



Echoes from Barkmere – April 2021

Here is a summary of the last Council meeting held Saturday, April 10th 2021:

- Mayor Trépanier reminds the population that the Covid pandemic is not over. He encourages the residents to continue to take precautionary actions and to get the vaccine as soon as their turn will come. This is the way to get our normal lives back. With the nice weather coming, it will be tempting to avoid the recommendations of Public Health. But we will all pay the price by delaying the end of the pandemic.
- It is not too late for the younger (and not so young) members of our community who would like to work for the Town this summer, to send their request and resume to the Town Hall. For more details, visit the homepage of the Town at www.barkmere.ca.
- There will be a distribution of small trees for planting on your lands and on the shore during the month of May in collaboration with the Watershed Organization – Rouge, Petite Nation and Saumon. The Town administration will get the small trees and will organize the free distribution probably on the May 15th and 16th weekend. More details will be communicated at a later date.
- Regarding the spreading of pesticides on the territory of the Town, the Town Management has contacted the Town of Mont-Tremblant and the Ministry of Environment to have Barkmere removed from the list of municipalities included in the authorization. The Town of Mont-Tremblant refused to do it. As for the Ministry, the representative declared that the company nevertheless needed to obtain the permission of the Town of Barkmere before proceeding to any spreading. After being contacted, this company has confirmed in writing that they will respect our decision and will not proceed to any spreading on our territory.
- The new external auditor of the Town has finished the preparation of the financial statements for the year 2020, and those were presented during the Council meeting. Councillor Marc Frédette gave a brief summary :
 - In 2020, the surplus was \$210,000 stemming from \$103,000 in higher revenues versus budget mostly due to significant real estate transactions. Welcome tax receipt was higher by \$65,000. The expenses are also down \$107,000 primarily due to lower legal expenses by \$70,000 as the case was postponed. The Town has used \$147,000 of the surplus to minimize 2021 taxes.

Following the recommendations of the auditor, Council will proceed with the introduction of a bylaw to create a working capital fund and to allocate the Town surplus.

The summary of the financial statements will be made available for consultation.

- The Council has renewed the hiring of Ms. Kirstin Lachance as specialist in environment for the 2021 summer season. Ms. Lachance, as she did last year, will work on the sampling of Lake waters, to the campaign against the milfoil, and other necessary studies regarding the zone upstream from Bark Lake.
- During an information session organized by the Ministry of Forests, Fauna and Parks (MFFP), they presented a new plan for the forestry operations on the territory of the MRC of Laurentides. This plan includes another forest cut directly in the zone upstream from Bark Lake, between the Lake and the Jack-Rabbit Ecological Preserve. This zone includes three main tributaries of the Lake.

The Council members have adopted a resolution to strongly oppose this cut and will begin political actions to force the Ministry to back off. The Town has been working for years to try and protective this sensitive sector, which is comprised of wetlands essential to the health of the Lake. It is imperative that the MFFP begins to see the reality of the Laurentians, and understands that the public forest is not simply a reserve of trees to cut anymore.

- The municipalities that formed the Fire Service of the Northwestern section of the MRC (RINOL) will soon proceed to the dissolution of the company. Most of these municipalities have already accepted the offer from the Town of Mont-Tremblant for the coverage of their territory by their fire services. The Town of Barkmere is therefore forced to also accept this offer, even if it seems unacceptable. The Town of Mont-Tremblant maintains that its offer is to take it or leave it. Mayor Trépanier reminded that the formula of sharing costs only on the basis of the real estate value of the municipalities serviced, is very costly and detrimental for Barkmere, without any improvement of the service itself.

It will therefore cost more than double for the fire services, which will have a major impact on our taxes. If the new service would become effective in 2021, Council would propose to use a portion of the surplus to absorb the increase this year, and avoid having to send another bill to our taxpayers.

The Mayor reminds that the Fire Services Act forces municipalities to have a fire service meeting the requirements of the Risk Coverage Plan of their MRC. In our case, this plan specifies that Barkmere must have an agreement with surrounding municipalities for this service, as it would be impossible for Barkmere to meet the requirements of the law.

- ❖ We remind you that it is very important to ensure that your smoke detectors are in good working conditions, including those in the cottages. They remain one of the best solutions to save lives.

- At the last Mayor's Council of the MRC, the MFFP made a presentation to the mayors, but these reacted strongly, and reminded the Ministry representatives that we were all fed up with their attitude. The mayors insisted that the public forest is... public, and not the exclusive usage by the Ministry to cut trees.

The Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing rejected the plan prepared by the MRC to identify territories incompatible with mining activities, because it was going too far and did not meet the criteria of the Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources. Let us remember that the Town of Barkmere found that the plan was not going far enough. The MRC requested a new moratory in order to prepare a new proposal.

- All residents of the MRC des Laurentides may receive a discount when purchasing certain Red Cross first aid kits for the workplace or home. This promotion runs until April 30th 2021. Click on this [link](#) for additional information.

Once again, for more details, consult the minutes of the council meeting that will be posted on the town's website once they are ratified, generally at the next council meeting.



Ice-out on April 10th, a record?

Picture : Marc Frédette



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