



Ville de / Town of

**BARKMERE**

# *Fall/Winter Bulletin*

## *January 23<sup>rd</sup> 2023*

Vol 49, No. 2



### **MESSAGE OF MAYOR**

The winter season arrived in a midst of confusion in this year of uncertainty. After Fall which extended all the way to December, the snow appeared abruptly to only step back with the return of rain and mild temperature. Once again, the electrical lines did not resist and our residents serviced by Hydro-Quebec, in the village and on Patry and Duncan roads, had to suffer major outages.

Times are also difficult and uncertain for the economy. Inflation and interest rates are high, and the Town's expenses are also affected. Moreover, the skyrocketing rise of property values had the effect that the Town must absorb very large increases of its shares in the financing of regional services. Despite these challenges, the administration and the members of the Council worked diligently and succeeded to adopt a reasonable budget for 2023, which will limit the increase of the municipal taxes at around 5%, a bit lower than the inflation.

During these few past years, Barkmere has seen a great number of real estate transactions. We are welcoming a lot of new citizens who will continue, I hope, to put forward our community spirit and the protection of our lake and our forests. If any indication, the conversations I had with many of these "newcomers" are making me confident: they came to Barkmere to enjoy the peace, quietness and the natural environment.

Accordingly, the Town Council and its administration will continue their efforts in terms of protection. We have committed ourselves with the neighbouring municipality of Montcalm to a conservation project for the sources of Bark Lake. In the same vein, the revision of our urban plan and the related bylaws will allow us to consolidate our conservation efforts and the persistence of the natural character of Barkmere. We also want to look for ways of reducing the exploitation of our forests and recognize other values for them, than just transform trees into cardboard.

I cannot wait for Spring to come back, to discuss and share these ideas with all of you. After more than a hundred years of efforts, our community has grown and continued to preserve Barkmere and its Lake for all who have followed. I see our children grow, and I hope to be able to leave this natural legacy in their good hands, for another hundred years.

*Luc*

## Urban Planning Update

By: Stephen Lloyd



Our work to up-date our Barkmere by-laws continues at a slow but steady pace. The firm that we hired to support the Town in this process, La Boîte d'urbanisme, is working out well. They have the right mix of experience and current ideas and insights and are familiar with the dynamic of smaller municipalities.

The Boîte d'urbanisme team spent a whole day touring Barkmere in the fall, and have had meetings with the CCU and the Council. They seem to be very impressed with the distinct nature of Barkmere, especially with things that we take for granted already: our bilingualism, our love for natural landscapes, our desire to protect wildlife habitat and our strong sense of shared community values and history.

The plan is to hold a preliminary public consultation by electronic means in February-March, just so the citizens can get a feel where things are going. That session will be followed by more formal, in person, Town Hall meetings in early summer.

It doesn't look like our up-dating process will result in any particularly ground-breaking measures: our current by-laws are pretty good and capture the essential spirit of our Town. Look for the updates to consolidate our current strengths and to clean up some of the more ambiguous provisions in the existing by-laws.

It seems that with the recent Convention on Biological Diversity signed in Montreal last month, the world is following Barkmere's lead! The thinking on protected biological corridors, providing for safe passage and habitats throughout the Laurentians for, among others, the wolves of Mont-Tremblant Park, has evolved significantly since our by-laws were last adopted in 2009. Our updates will surely capture these new elements within our already rigorous wildlife protection measures.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge again the contributions to our Town of the late Susan de Schulthess. Right to the very end, Susan remained devoted to her work on the CCU and to Barkmere generally. Her encyclopedic knowledge of the Town's records, by-laws and resolutions was always a tremendous help to the CCU, as was her passion for the community as a whole. Susan will be dearly missed. Our thoughts are with her family for what for them will be a difficult holiday season

*Stephen Lloyd, Councillor*

## Environmental Matters

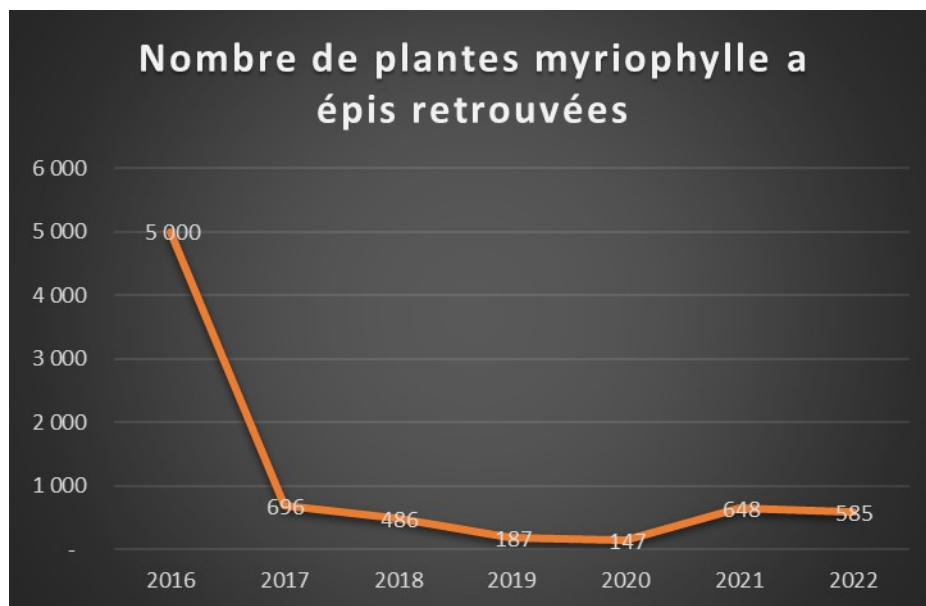
By: Jake Chadwick



### 2022 Milfoil Update

The annual search and removal of Eurasian Milfoil started on a good footing with relatively few plants found in the main area of Silver Bay. In early July however, the team conducted intensive searches in the inlet area and found many plants, including in the main channel accessing the inlet. This was disappointing since it is very hard to find and remove plants due to the limited depth and sediment. In summary, a total of 585 plants were removed over the summer. This compares favourably to the 648 plants found in 2021. Of the 585 plants, almost 400 were taken from the inlet and the balance from Silver Bay. Once again, we urge all residents not to enter the inlet zone next summer until we have had the chance to survey the area.

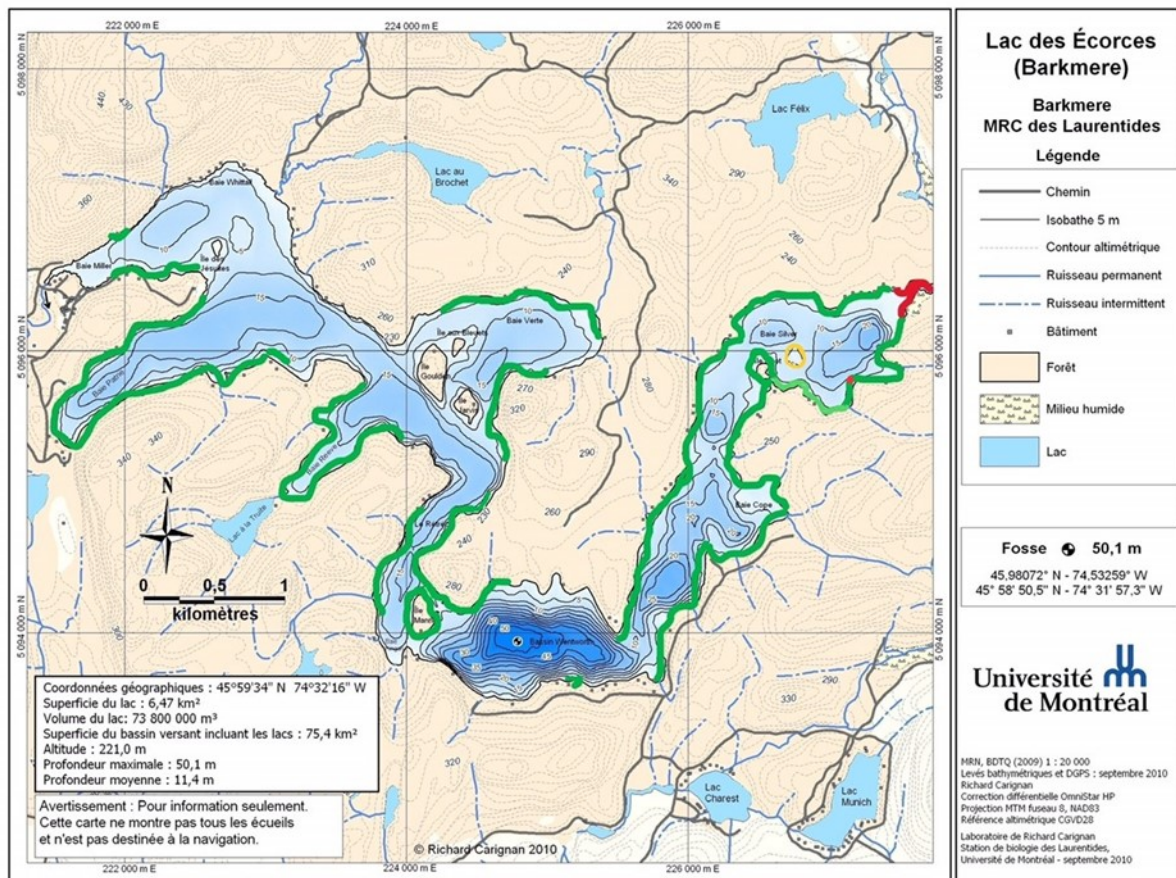
The table below summarizes the number of plants removed since 2016.



We take this opportunity to once again thank Sylvain Miller and Anne Létourneau for their unwavering support of our milfoil program. We are blessed to have them so motivated to help us protect our lake.

## CEAP Program

The results of the Community Environmental Action Patrol (CEAP) were much more encouraging this summer when compared to 2021. A total of 40 reports were submitted from 31 different participants. This means that approximately 14% of cottage owners participated in the programme last summer. Obviously we will work to improve on this result in 2023. Of the 31 participants, over half (18) surveyed more than their own shoreline or surveyed more than once, which is excellent. This “double coverage” means less chance for errors. The map below shows the extent to which the lake was surveyed. Roughly 2/3rds of the lake was surveyed at least once during the summer. The green areas show where no milfoil plants were found. Red indicates areas where plants were found. It is obvious from the map where we need to get residents motivated to survey their shorelines in 2023! THANK YOU to all 31 participants.



## Water Testing

Your CCE conducted the usual water tests during the summer of 2022 and participated in the annual RSVL programme with the BLPA. At this time, no alarming results were found and the lake and its tributaries are in good shape in terms of overall water quality. We will provide full analysis in the spring bulletin when the RSVL data will be available.

*Jake Chadwick, Councillor*

## New 9-1-1 Address Signs

By: Kim Lamoureux



Recently, the town administration installed street addresses' at all properties along roads in Barkmere.

These signs are commonly known as "9-1-1 Signs" because of their usefulness for emergency services and to locate properties rapidly. It is a consistent tool specially designed for rural properties.

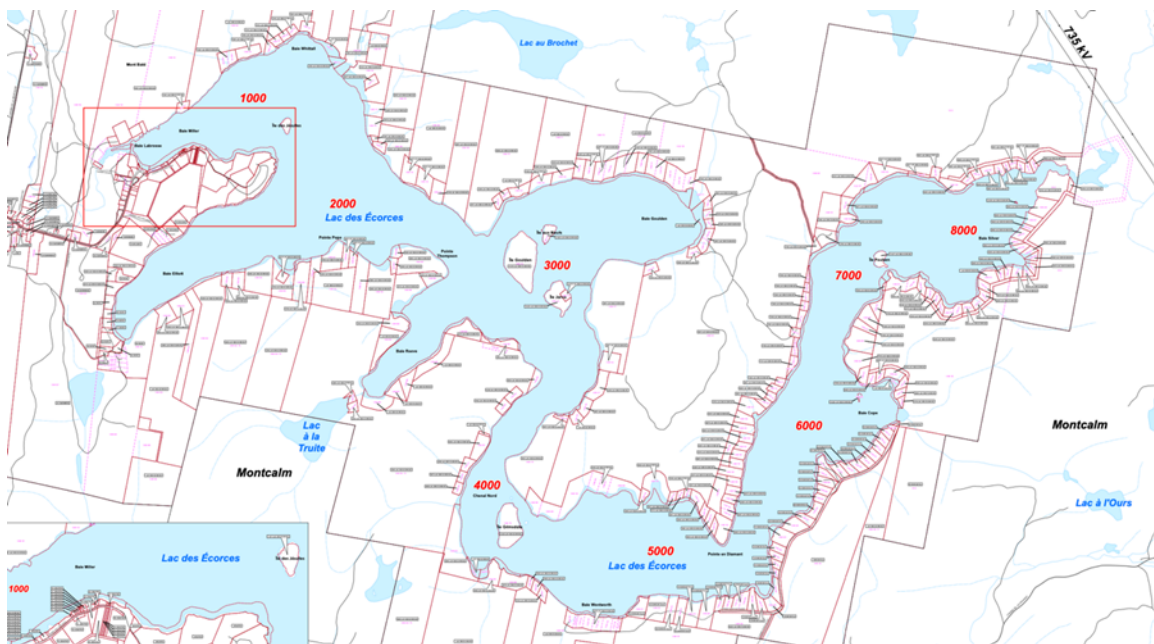
Durant the upcoming summer, the same signs will be installed at all residences located around the lake.

Here's a bit of history regarding property addresses in Barkmere.

When the town was founded in 1926, and until about 20 years ago, properties around the lake were identified by lot numbers and owner names which weren't too useful and certainly not very safe.

It was in January 2002, that the council adopted a bylaw to create a numerical system to identify properties that we currently use today, which we call LDE's.

The addresses around the lake go from 1000 to 8000 as we move east on the lake. Even numbers are on the north coast of Bark Lake and odd numbers are on the south shore. Consequently, it is now possible to locate each property easily as shown in the attached map.



*Kimberley Lamoureux, Councillor*

## Budget 2023

By: Marc Frédette



### Year 2022 in review

Based on 2022 preliminary figures (our financial year closes on December 31), we expect to generate a deficit of \$53,790.

Total expenses were lower by \$130,000 versus what we had budgeted last year for 2022 due, in part, to lower professional fees related to the bylaw revisions partly offset by higher legal fees.

Revenues were approximately \$16,000 lower than budgeted mostly from lower transfer taxes versus 2022 budget. Also, the Town administration has issued a significant number of permits representing more than \$10,000, a 100% increase versus budget.

Given the deficit mentioned above, the Town will use a portion of the allocated surplus of \$172,500 budgeted in 2021 for 2022. As indicated below, the surplus will help in mitigating the 2023 budget shortfall.

### 2023 budget

The economic uncertainty and inflation are affecting everyone for many reasons and, unfortunately, the Town of Barkmere is impacted also. These economic challenges have shaped the 2023 budget.

Some of the cost items are beyond the Town's control. For example, the MRC which provides many services for services like property evaluation and technology will cost 21% more in 2023. The snow removal cost is also going up by 25% in 2023 versus 2022.

Salaries and benefits for the Town employees represent 29% of total operating expenses. The recent inflation figures have put pressure on everyone's purchasing power and we anticipate the increase in the Town's 2023 salary cost to be in line with the Consumer Price Index according to the Town's Employee Policy. The CPI is running at 6.9% as at October 2022.

The compensation paid to your devoted counsellors and mayor is still at \$6,615 (not a typo and in total - not per individual) and has stayed at this level since 2010, the first year most of us got elected. We will keep them flat, again, for 2023.

In 2023, the legal costs are expecting to increase to \$117,000 from \$82,000 in 2022 mostly related to the court case that has been postponed for some time. Please note that we have reserved additional funds from the surplus for other potential legal challenges to defend the Town's by-laws.

As mentioned last year, our bylaws need to be updated to reflect the new environmental reality. This process has started and will be costly but needs to be done by professionals. We have budgeted \$50,000 and rest assured that we will aim at controlling this expense item as much as possible. Please refer to Stephen Lloyd article in the bulletin.

As for the other costs, we have scrutinised them on a line-by-line basis and some of them have been reduced or eliminated completely for the 2023 budget. The Town administration has done a great job at maximizing each dollar in 2022 but more work will be required in 2023 considering the inflation pressure. Noteworthy expense reductions include dock rental fees for \$13,000, boathouse repairs for \$13,000, reduced working hours and waste management cost reduction. Therefore, despite the inflationary pressure mentioned above, we have reduced total expenses to \$740,197 in 2023 from \$823,110 in 2022. For a 10% reduction.

On the revenue side, we have reduced the welcome tax revenues from \$75,000 in budget 2022 to \$15,000 in 2023 to reflect an anticipated poor real estate market activity in 2023. We therefore anticipate 2023 revenues to be at \$605,197 for a shortfall of \$135,000.

Consequently, we will use \$135,000 from the surplus resulting in a 5% increase in the general tax for 2023. Therefore, the general tax rate will be \$0.4965 in 2023.

A 5% increase in 2023 is not optimal but we are dealing with unprecedented times. Our first mandate started in November 2009 and between 2010 and 2023 the total general tax has gone up 0.3% per year which is well below inflation. Alternatively, over the past 5-year, the general tax base has been up by 0.07%. These percentages are a good proxy for average tax bill increase over the years for Barkmere taxpayers.

Finally, I would like to reassure you that the Town's balance sheet is in a strong financial position to sail through these economic uncertainties to ensure Barkmere has the means to preserve its current state.

*Marc Frédette,  
Councillor*

**Revenues**

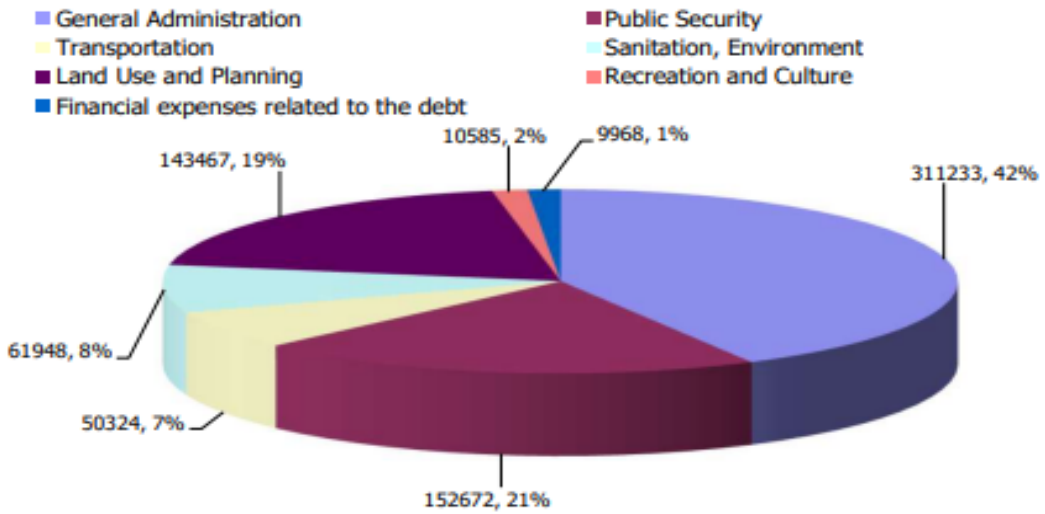
	2022 Estimated	2023 Budget
Taxes	\$ 474,901	\$ 478,992
Other revenues	\$ 133,365	\$ 96,655
Grants - operations	\$ 26,350	\$ 28,450
Surplus & Reserves Allocation	\$ 26,147	\$ 136,100
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 660,763</b>	<b>\$ 740,197</b>

**Expenses**

	2022 Estimated	2023 Budget
General Administration	\$ 306,716	\$ 311,233
Public Security	\$ 156,247	\$ 152,672
Transportation	\$ 87,294	\$ 50,324
Sanitation, Environment	\$ 47,985	\$ 61,948
Land Use and Planning	\$ 80,740	\$ 143,467
Recreation and Culture	\$ 3,931	\$ 10,585
Financial expenses related to the debt	\$ 10,240	\$ 9,968
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 693,153</b>	<b>\$ 740,197</b>
Grants - capital expenditures	\$ (100,563)	\$ (278,047)
Cumulated Surplus Allocation	\$ -	\$ (50,100)
Debt repayment	\$ 21,400	\$ 22,600
Capital expenditures (capex)	\$ 100,563	\$ 305,547
<b>Total Expenses, Capex &amp; Debt Rpmnt</b>	<b>\$ 714,553</b>	<b>\$ 740,197</b>

<b>Surplus (deficit)</b>	<b>\$ (53,790)</b>	<b>NIL</b>
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**Expenses - 2023 Budget**



## Season's Greetings

Per: Marie-Hélène Lemarbre



The 2022 season has ended and how beautiful it has been!

Most of you have left the lake a while ago and there are a few who will continue the adventure during the winter and will have the chance to enjoy in this unique and majestic place covered in snow. Lucky! One thing is sure, I can't wait to set everyone next year in our little paradise for another great season.

During this time, we will continue to work with you to conserve, preserve and care for our extraordinary community. Through our communications, we will continue to share information and give you news about Barkmere.

I wish you all happy holidays and a happy new year 2023!

*Marie-Hélène Lemarbre,  
Councillor*

## Navigation

By: Ken Mann



A beautiful and comprehensive bilingual pamphlet has been produced regarding safe and respectful boating on our lake. If you have not yet seen a copy not to worry as it will be redistributed in the spring to everyone.

Night time navigation on Bark Lake can be tricky at the best of times. There have been a few direct hits and many near misses of the buoys in Miller Bay so new reflectors will be installed in the spring to make them more visible. As well, the little rock island in Green Bay - it too has had a direct hit or two over the years, will have three safety buoys installed around it.

A serious accident is waiting to happen regarding night time navigation due to boats missing one, two or all three navigation lights. There is never a police presence on the lake at night of course so safe boating is really only based on an honor system. Boat owners; let's make sure we have our lights working properly at all times and let's not be shy in reminding each other if that's not the case.

If you're looking for last minute gift ideas for the holidays consider some essential safety equipment for your boat such as new life jackets, a fire extinguisher; a heaving line, a water tight flash light and whistle or even a flashy new paddle.

*Ken Mann,  
Councillor*

## From the Director General

Par: Martin Paul Gélinas



I am pleased, once again this year, to take this opportunity to address you and to convey to you some messages of practical interest.

### INSTALLATION OF NEW DOCKS

As you know we were obliged to take, with regret, the decision to demolish the old 7-door boat shelter that the city had acquired a few years ago.

The mooring spaces lost by this demolition will be replaced by new docks of the same quality as the "A" docq. These docks are stable, non-greasy, sustainable, and above all, they will be funded by the gas tax subsidy (TECQ) without any direct cost to citizens.

### MOBILE ECOCENTRES

Once again this year, mobile ecocentres will be installed in the usual areas. To allow you to get rid of large objects. They will be installed on 16 and 17 June 2023 and 11 and 12 August 2023.

I would like to remind you that if you cannot use the mobile ecocentres, please do not hesitate to contact us and we will be happy to help you find a solution. The goal is to prevent overuse of containers and thus cause a degrading atmosphere for everyone who has to go through the parking lot.

### NAVIGATION

Again this year we received several complaints about the speed of navigation too close to shore. Accordingly, we will continue our efforts to inform users to encourage them to navigate with courtesy and respect for the well-being of each of us.

### BEST WISHES

In closing, I hope we can continue to work together to find ways to enjoy our wonderful environment while protecting it with all the tools at our disposal.

With all my best wishes for the new year.

*Martin Paul Gélinas*  
*Director general*

### TOWN HOUSE INFORMATION

#### OPPENING HOURS

*From Monday to Friday:*

08h00 à 16h30

Maire:	819-681-3374, poste 5100	<a href="mailto:maire@barkmere.ca">maire@barkmere.ca</a>
Direction Générale et Greffe:	819-681-3374, poste 5101	<a href="mailto:dg@barkmere.ca">dg@barkmere.ca</a>
Finances (compte de taxes):	819-681-3374, poste 5102	<a href="mailto:finance@barkmere.ca">finance@barkmere.ca</a>
Urbanisme et infrastructures:	819-681-3374, poste 5103	<a href="mailto:inspecteur@barkmere.ca">inspecteur@barkmere.ca</a>
Communications:	819-681-3374, poste 5100	<a href="mailto:communications@barkmere.ca">communications@barkmere.ca</a>



Credit: D'Arcy Bruderer