in our own community. We have productive, arable land. Choosing locally-grown food is a vote in favour of an efficient, self-sufficient food supply direct from farm to plate, without the round-the-world tour. And knowing who grew your food builds community, and boosts the local economy.

The MMRA would like to make it easier for residents to support local agriculture. If you are a local farmer who would like to be included in an online and print directory of farm-gate, order-based, and by-subscription growers, or are a vendor of locally-supplied foodstuffs, please give us a shout and tell us what you've got.

Contact Melanie at 256-9109 or at melanie.ogilvie@sympatico.ca

Membership Alert! Join the MMRA! Current members please renew your membership for the year 2005-06. Everyone, please use the form on page 4.

What's going on at Mississippi Mills Public Works?

Did you know that Public Works' projects, such as road maintenance, represent by far the largest expenditures in the 2005-06 Town budget? The MMRA talked to Councillor John Levi, who had this to say about Public Works:

"The town has a number of major decisions to make in the near future, and I personally believe, somehow, we have to motivate more people to participate [to help make these decisions].

"Public works is one of these issues. The past Council, to keep costs in line with their budget-making decisions, decided that workers should take time off in lieu of being paid overtime. The result of this policy is that employees gain overtime in winter and take summers off. With a much reduced work force in summer, little is accomplished. If citizens and businesses feel we need more done in the summer (for example: cleaner streets, brush cut, and maintenance of parks) then make it known to Council.

"The Public Works employees' union contract is up for negotiations this summer. Some alternatives to the current situation might be: to contract out some part of Public Works, try flexible shifts, or extra vacation credits if vacations are taken at slow times of year."

Council is also, currently, involved in an operational review. Councillor Levi pointed out that the Town's capital spending has grown from 2 to 7 million in one year because necessary projects were put-aside in past years. Examples of big ticket items not planned for in the budget process, but came along during the year:

- Old town hall restoration = \$1million (committed)
- Ottawa Street upgrades (widening) = \$2 million (proposed)
- Part 1 of the Industrial Park upgrades (with engineering) = \$1 million (committed)

And there are other big infrastructure projects:

- Pakenham arena roof and ceiling in arena = approximately \$200 000
- Road repaving and chip and tar surfacing Ramsay/Pakenham = approx. \$200 000

Councillor Levi's closing words: "I think all are worthy projects, but even with a fulltime planner on board we are doing very little to plan the way ahead. Without long range planning we will keep working adhoc, which in my mind will lead to more serious problems down the road."

submitted by Jill McCubbin

Waste Reduction and Recycling efforts in Mississippi Mills

- MM Freecycle group (affiliated with the MMRA) started in May 2004 and has 126 members! Freecycle is designed to allow "reuse-recycle" of those things that are no longer used, but too good to throw out. Join at: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/mm-freecycle/>
- Purple Bins instead of bags for shoppers in grocery stores
- Town sponsored cloth bags for consumers on sale for \$3 at many MM shops and at the Town offices
- second hand stores: The Hub at 118 Mill St. and the Hub's Rebound Store at 25A Industrial Dr., Almonte
- Spring and Fall Pitch-In Program
- Miss Mills compost bins, office paper recycle bins, and rain barrels (call Town office at 256-2064)
- Miss Mills large item curbside exchange/collection day: May 14, 2005
- Lanark County Bluebox Program
- Municipal Compost at Howie Road dump site
- Local leaf compost site at Potvin's property at 38 Carss St., Almonte
- Carleton Place Hazardous Waste depot
- LCBO recycles bags, cardboard beer carriers, and green plastic nets
- Beer Store recycles beer caps and plastic six-pack tabs (as well as bottles and cans)

The MMRA encourages all forms of Waste Diversion and Recycling. Please use this list to help your own efforts and keep your eyes open for other initiatives. The MMRA welcomes any proposals and/or suggestions to increase the opportunities for Waste Diversion and Recycling in our Town. submitted by Mike Boire

The House is finished. Who's going to guard it?

"We're talking about the COP"

The Mississippi Mills Community Official Plan (COP) is finished. It has been turned over to Council. Three years of sometimes intense discussion brought forward some very positive and even innovative ideas. Many times, we wondered where we were heading and I am sure we gave a few scares to Council on our course of action. But we did it! The document is done; "we've got, what we've got."

The new COP is all about land use. Let's face it, everything we do in this community involves land use. We build on it, play on it, pray on it, drive on it and conduct commerce on it. We gain a great sense of spirituality and well-being from our land, providing we use it constructively and sustainably. The wording in the new Plan will give every citizen hope, pleasure and security as to how our land is going to be used in the next twenty-five years.

The constructors of the COP were representative of sixteen different organisations in Mississippi Mills. Memberships from these organisations number into the upper hundreds. Add to that the hundreds who attended workshops and filled out surveys and you can probably count a few thousand fingerprints on the Plan's development. The helmsman steering us through this monumental task and putting our ideas into words on print was our own Town Planner Forbes

Symon. Having a planner of Forbes' caliber was instrumental in bringing forth the thoughts that went into the Plan. We owe a big round of applause to Forbes.

So now that the document is finished, what happens to it next?! Council and then the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing both get a "major kick at the can." Some changes will be forthcoming; some which may easily undo the work we have completed. How will we know what? What will we do about it?

Here's where MMRA comes in. MMRA, typical of most community action groups, was born out of a need to react to a critical incident: White Tail Ridge. However, unlike many groups, which die on the vine after the crisis is over and done with, MMRA moved out into the larger forum of community affairs and continued its thoughtful, constructive, helpful participation to the benefit of Council, staff and to we citizens. MMRA doesn't agree with all things Council or staff do, and we are quick to say so, as constructively as we can.

MMRA now has a golden opportunity to work to ensure that all of the ideas in our Plan are adhered to over the coming years. Firstly, it must play a watchdog role. It must rally its members to "be there" both with collective response to issues and with small working groups continuing to harness the in-depth research capabilities of the community. Collectively, we have a great amount of interest in what happens to land uses. Here's MMRA's chance to grow in stature and image.

submitted by Cliff Bennett

(see MMRA resolution on page 4 of this newsletter)

Support a good initiative...

Soil in Almonte's old Baker's Quarry (the land bordered by Mitcheson, Martin and Carss) is contaminated. So far, water samples are inconclusive. A situation with old roots, it can't be blamed on any one polluter: A long defunct dump in the area, Charlie Baker's old scrap metal yard, perhaps even the railway may all be partly to blame. The current developers and their environmental consultants are following MOE guidelines and have begun the long, regulated and expensive process of soil remediation. Our municipality could participate in "Brownfield redevelopment tax incentives" for

such instances. This is a joint municipal/provincial initiative, but the municipality must "opt-in." Our Council will act only if the community demonstrates support for the idea. (Links on this initiative are below.) Although this is only one case of soil contamination, others may "surface" in the futur. Having the municipality start a process that encourages the effective management of soil contamination would benefit the health of our whole community from this point forward. Please speak to your Councillors about this initiative.

http://www.mah.gov.on.ca/userfiles/HTML/nts_1_3305_1.html

<http://www.gov.on.ca/FIN/english/brownfields/mletter.htm>

Something can be done about JUNK MAIL!

The Canadian Marketing Association (CMA) (<http://wwwthe-cma.org>) has a "Do Not Contact Service" that individuals can fill out online. In the CMA's words, The Do Not Contact Service enables individuals to reduce the number of marketing offers they receive by mail, telephone and fax. Consumers can register to have their name removed from marketing lists held by members of the CMA. In other words, individuals will not receive addressed admail or telephone calls from corporations that belong to the CMA. It does not, however, eliminate unaddressed junk mail.

In order to stem the tide of junk mail, individuals can place "No Junk Mail" stickers on their mail boxes. They may also phone the Weekender at 257-1303 and the EMC (Extended Market Coverage) at 1-800-267-7936 or 283-3182 and ask to halt delivery, or ask that these papers please limit their "junk" mail inserts (perhaps to once a month?).

The MMRA welcomes any further suggestions from residents about what can be done about JUNK MAIL! Perhaps an MMRA sponsored mailbox sticker for Mississippi Mills?

submitted by Adam Lenny

And last but not least...

the White Tail Ridge Update

from the Citizen Member of the WTR TAC

As you may know, a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) has been struck to advise the developer of the White Tail Ridge residential development (to be sited in Ramsay Ward along County Road 17 just outside the Almonte Ward boundary) and MM Town Council on the issues surrounding the sewage and water servicing options for the subdivision.

I asked to be part of the TAC and was accepted. The process being followed involves the selection and numerical weighting of factors and subfactors that describe the relative merits of extending municipal services or providing communal solutions. We have had three meetings and I am confident that the process is sound, unbiased and will generate a recommendation for the best option.

Tim Kocialek (Town Engineer), Councillor Val Wilkinson, and Mayor Al Lunney have done a remarkable job of ensuring balanced discussion and transparency. All deserve credit for instilling some balance and reason in a situation where there had been none.

submitted by Dan Wicklum

MMRA Board resolution, March 2005:
The MMRA will implement a process to review the Community Official Plan as it evolves within the community.

Watchdog tag

MMRA—The Mississippi Mills Residents' Association
The Watchdog is the newsletter of the MMRA. The Watchdog broadcasts information & decisions from the Board of the MMRA and keeps members up-to-date on current issues and municipal affairs in Mississippi Mills. (Published as required.)



Our bark is no worse than our bite.

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Mississippi Mills Residents' Association—MMRA

2005—Membership Registration Form—also available on-line at www.mmra.ca

The MMRA is a non-profit association. To join: drop off this form at The Miller's Tale bookstore at 52 Mill, Almonte, or post to: MMRA, 2 Tatra St, Almonte ON K0A 1A0. Your membership helps cover the costs of organizing meetings, advertising & communications. Please join the MMRA to help protect & enhance our wonderful community of Mississippi Mills.

last name(s):

first name(s):

mailing address:

home phone number:

town:

membership fee (circle one):

postal code:

individual: \$15

family (2 members): \$25

email address:

donations are appreciated: \$

TOTAL enclosed: \$

residence (circle one):

Blakeney Almonte Clayton Appleton Ramsay Rural Pakenham Pakenham Rural

Another reminder to MMRA members: Time to renew your membership. Thanks!

Notices...

MMRA Member David McLaren asks a few good questions about the WTR TAC process:

- Who is chairing the TAC?
 - Who is responsible for the final report?
 - Are all representatives actively involved?
 - Are all representatives bound by a majority decision of the TAC?
 - If there are differing opinions within the TAC will these be reported?
 - Does the Town's involvement in the TAC rule out a third party independent review?
 - Will all TAC data, not just summaries, be available to the public?
- Want answers? Ask your Councillors and watch for future updates from the TAC committee and the MMRA.

Notice of the next public meeting on the "Council Draft" of the new Miss Mills Community Official Plan: Tuesday, 24 May at 7:00 PM, in the Town's Council Chambers. As part of Council's review, this meeting is intended to solicit comments from the general public on the newest draft of the document prior to Council's consideration of adopting the Plan. To prepare for the meeting, you can acquire a paper or electronic copy of the draft. Call the Town Office or the MM libraries, check the Town website or www.mmra.ca

The MMRA is raising its profile within the community. The organisation co-sponsored the musical variety show: The Ottawa Valley Hot Stove League that played in Almonte, on May 7. The MMRA wishes to make a positive contribution to the political, economic, and cultural life of Mississippi Mills.