



Ville de / Town of
BARKMERE

Fall/Winter Bulletin

December 21st, 2023

Vol 53, No. 1



MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR

Another beautiful year at Barkmere that comes to an end, but as far as the snow and the frozen lake, we will have to wait a little longer. We are starting to pay the price of our human negligence in regard to the climate changes, and Barkmere and its Lake are not spared. This is why we need to carry on our efforts to preserve the forest, the trees, the brooks, and naturally, the central point of these efforts, Bark Lake itself.

These efforts go through the creation of a protected area upstream from the Lake, in collaboration with our Montcalm neighbours, and by using public lands to other ends than cutting trees, as we propose with the project of wild trails on the peninsula. And it is also with the responsible use of the Lake, to preserve its clear waters, tested every year, to navigate in a responsible fashion et by continuing our fight with the Eurasian milfoil and other invasive species. We also must keep our urban bylaws up to date, of which the common thread is the protection of our territory, to apply them with our projects, with the help of the municipal administration.

To that end, we have recruited for the Town Hall team, Ms. Annie Larocque, a Barkmere resident, in the role of municipal inspector for buildings, navigation and environment. I am really proud to welcome Anne who, given her enthusiasm and her experience, will be able to help us achieving our projects in the respect of our regulations to keep on protecting our beautiful landscape and our natural environment.

Sometimes, I hear from some people outside of our community that the Town of Barkmere is too small, that it is an aberration from the past. But we are continuing our existence soon for 100 years, with a dynamic community, whose participation to Council meeting and other public meetings causes other municipalities to be envious. And this year, once again, we have managed to balance a budget for 2024, which will not force any tax increase for our citizens. Small is indeed

beautiful!

I will end right here, by wishing you a wonderful holiday season, to spend precious time with your families et your friends. I also wish to all of us a very happy new year 2024, the Year of the Dragon, according to Chinese astrology (I am one myself!). A year where our projects will continue to progress and to be achieved, and I hope to see you in good numbers participating to our municipal and community activities, and to share ideas with all of you.

Luc Trépanier
Mayor

Our secret Barkmere weapon: our community

By: Stephen Lloyd



As we have all known for a very long time, Barkmere is a special place. How many times have you been at a “mixed” (i.e. both Barkmere and non-Barkmere) party and been introduced as simply “Bark Lakers”? There is an instant recognition in the eyes of the non-Barkmere folks: “Oh, yes. We have heard about that place”. Enough said.

Sharing that special place has created a real community. We are proud to be “the Town of Barkmere”, but there is much more going on than a mere municipal structure. There is a shared history, common values, and a group of people who look out for each other. There certainly are different views among our residents on some topics: Town and Lake, Boathouses or no Boathouses, Exterior Lights or Pitch Dark Sky are a few perennially touchy issues that come to mind. But being part of being a community means that we get together and talk these things through – in French and in English!

My earliest memories as a child include many Saturday evenings on the porch at Elsie Miller’s store at the Landing, listening to the hot Barkmere political issues of the time being debated. It was enough to make you wince sometimes, but because we were a community, it was never REALLY life or death. Things got worked out.

I often think that a lot of the almost visceral opposition in Barkmere to “private roads” is based on an understanding of the hidden value of the Landing. The chance encounters and conversations that you have with other residents at the Landing are essential building blocks to our community. Take away any structural requirement to cross paths in a common area, and you impoverish the richness and resiliency of the community. If you can just drive directly in to your own place without having to make small talk with your neighbours, you tend to lose track of the overall Barkmere big picture...

It is great news that it looks like the store at the Landing will open again. I am sure our residents will support the local business and gravitate again to a shared focus.

It was also really great news that we as a community rallied this summer in the fight to save the “peninsula” from the proposed logging cut. When over 400 voices were raised with the Ministry to

explain, respectfully, that the proposed harvesting activity was just not “harmonizable” with our Barkmere community, it was a highly effective message.

It is community spirit like that which keeps your elected Council motivated and engaged. It really is appreciated. It makes us feel like we are fighting the good fight.

And we will continue to fight the good fight: both on behalf of our community and as we take the steps we can to preserve and protect that very community.

Happy holidays!

*Stephen Lloyd,
Councillor*

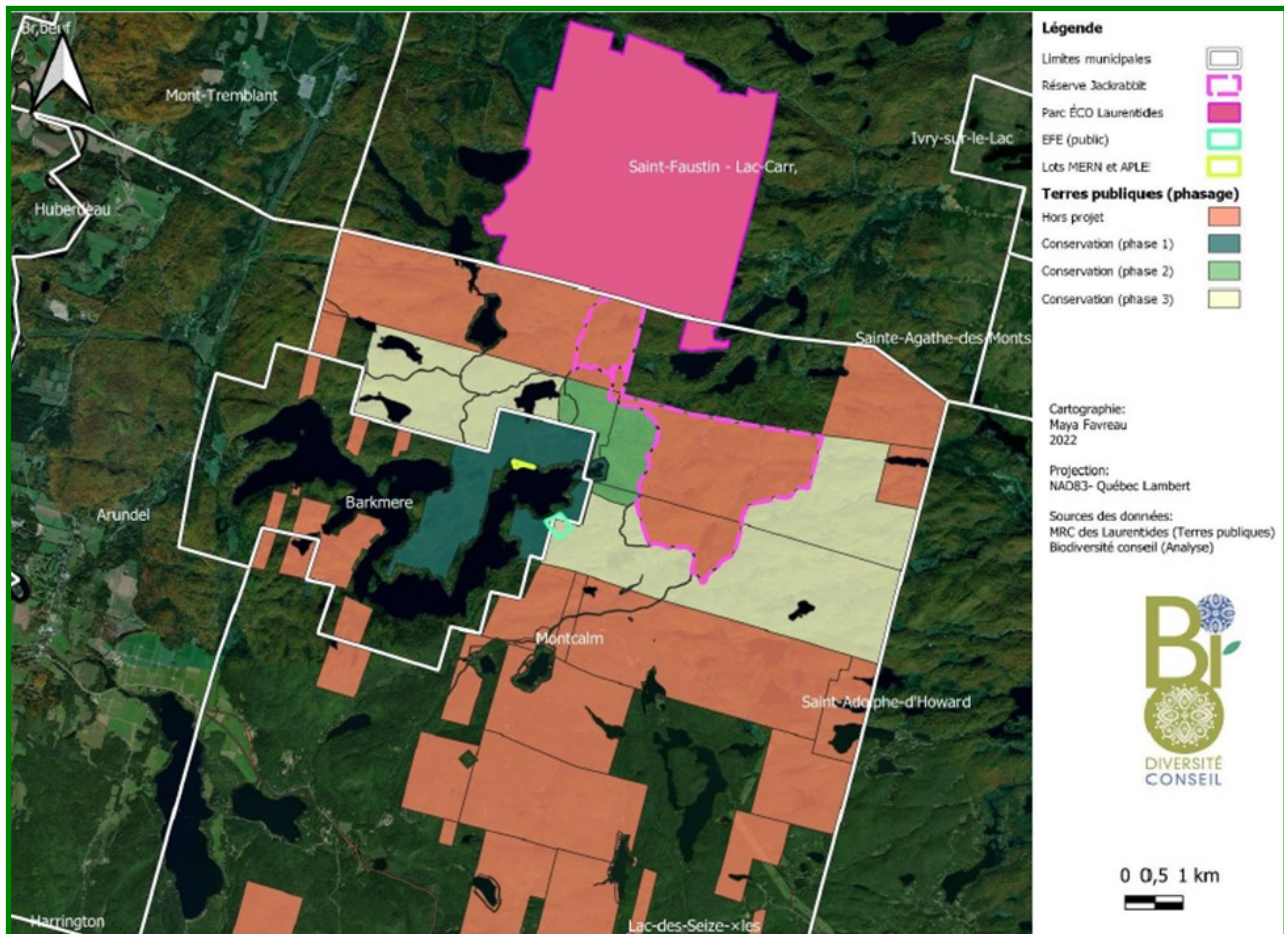
Environment Matters - Protected Zone Project

By: Jake Chadwick



I wanted to take the opportunity of this Winter/ Fall bulletin to provide some more details about our Protected Area project. As you may have read in newspapers, the Quebec government has established a goal of protecting 30% of the province by 2030. We are hoping to capitalize on this objective with our project. We know that only approximately 8% of the MRC de Laurentides is currently protected so there is ample room to accept our project!

Together with Montcalm our project envisages three phases which are highlighted in the map below.



In the first phase, the land proposed for protection is entirely within the Barkmere municipal boundary and includes crown land to the north of Silver and Wentworth Bays, including the Diamond Point peninsula, as well as land south of Silver Bay (dark green colouring on the map above). The first phase will also include the BLPA lot in Silver Bay (yellow colouring). The second phase envisages the crown land between the lake's inlet and Jack Rabbit Reserve (lighter green section). This is one of the strong positive arguments for our project: to join up our protected area with that of Jack Rabbit Reserve. Chemin Jackrabbit would remain open as a secondary access road for Montcalm. The third phase would include the remainder of the lots in Montcalm that contain areas in Phase I and II in order to simplify the request and fully join up our protected area with the Exceptional Forest to the southeast of Silver Bay. The total area of the three phases would be 23.4 square kilometres.

The main objectives of establishing the Protected Area are to:

1. Protect the Bark Lake inlet watershed. Protecting the upstream area of our main tributary is crucial;
2. Conserve biodiversity and preserve the integrity of ecosystems and landscapes as an adaptation to climate change;
3. Enhance the territory by preserving the environment;
4. Preserve the quality of life of the municipality's residents and cottagers.

As previously announced, the project received a grant of \$72,000 from Société pour la Nature et les Parcs du Canada (SNAP Quebec). These funds will finance the various studies, communication strategies and overall project management which is being fulfilled by our partners Éco-Corridors Laurentiens.

Over the last year we have received resolutions of support from the MRC des Laurentides, the BLPA, our water basin organization (OBV-RPNS), Conservation Laurentides, CNC, TerraVie, and CRE Laurentides. We are waiting for additional supporting resolutions from neighbouring municipalities including Mont Tremblant, Mont Blanc, Sainte-Agathe, Saint-Adolphe, and Arundel.

A biodiversity study of the area has also been completed by Biodiversité Conseil. Several endangered plant species were identified, and the report fully supports the objectives for protection.

The project team met recently with the ministry of the environment (MELCCFP) which was quite positive. We learned that the ministry will be sending out a call for proposals in the coming months in order to quantify and consolidate the various applications for protected areas. The ministry also confirmed that our file is in good order so we plan to file the initial document by the end of December in order to be ahead of the call for proposals.

We have also met with our MNA Agnès Grondin, who is very supportive of the project and promises to push her colleagues as hard as she can.

In parallel to the official protected area project we are seeking to have the Diamond Point peninsula area registered with the Ministry as a zone for nature paths. The idea is to create some very basic walking and cross-country skiing trails on the peninsula without cutting trees and well away from lake side residents' properties, for the use of Barkmere residents.

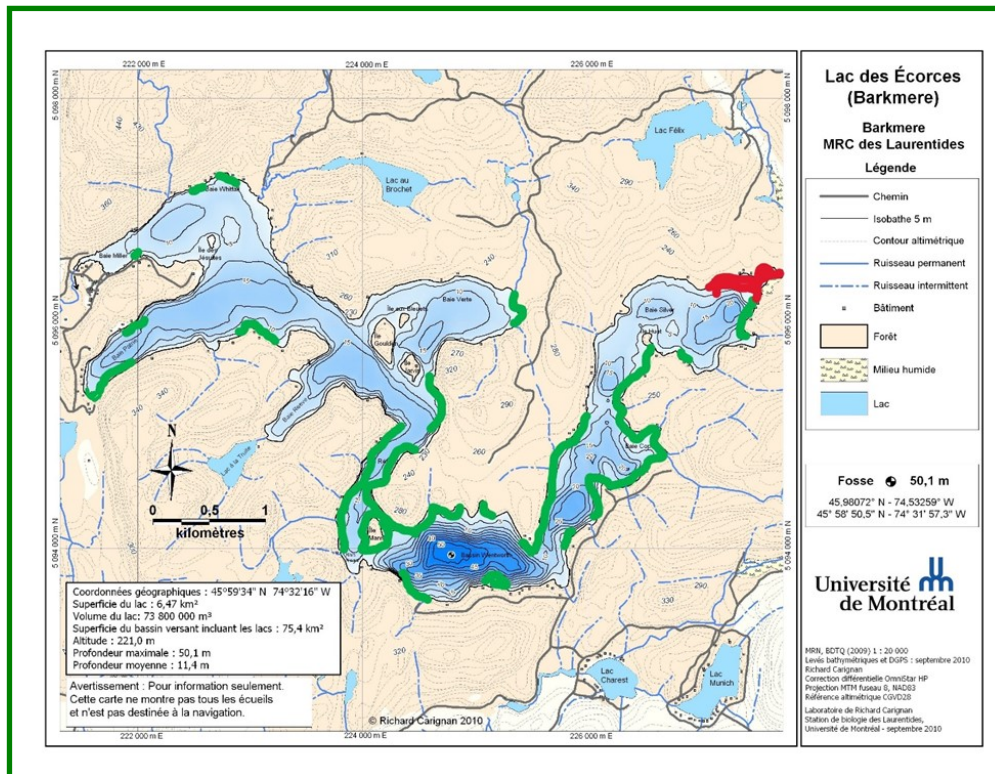
With this registration by the Ministry, the area cannot be used for other purposes (read: forestry!). The Town has hired a consultant with experience in this type of work to recommend some trail strategies and several local residents have started to scope out paths as well. The two strategies are not mutually exclusive and actually support each other.

Our project leaders, Éco-Corridors Laurentiens, are following up on the communication plan which will start activities early next year. Another important activity for 2024 will be the socio-economic study of the area to assess the value of the project vis-a-vis other alternative uses, including forestry. We will also have important meetings with Hydro Quebec as the area between the inlet and Jack Rabbit Reserve has their power lines passing through.

2023 CEAP Programme Results

Unfortunately, this past summer's CEAP efforts were not quite as enthusiastic as we had hoped. A total of 23 residents participated, down from 31 in 2022. A total of 26 reports were filed (versus 40 in 2022). Five participants surveyed more than their properties, down from 18 in 2022.

The following map approximates the zones covered by our participants.



The Green areas represent the shorelines surveyed during the summer where no milfoil was found. As expected, milfoil was only found and removed in the northern section of Silver Bay, in line with prior years (red area). We hope to re-establish momentum for next summer and try to cover the entire lake.

As the map shows, we have work to do on the western side of the lake. Thank you to all the participants. Your efforts make a difference in our continuous fight against invasive species. Now please convince your neighbours to do the same! Word of mouth is the best communication tool for such a project.

Once again, a BIG mention of thanks to Anne Létourneau and Sylvain Miller for their efforts in surveying Silver Bay, the inlet, and diligently removing the plants found. Their continuous efforts are allowing us to control this invasive specie.

*Jake Chadwick,
Councillor*

Barkmere 100 committee

By: Kim Lamoureux



Barkmere citizens,

As many of you are aware, the hundredth anniversary of the creation of our town by an act of the Quebec National Assembly is coming up in July 2026. Since its founding, Barkmere citizens have been known for their active engagement in protecting our environment, organizing and participating in community events, and supporting our Town Council.

Barkmere100 – a citizens' committee has been created to organize events in the centennial year - including those focused on Centennial Day itself. A wide range of events for families are envisaged including music, BBQ, arts & crafts, treasure hunts, cottage & historical house visits, oral histories, and key events that have marked the history of the town and its citizens. These events will be supported and coordinated with the Town Council and the BLPA.

The committee would like your input in the selection and design of these events as well as and participation in making these successful.

You can send your comments, suggestions, and/or indicate your interest in participating in various committees such as Centennial Day events (kids, ados, adults), entertainment, food, site logistics, merchandise, oral history, cottage visits, etc. to Barkmere100 at barkmere100@gmail.com. For those indicating interest in participating, you'll be invited to the next Barkmere100 virtual meeting on Microsoft Teams.

We look forward to hearing from you and to a successful centennial year!

Kim Lamoureux,
Councillor

2024 Budget

By: Marc Frédette



Year 2023 in review

Based on 2023 preliminary figures (our financial year closes on December 31), we expect to generate a surplus of \$33,700.

Total expenses were lower by \$185,000 versus what we had budgeted last year for 2023. Due, in most part, to lower professional fees related to the one-time bylaw revisions and one-time legal fees related to the case postponed to a later date. These two expense items represent \$150,000 and will be reported to the 2024 budget. Some capital expenditure expenses, for approximately \$25,000, were also not covered by available grants and have a negative impact.

Revenues were approximately \$30,000 higher than budgeted mostly from higher transfer taxes, permits and interests income versus 2023 budget.

Given the surplus mentioned above, the Town will not use the amount of \$135,000 from the cumulated surplus budgeted in 2022 to cover 2023 expenses.

2024 budget

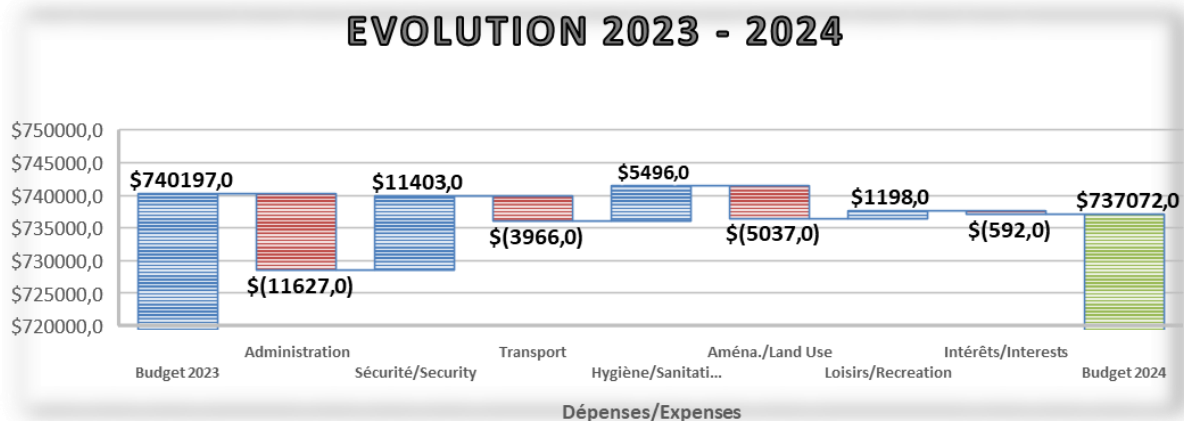
The economists are forecasting disinflation for 2024 which is potentially good news but inflation is still an issue. Also, the economic uncertainty is something we will pay close attention and have an impact on the 2024 budget inputs. In addition, Barkmere's property values compared to other municipalities in the MRC have helped in reducing some costs for 2024. However, we will need to monitor this going forward due to timing of the relative value assessments and its impact on Barkmere.

Overall, we expect the Town's 2024 expenses to decrease by 0.4% to \$737,072 from \$740,192 stemming from costs discipline despite somewhat elevated inflation. Again, this year, we have scrutinised and questioned each expense line item. The Town administration is keeping an eye on expenses and ensure that each dollar is maximized. I would like to thank the town manager for his great work.

The waterfall chart below shows the evolution of budgeted expenses from 2023 to the 2024 and here are the major items:

1. Administration: Lower hours worked by some staff.
2. Security: Fire protection increase of 15% due to higher wages under the agreement whereby the Town has no control.
3. Transport: Various costs will be eliminated in 2024 including some maintenance work;
4. Sanitation: Garbage container costs are expected to be up 42%
5. Land Use: Lower costs from the MRC allocated to Barkmere.

Other noteworthy expenses are the following. In 2024, the legal costs are expecting to decrease by \$2,000 to \$115,000. These costs are substantially 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 have budgeted \$50,000 in 2024 but we will aim at controlling this expense item as much as possible.



We anticipate revenues to be essentially flat in 2024 versus 2023 budget. We will use \$115,000 from the cumulated surplus resulting in a 0.1% increase in the general tax rate for 2024. Therefore, the general tax rate will be \$0.4969 in 2024 versus \$0.4965 in 2023.

Our costs discipline allows us to maintain one of the lowest tax rate in the Laurentians. Minimizing the tax burden is our main objective while providing great services to the community. More importantly, Barkmere's balance sheet is pristine because to preserve what we love, the Town needs to be on solid financial footings. Happy holidays!

Marc Frédette,
Councillor

Revenues

	2023 Estimated	2024 Budget
Taxes	\$ 484 752	\$ 486 705
Other revenues	\$ 120 685	\$ 110 577
Grants - operations	\$ 28 451	\$ 24 040
Surplus & Reserves Allocation	\$ 1 624	\$ 115 750
Total	\$ 635 512	\$ 737 072

Expenses

	2023 Estimated	2024 Budget
General Adminis- tration	\$ 193 384	\$ 299 606
Public Security	\$ 157 227	\$ 164 075
Transportation	\$ 54 756	\$ 46 358
Sanitation, Envi- ronment	\$ 50 549	\$ 67 444
Land Use and Planning	\$ 76 335	\$ 138 430
Recreation and Culture	\$ 12 437	\$ 11 783
Financial expenses related to the debt	\$ 9 968	\$ 9 376
Total Expenses	\$ 554 656	\$ 737 072
Grants - capital expenditures	\$ (224 894)	\$ (45 000)
Cumulated Surplus Allocation	\$ -	\$ (61 000)
Debt repayment	\$ 22 600	\$ 23 000
Capital expendi- tures (capex)	\$ 249 441	\$ 83 000
Total Expenses, Capex & Debt Rpmnt	\$ 601 803	\$ 737 072

Surplus (deficit)	\$ 33 709	NIL
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Navigation: Be visible at all times!

By: Ken Mann



I think most Bark Lakers are pretty much aware of the basic safe boating rules on our lake such as:

- carrying all the proper safety equipment in your boats
- keeping to the right of oncoming boaters and through the narrows
- keeping a good distance from the shore, other boaters, swimmers and docks
- boating at all times with the least wake possible
- and so on

However, it seems that when it comes to night time boating there seems to be a lack of understanding by some of the single most important item – lights!

Many Bark Lakers have a story about a night time near mishap and it is scary to think of a situation whereby two boats collide at night. This past summer during a cloudy pitch black night, I was heading down the lake around 10 pm to drop off my son at the landing. Although my lights were working fine I was feeling extra cautious as visibility wasn't great. Keeping somewhat to the right as we were nearing Priest Point we both noticed a big shadow seemingly coming right at us. I quickly veered 90 degrees to the right and stopped to shout out "lights" and other pleasantries. As the boat continued on at a good speed the stern light switched on. Bow lights remained turned off.

As you read this I know many of you have unfortunately experienced similar situations. Don't be shy to call out your fellow Bark Lakers if you see them navigating at night without correct lighting. It is a total lack of respect and very dangerous. It is therefore up to all of us to double check our lights at the start and throughout the boating season and also have a working flashlight handy for any unexpected problems.

Be visible at all times and slow down in reduced visibility. Drive safely.

*Ken Mann,
Councillor*

The pride of being in Barkmere

By: Marie-Hélène Lemarbre



With the end of 2023 approaching, we all tend to take stock of the year that has just passed. After reflexion, my family and I, decided that we simply cannot live without Barkmere.

There are lots of things we like...Arriving at the landing, chatting with the people who are there even if we don't know them. Help others load their belongings into their boat. Get help, because we ourselves have too much stuff to bring to the chalet :) We like to see the lake revealed as we go by boat to our chalet... how magnificent it is lake! We love to go swim at the big rock, playing on Goulden Island with our daughter, paddle boarding, exploring the lake, etc. We love the calm that only Barkmere can brings us.

This summer, I met someone, on the main dock, who told me how blessed we were in Barkmere to have such a beautiful lake. This person told me about friends who also had a chalet in the Laurentians. But due to the presence of blue-green algae, they could no longer swim or navigate on their lake. I also have friends who rented a cottage every summer who unfortunately no longer do so, because the state of the lake, due to Eurasian water milfoil, prevents them from swimming and even canoeing. I don't think we can say it enough, but we have prevented our lake and its environment from deteriorating thanks to the hard work of its community.

This is our wealth in Barkmere, our lake and its community. It is because our community works hard that we can enjoy a healthy lake and environment. I admire your commitment. That's one of the reasons that makes me most proud to be in Barkmere and that tells me that we are in the right place. As I have already written, it is really important for me to participate, with you, in the conservation of this place and also of our community. This is what I will continue to do in 2024 with great pleasure.

I wish you happy holidays and a wonderful winter. I look forward to seeing you again this spring!

Marie-Hélène Lemarbre,
Councillor

The Director General's column

By: **Martin Paul Gélinas**



It seems to me that we've just hung up our 2023 calendar, and yet in less than 10 days we'll have to replace it with the 2024 one! So now's the time to take stock of what we've done in the past, and to tell you about our plans for the future.

MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS 2023

- As announced in our fall 2022 newsletter, we demolished the old seven-door boathouse. We also purchased and installed a new dock to make up for the berths lost when the boathouse was demolished. This dock is now described as dock "B". All this work was carried out at zero cost to the public, since it was reimbursed by the TECQ program, which comes from a share of the gasoline tax.
- We extended the "A" dock to add ten or so parking spaces to meet demand. This addition was also made using the TECQ subsidy.
- The dock adjoining the marina shelter was refurbished using funds granted to the town under the PRABAM program, designed to improve municipal buildings. This program awarded \$75,000 to the Town of Barkmere. Most of this grant was used to purchase the generator serving the Town Hall and the generator. We also replaced the roofing materials on the shelter.
- After nearly a year of various procedures with the Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources, we obtained authorization to proceed with the closure of a logging road giving partygoers access to the Silver Bay area. The work was carried out in early autumn, so citizens in the area can look forward to a summer free of raves and unwanted visitors. The work is being monitored by cameras, so that we are kept informed of comings and goings in the area.

I'd be remiss if I didn't point out that all these achievements, as well as all the services rendered to the population, would not have been possible without the collaboration of all the town's employees, including the students who work during the summer period.

As announced in a recent issue of ECHOS, I would like to highlight once again the arrival of Ms. Annie Larocque as municipal inspector. You can contact her by e-mail at inspecteur@barkmere.ca.

2024 PROJECTS

- In the coming year, we plan to purchase and install new containers for residual waste. In order to reduce odours, increase the capacity of materials accepted and facilitate access, we have opted for semi-submerged containers. This project is also eligible for the TECQ subsidy, so it will be carried out at zero cost to Barkmere residents.

- We will also be enlarging the public parking lot by using the entire lot in front of Town Hall, which should provide us with just over twenty additional spaces.

I'd like to end this message by wishing you and yours a wonderful holiday season and a happy new year 2024.

*Martin Paul Gélinas,
Director general*

The Inspector's column

By: Annie Larocque



It is with great pleasure that I introduce myself as the new municipal inspector for the splendid Town of Barkmere.

Trained as a building inspector, I have also worked for several years as an urban planning and roads manager as well as building and environment inspector in this beautiful region of the Laurentians.

I'd like to take this first opportunity to remind you of the basic rules to follow when planning work of any kind. I invite you to ask me whether you need a building permit or a certificate of authorization, and what documents you need to enclose with your application.

The winter period is a good time to prepare and submit your applications, so that you can obtain the necessary authorizations with all due diligence to facilitate the processing of your requests and avoid any inconvenience.

I look forward to answering your questions and helping you with your projects.

I wish you an excellent winter season and look forward to meeting you.

*Annie Larocque,
Inspector*

INFORMATION ON CITY HALL



OPENING HOURS

We are closed from December 22nd 2023 to January 8th 2024 inclusive

January 9th 2024 to June 2024

<i>Monday to Friday:</i>	8:00AM- 4:30PM	
<i>Saturday and Sunday:</i>	Closed	
Mayor:	819-681-3374, ext. 5100	maire@barkmere.ca
Director General 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

