



Barkmere Echo – March 2025

The following is a summary of the last ordinary Town Council meeting held on Saturday, March 8th 2025:

ANNOUNCEMENTS

It is with sadness that we learned about the passing of Mrs. Susan Ann King nee Murray, on Saturday March 1st. Susan was the mother of Doug, Joan, Chris and Sarah Robinson. The whole community knows how much Joan and Sarah loves to paddle around the Lake, but this passion was given to them by their mother. Susan loved Bark Lake and the nature around it. The Barkmere Town Council offered its most sincere condolences to the Robinson family and held a minute of silence in memory of Susan.

Another member of our community, Mr. Stuart Henry, also passed away last month. He grew up in the Narrows in the cottage now owned by the Marpole family.

FOLLOW-UP ON THE LAST MEETING

We have received the report of Mr. Stuart Jack regarding the project of creating nature trails on the Peninsula. Support for the project is almost unanimous, despite some legitimate concerns, and the members of the Council have been convinced to go forward. The comments will serve to prepare a definite plan and an official request for the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forests (MNR), who manages public land. This request will need to be adopted by the Council before its transmission later this Spring.

ENVIRONMENT COMMENTS

By Councillor Jake Chadwick

We have received the initial report from the OBVRPNS covering the benthos testing we conducted this past summer.

As a reminder, benthos testing, also known as benthic testing or benthic monitoring, involves the study and analysis of benthic organisms, which are the plants, animals, and microorganisms that live on, in, or near the bottom of water bodies such as oceans, rivers, lakes, and streams. These organisms, collectively known as benthos, include a wide range of species such as worms, crustaceans, mollusks, and various microorganisms.

Benthos are excellent indicators of the environmental health of aquatic ecosystems. They are very sensitive to changes in water quality and pollution levels. By studying the composition and abundance of benthic communities, we can detect the presence of pollutants and assess the extent of environmental degradation. A decline in certain species can signal pollution or habitat degradation. High benthos diversity typically indicates a healthy ecosystem. Researchers believe that benthos testing is likely the best

long-term warning indicator of the negative effects of climate change. By starting to collect data now we will be in a better position to anticipate and manage in the future.

We established two testing sites, one upstream from the main inlet in the main tributary to the lake (Jackrabbit site), and the second in the Cope Bay tributary (Cope Bay site). The methodology employed is very detailed and thorough and looks at the type and diversity of macroinvertebrates found in the streams as well as a general measurement of the quality of the habitat in the streams. The habitat can be negatively influenced by erosion of shorelines, for example. Finally, statistical analysis was done to determine whether there was a material difference between the two sites.

Summary conclusions are:

1. The quality of the habitats of the two testing sites were deemed “sub-optimal”, the second best classification in the scale (after “optimal”). While the scores were just shy of the “optimal” classification, possible reasons for the lower score include the fact that the Jackrabbit site is under the Hydro lines with little tree cover. As such, the Jackrabbit site scored lower than the Cope Bay site on this measure.
2. The benthic (ISBsurvol) score for both sites was “Good”, the highest category possible. This high score indicates a rich benthic biodiversity and importantly the presence of sensitive macroinvertebrates, testifying to a generally healthy aquatic environment.
3. In both sites, there was a relatively large population of macroinvertebrates that are very sensitive to their environment and therefore pollution. This also confirms very healthy quality of the water.
4. There was no statistical difference between the results of the two sites.

In conclusion, this first base set of data is positive and encouraging. However, the main purpose of ongoing benthos studies is to measure changes over time. Therefore, our next tests, which will be done in two- or three-years time, might be revealing.

The final report will be posted to the Town’s website, and I encourage you to review it.

UNDERWATER LOTS AT THE LANDING

The Town of Barkmere invokes its right of first refusal for the sale of the underwater lots facing the landing. The Ministry of Revenue, who is managing these lots in the name of a now defunct corporation, mentioned that they had received a request for purchase of these lots. That way, the installations of public and rental wharves would be protected if someone wanted to acquire these lots.

BYLAW ON DEMOLITIONS

A notice of motion was presented for the future adoption of a bylaw regarding demolitions. Such a bylaw used to be optional but has now become compulsory. It must minimally define guiding principles and requirements regarding the demolition of patrimonial buildings. Eventually, another bylaw regarding the maintenance and renovation of buildings will also need to be adopted.

LAST COUNCIL OF THE MRC

Regarding the patrimonial buildings, the MRC must also prepare an inventory of these buildings. Like other MRCs in Quebec, it seems to be difficult to find a resource to prepare this inventory, at a reasonable cost. Three bids were already refused.

The majority of the mayors rejected the idea of levying a tax on the licensing of motor vehicles to finance public transportation, without adopting beforehand a plan of development from the TAACL organisation, which manages the public transportation initiatives on the territory. Many mayors also complained about a tax which appears unfair to them, as it does not target all the taxpayers, or because it targets communities that would not be able to use the service.

The MRC will lodge a formal complaint against the logging company Scierie Carrière for its negligence during a recent forest cut in the neighbouring municipality of Montcalm. The complaint also targets personally the forestry engineer who was overseeing the works. The environmental damage done during the operation was deemed very important.

The MRC is also asking the MNRF not to give an authorisation for a multi-use road to be built in Lac-Tremblant-Nord, following a decision by the Quebec Superior Court. This decision will be appealed by this municipality and other stakeholders in this case. To be continued...

Finally, the ministry of Environment approved the Regional Plan on Wetlands and Watercourses of the MRC. This is an important step as this plan identifies a significant number of wetlands in the area where we proposed to create a protected zone upstream from Bark Lake.



Picture taken from the landing on March 11th
Photo by: Shanny Larose

For more details, please 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.