



Ville de / Town of

BARKMERE

Fall/Winter Bulletin

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MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR

We have arrived at the end of year 2020, which was difficult and forced us to revise our ways of living together and our vision of the future. It seems that there was a world that existed before the month of March, and a new world since. Much hope is resting on vaccines, but this disease will not disappear with vaccination, just like the flu and other viral diseases. Our behaviour will need to continue to adapt to this new reality, because Covid-19 will, in all likelihood, not be the last virus to attack human beings.

While this virus has focused much of our attention, we must remember that there are other types of “virus” which continue to affect us. I am talking about the growth of the world population, wars, climate change, the disappearance of many animal and vegetal species, and of the pressure on our natural ecosystems. Barkmere and its wonderful Bark Lake are not sheltered from the reality, and are actually right within the critical zone.

In five years, Barkmere will celebrate its 100 years of existence. But it is really for more than a century that this community has been making efforts to conserve as much as possible in its natural state this corner of the Laurentians. This success renders our municipality very attractive. And during the pandemic year, we have seen real estate transactions reach a peak rarely seen in the past, a phenomena which had already begun for a few years, but has now intensified. Covid triggered a phenomena of exodus from the cities, of search for a refuge safe from contagion. Barkmere has welcomed, or should have welcomed better had not been for the pandemic, many new residents and citizens.

I believe that it is wonderful to see the population of Barkmere being renewed and that new people come to share and participate in this conservation project. We must all remember that Bark Lake, its natural shores and the forest surrounding it exist because we have collectively chosen to make some choices, difficult at times, to preserve them. I am talking about promoting three-season cottages, which allow nature to breathe a bit, the “refusal” to introduce some modern comforts, like roads, “connected” electricity, and some sports or other activities that are harmful to the shores and to the forest. The goal is to reduce our ecological footprint, to live with nature and to ensure that we and those that will follow us may continue to benefit from this exceptional place.

The virus, for Barkmere and its Lake, is called urbanization.

And this virus, just like Covid, is pernicious. It may seem that it is not present, but here and there, small blooms are happening: proliferation of lights, a bit of road bulldozed in the forest, some trees felled to make a view, new nautical “sports” that are making bigger and bigger waves. And just like a virus, these “novelties” propagate, also through human beings. And little by little, all of Barkmere can become “infected”. Cut trees, brooks carrying the sediments of roads into the Lake, and eroded shorelines, represent losses that will be very difficult, if not impossible, to repair.

Preserving Bark Lake and its surrounding forest demands some small sacrifices. Fighting Covid forces us to wear a mask, to keep our distances and to limit our contacts. Fighting urbanization is about turning off our lights; going down to the Lake to view it and moderating our speed and our activities on the lake. We must accept that in order to protect nature, we must live with her, with her difficulties, and not ignore her or push her back further because it makes it easier for us.

I ardently wish that we will continue to work together all of us to conserve Barkmere, new and old arrivals, cottagers and permanent residents alike, because we are all “newcomers”. Bark Lake, its animals and its forest, were there long before us. Let us make sure that they will continue to be with us, despite ourselves, and after us.

In this difficult end of year, I want to give you, in my name and that of the members of the Council, my best wishes for the Holidays, with a special thought for those who will be alone, and those who have left us. Let us celebrate with our own small families but let us remain prudent. To those who come from another region, avoid visiting local commerce and restaurants to avoid jeopardizing the already fragile health system of the Upper Laurentians.

I hope that 2021 will allow us to see each other, in good health and to recover from 2020. From our side, at Council, we have decided to reduce the municipal taxes, even if we have to dig into the Town surpluses to achieve it, despite all the cost increases the Town will face in 2021.

Luc Trépanier

Mayor

Exterior Lighting in Barkmere : The Compromise

By: Stephen Lloyd



Many of you were present at the extremely well-attended (in person and virtually) town hall meeting on August 29, where we had a wide-ranging discussion on exterior lighting rules in Barkmere. Exterior lighting is an issue that has been a hot-button for many, many years and on which most Barkmere citizens have strong opinions. To everyone's credit, that session was very productive, constructive and many creative solutions emerged. The exchanges, together with the written submissions we received, were also, without exception, respectful and thoughtful. Thank you for that.

The Council has taken some time to digest all this input, and has put together a new compromise: draft By-law 257, which is available for consultation on our website. We realize that we will never be able to please all of the people all of the time, but the status quo is not an option. The initial, "Dark Sky" version of the by-law has been modified significantly, to incorporate your thoughts. Here is a summary of the compromise proposal that we are putting forward:

Exterior Lighting of Main Buildings

As long as the exterior lighting fixtures on or around your main building are compliant with the current by-laws, they will have grandfather rights. You will not have to call an electrician to re-wire your cottage or village home! NEW constructions, however, will be limited to lighting fixtures solely around pedestrian entries on the main building, up to a maximum of 4. The idea is to allow normal lighting for safety, but to avoid the "decorative" exterior lighting that we find on many urban homes today.

Lighting of Pedestrian Pathways

We heard you loud and clear, in saying that it is quite impractical for some citizens, particularly elderly members of the community, to navigate pathways to their main buildings at night, solely with the aid of a flashlight. As many of you pointed out, it is hard to hold a flashlight when you are also carrying a cooler with a duffle bag balanced on top. The obvious solution put forward, which is now in the draft by-law, is to allow reasonable (i.e. as to spacing and height) lighting along paths, so long as that light is motion sensitive. The lights will go on when you need them, but they will not stay on all night. Again, the focus is on lighting for safety, while avoiding for Barkmere the "decorative wonderland" look which we believe is not really appreciated by the majority of our citizens.

Indoor vs. Outdoor

There were lots of questions and concerns on this front. If citizens have indoor lights in their sheds or boathouses, to help them find a hammer when they go out looking for one at night, that is fine. The by-law only applies to EXTERIOR lights.

Blackout in the Shoreline Zone

For lake properties, the draft by-law provides that there are to be NO exterior lights in the 5 meter shoreline zone. At one point, it was proposed to allow for exterior lighting of boathouses, but this rule was seen as discriminatory towards those who don't have boathouses. This shoreline blackout rule is set up to reflect the concerns of many citizens who, while they love their neighbours, do not appreciate having to look at their solar lights twinkling on their docks all night long. When the current rules were put in place in 2009, those low-cost automatic solar lights were nowhere near as prevalent as they are now. The Council's understanding of the community consensus is that the offence to the neighbours caused by those little solar lights outweighs any decorative or navigational safety benefit. Contrary to the rule for main buildings, there will be no grandfather rights for these shoreline lights; they will have to be taken down. To keep it simple, it does not matter whether the lights are motion or heat sensitive, "not very bright" or "friendly and welcoming" in the eyes of their owners – they will all have to come down in the 5 meter shoreline zone. To be clear, the 5 meter shoreline zone includes docks and boathouses.

Navigational Safety

The Council takes water navigation safety VERY seriously. We understand that many citizens find the shoreline solar lights a benefit for them, when they are driving their boats on Bark Lake at night. However, as part of the compromise that this by-law represents, we are asking that people adjust – we will be putting a greater emphasis on reflectors around the lake and we are looking for input from you as to how generally to make boating on the lake safer. No one wants to see an accident on Bark Lake. But the issue is complex. The solution is not to simply allow everyone to put lights out on their docks. That would change the wilderness character of our community completely.

Transition Period

We recognize that this compromise proposal may be difficult for some. It will involve some changes. That's why we are moving slowly on this by-law and are still open to more suggestions, questions and comments. It is currently proposed that the new rules would come into force only on July 15, 2021.

Please have a look at the new by-law proposal and let us know what you think! The link is on our website at www.barkmere.ca on the home page.

Environment Matters

By : Jake Chadwick



CEAP Programme Review

This past summer was the first of our new initiative, the Community Environmental Action Patrol (CEAP). The programme was established with the following objectives:

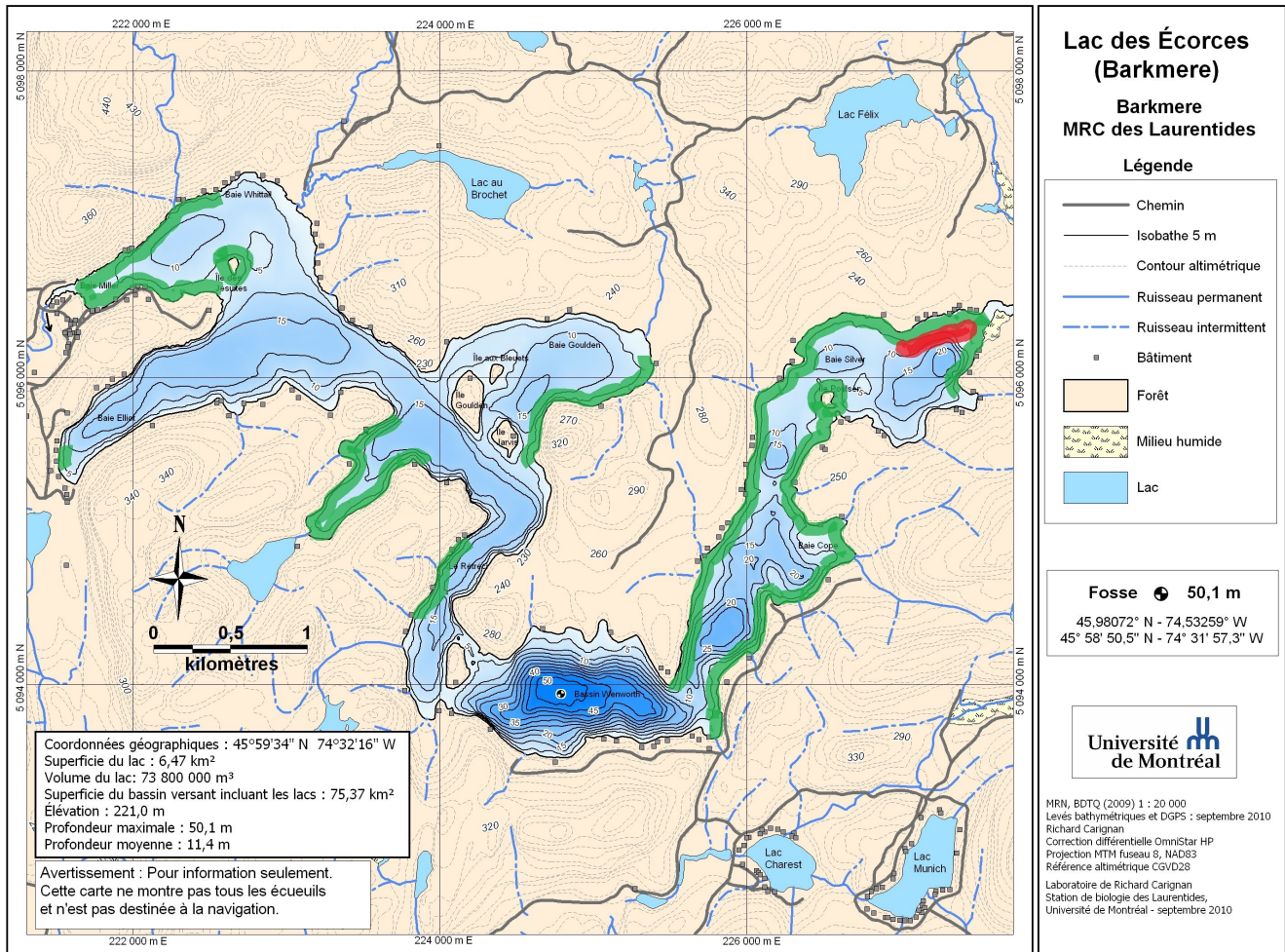
- To educate and engage the wider Barkmere community in environmental protection actions;
- To reduce the reliance on outside consultants to conduct general environmental surveillance and data gathering; and,
- To create a reliable community group to call on in the event there is a serious environmental emergency at the lake.

The first project identified to put the CEAP concept into action this past summer was to patrol the shoreline in search for Eurasian Milfoil. The project asked each resident to survey their shoreline to the left and to the right, up to the respective neighbour's property line at least once (preferably several times) between the dates of July 1 and August 15 looking for milfoil. The surveying would ideally be done by snorkeling when there was good visibility covering the depths of ~ 0.5m to 3.0m. The surveying could also be done via kayak, paddleboard, or canoe. An online Google form was created for reporting.

2020 CEAP Results

A total of 11 individual CEAP reports were filed in July and August 2020. Of these, several were filed by the same surveyor, so we had a total of 10 participants in the programme. An underwhelming result given that there are well over 200 shoreline cottage owners on the lake. This said we do recognize that it was the first year of the initiative and we accept that communication and leadership could have been better. Thanks to the extra efforts of some of the ten surveyors who covered more terrain than their properties and adjacent neighbours' however, we did manage to cover a decent proportion of the lake's shoreline including most of the more risky areas.

The map below highlights (in green) the areas surveyed in 2020. Despite a couple of false alarms, no milfoil was found outside the critical area in the northern shore of Silver Bay highlighted in red.

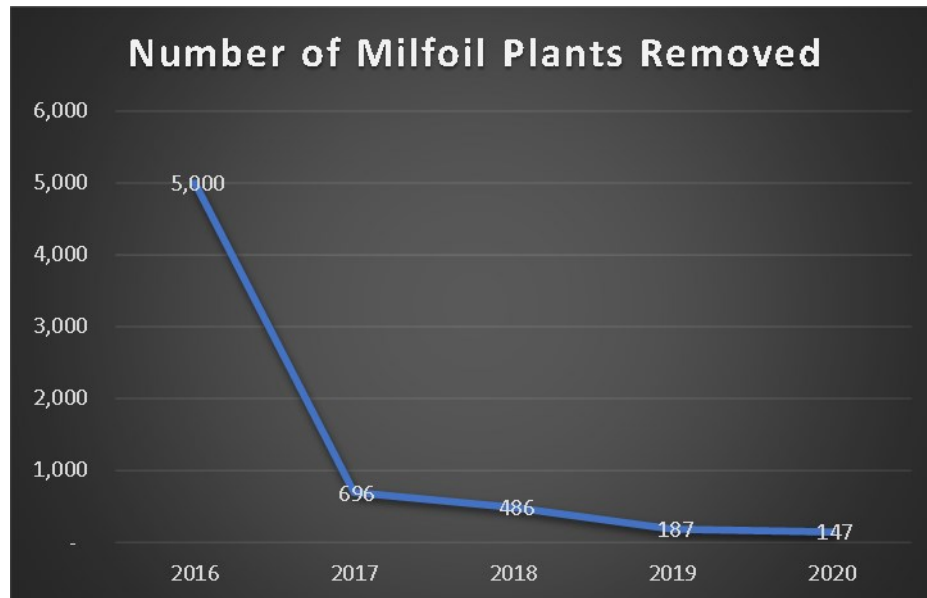


We vow to communicate better and get more residences on board next year.

Overall Milfoil Results

We were very fortunate again to have our milfoil dive team of Anne Létourneau and Sylvain Miller on site this past summer. They focused their efforts and thoroughly surveyed the critical zone of north Silver Bay. In total, 147 plants were removed. This result was somewhat higher than we had hoped but was still 40 plants or 21% lower than 2019. Because of the presence of many other aquatic plants in the area the milfoil plants are becoming harder and harder to find. Of particularly good news is that no plants were found in the area where the large patch first surfaced in 2016. This points to the superb job the Létourneau team did at the time.

The graph below updates our evolution since its discovery in 2016.



We will continue our diligence in north Silver Bay to minimize the risk of further propagation to other areas of the lake. For 2021 we have ordered and will install a better buoy system in the area to discourage boat traffic and speed since the turbulence boating is the greatest risk to propagation.

Water Quality Testing

We all recall extended presence last spring of unpleasant “brownish” algae in the lake. Despite efforts we were not able to ascertain with 100% certitude what the algae was and why it was so prevalent. The general conclusion was that it was a golden algae bloom which is not harmful to humans. We did detect higher levels of cyanobacteria in some samples but never at a dangerous level to human health. Remember that these algae and bacteria are always present in fresh water and only become dangerous when there are highly visible blooms. The ministry of the environment will not even intervene unless blue-green algae blooms are found. We will continue to develop our understanding of these algae blooms through our partnerships with our water basin association and other experts. We now have cyanobacteria testing kits at the town hall in the event there is a blue-green algae bloom in the lake.

As usual, we conducted the portfolio of water quality tests throughout the summer and participated in the RSVL programme through the BLPA. While not all test results have been received, we did not find any alarming readings so far. With the assistance of our resident biologist Kirstin Lachance, we will be publishing a fully detailed update of our water quality report in the spring once all the RSVL data is received. The report will be available on the Town’s website and we encourage everyone to review it.

Security on the Water is Important

By: Kim Lamoureux



This past summer was one of the most memorable of all in regard to navigation on Bark Lake. There have been many more people out on the lake cruising, tubing, and water skiing.

The town of Barkmere received many complaints of annoying and dangerous behavior in boats.

Here are a few:

- Water skiing close to shore and near swimmers;
- Boats passing through the Narrows at full speed;
- Stopped boats fishing in the Narrows passage;
- Boats entering the milfoil restricted area in Silver Bay.

Here are some Navigation Rules for Bark Lake:

- When passing through the narrows, you should be going at a constant speed without creating a wake. When you are going up the lake, your boat should be on the right side of the middle buoy (same as when driving a car).
- When returning from the far end of the lake and going through the narrows your boat should again be on the right side on the buoy, passing near the rock cliff on the shore.
- No fishing or stopped boats in the narrows as this could be very dangerous for oncoming boats.
- If you are kayaking through the narrows, try to remain very close to shore and move out of the passage as soon as possible to leave room for bigger oncoming boats.
- If you fish along the shore, try to stay a certain distance from docks and move around so as not to intrude into people's privacy at their cottage.
- When departing the landing from the marina, the NO WAKE ZONE extends from the marina until the last boathouses on your right. Your boat should be at idle speed (5 mph) and not creating a wake.
- The same rule applies when re-entering the landing area, your boat should be planning at idle speed until you reach your dock.

The town of Barkmere plans to install new buoys to help with navigation in and around the landing area. Furthermore, we are working on a plan to inform all boaters of a "Bark Lake Etiquette" in regards to navigation on the lake. As always, your input is important to us, so feel free to reach out and give us your comments and ideas.

BUDGET 2021

By: Marc Frédette



Year 2020 in review

Based on 2020 preliminary figures (our financial year closes on December 31), we expect to generate a surplus of \$63,500. Total expenses were lower by \$96,000 versus what we had budgeted last year for 2020 mostly due to lower administration expenses. This amount was a result of lower legal fees for \$76,000 as the main case has been postponed again. Public security was also lower by \$10,000 due to reduced requests from the fire protection group called RINOL.

Revenues were approximately \$53,500 above budget from higher transfer taxes resulting from a significant increase in real estate transactions. In 2020 we did not need to use the allocated surplus of \$71,000 which was very beneficial to the strength of the town's financial position. The administration has done a great job in 2020 at keeping the expenses under control while providing an excellent service to the community. We enter 2021 with an improved financial position.

2021 budget

This budget reflects a strong emphasis on environmental matters and services to the community. Some are one-time events others will be with us for years to come. We expect total expenses to be up by \$84,000 or 13.5%.

We have budgeted for the equivalent of a full-time building inspector to supplement the current inspector's 3-day a week schedule. This will ensure that our by-laws are better understood and enhanced presence on the ground. We anticipate permit requests to be higher in 2021 given the increase in land transactions in 2020. These amounts account for half of the total expenses increase.

We have also budgeted for a water safety patrol as part of the landing attendant budget and I welcome you to read the article from Kim Lamoureux in the bulletin.

We have also increased our maintenance expense by \$12,000 for our infrastructure. This would support the administration in outsourcing this aspect and ensure the long-term longevity of the town's infrastructure. It would also free up time.

The administration needs some help in its accounting department, and we have budgeted for a part-time accounting support for \$10,000 to meet the government standards and improve our financial reporting tools.

On the environmental front we have budgeted the following which we do not expect to be recurring.

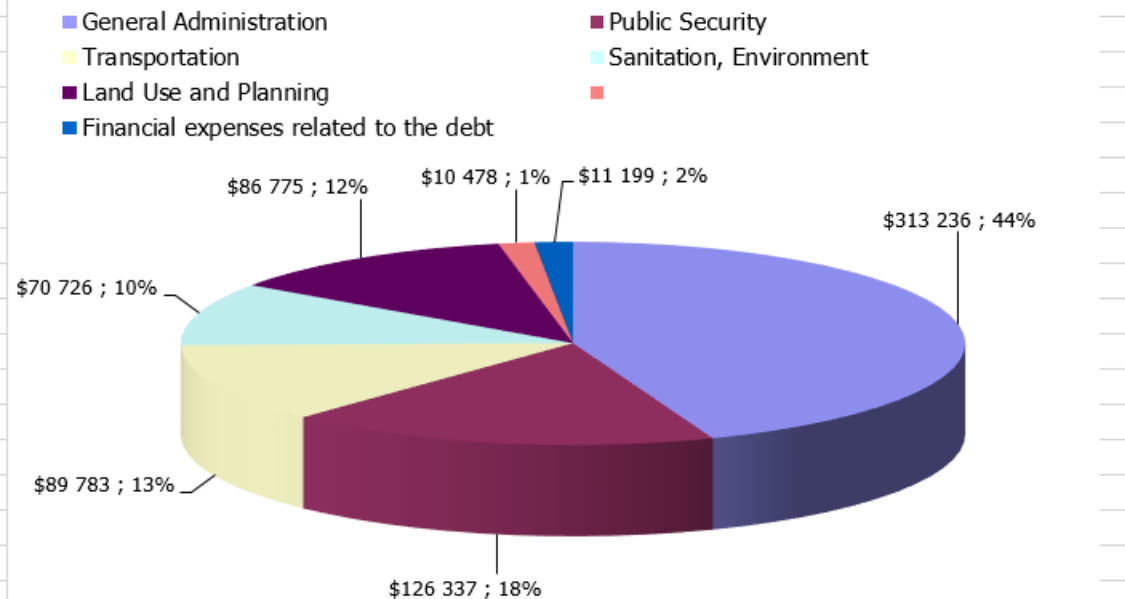
- \$7,000 for a lake study as part of program in the region and in collaboration with the BLPA and the OBVRPNS (Organisme de Bassin Versants de Rouge, Petit Nation, et Salmon) www.rpns.ca. We are fortunate to have been selected by the organism.
- \$15,000 for environmental projects including decontamination related to the removal of toxic batteries in the lake accumulated over the past 70 years. They vary in sizes and there could more than 1,000 of them in the lake. These batteries have been located by the divers while working on the milfoil removal. They are made of various metals including zinc. We may remove additional items such as plastic and rubber when possible.

2021 is an election year and \$10,000 has been budgeted, based on the 2017 election costs. There are many steps to ensure the elections respect the law including putting together the electoral list, sending public notices and election president compensation.

Given our good financial position, we can be flexible, nimble, and creative while wisely use the unaffected surplus. In order to minimize the burden on the citizens we will use \$147,000 to cover the expenses resulting in a 2.4% decline of the 2021 general tax rate over 2020. Our general tax rate will therefore be \$0.554 in 2021 versus \$0.564 in 2020.

Revenues		
	2020 Estimated	2021 Budget
Taxes	\$491 360	\$478 522
Other revenues	\$95 497	\$71 812
Grants - operations	\$19 863	\$11 199
Cumulated Surplus Allocation	\$0	\$147 000
Total	\$606 720	\$708 533
Expenses		
	2020 Estimated	2021 Budget
General Administration	\$197 416	\$313 236
Public Security	\$106 209	\$126 337
Transportation	\$86 965	\$89 783
Sanitation, Environment	\$54 867	\$70 726
Land Use and Planning	\$66 996	\$86 775
	\$4 232	\$10 478
Financial expenses related to the debt	\$11 500	\$11 199
Total Expenses	\$528 186	\$708 533
Grants - capital expenditures	(13 050)	(15 000)
Cumulated Surplus Allocation	\$0	(100 891)
Allocation Jesuites & Duncan reserves	(9 588)	\$0
Debt repayment	\$19 900	\$20 800
Capital expenditures (capex)	\$17 750	\$95 091
Total Expenses, Capex & Debt Rpmnt	\$543 198	\$708 533
Surplus (deficit)	\$63 522	NIL

Expenses - 2021 Budget



A Word from the Director General

By: Martin Paul G  linas



The Director general of the Town is automatically the Returning Officer during municipal elections. I would like to take this opportunity to put on my hat as Returning Officer of the Election to give you the first information about the upcoming municipal elections.

Are you registered on the voters list?

The year 2021 will be a municipal election year. But to be able to exercise your right to vote, you must still be registered on the electoral list of the Directeur g  n  ral des   lections (DGEQ).

To verify your registration, you can contact the information center toll-free at 1-888-353-2846 or use the DGEQ's online application to register or update your registration.

If you are domiciled in Barkmere, contact the DGEQ information center at 1-888-353-2846 (toll free) or by email at info@electionsquebec.qc.ca.

If you are owners or occupants not domiciled in Barkmere, contact the General Manager of the Town of Barkmere at 819-681-3374 (extension 5101) or by email at dq@barkmere.ca.

Do you have any suggestions or comments for us? Please do not hesitate to contact us. We are always at your service.

In closing, I hope that we will continue to find together the means to enjoy our wonderful environment while protecting it as best we can.

With all my best wishes for the New Year,

Martin-Paul G  linas
Director General

A few words from the Inspector

By: **Marc-André Paquin**

The municipal inspector's job is to deliver permits and see to the implementation of by-laws. Its role encompasses giving information to citizens, which is different from being a consultant. The inspector delivers an authorization only when presented with an application with all the necessary documentation.

At Barkmere, the good maintenance of septic systems is judged to be a priority for the lake's water quality. The protection of the 15-meter shoreline zone is also very important. That's why these aspects are controlled resolutely. The goal is to preserve the water quality and keep the natural conditions of the shoreline as pristine as possible.

The Local Leisure & Recreation Committee

By: Lyne Valois, President

Hello !

We were disappointed of not having been able to offer activities during the course of this year. We hope to have the possibility to gather together again in a near future in order to resume the yoga classes, hold a fishing tournament and organise many other activities.

Meanwhile we wish you a great winter, and enjoy nature!

INFORMATION ON CITY HALL

OPENING HOURS

November to April

Monday to Friday: 8:00 AM—4:30 PM

Mayor:	819-681-3374 , ext. 5100	maire@barkmere.ca
General Director and Treasurer:	819-681-3374, ext. 5101	dg@barkmere.ca
Finances (tax bill):	819-681-3374 , ext, 5102	finance@barkmere.ca
Urbanism and infrastructures:	819-681-3374 , ext. 5103	inspecteur@barkmere.ca
Communications:	819-681-3374, ext, 5100	communications@barkmere.ca

