

Summer Village of Birchcliff

Summer 2020 Newsletter



This summer has definitely been different for all of us and many of you have had to alter plans or change the way in which you go about your daily lives. While Council and Staff looked forward to our Annual Information Meeting this fall, we felt this brief would be a safer way to communicate to you about what we have been up to.

Council is committed to protecting our Village values and improving community and quality of life while protecting the environment and your investment. This newsletter provides an update detailing some of the longer term external risks that come with having property on Alberta's premier lake and some of the action taken to mitigate them.

Intermunicipal Development Plan (IDP) Update

This year, a draft IDP was created by the eight municipalities (Villages of Birchcliff, Jarvis Bay, Norglenwold, Half Moon Bay, Sunbreaker Cove, the Town of Sylvan Lake, and the Counties of Lacombe and Red Deer) that border the lake and share the Sylvan Lake watershed. The IDP will go to a joint public hearing, yet to be scheduled due to Covid 19, for final approval. The IDP and Regional Area Structure Plans contemplate significant long term growth in the region that will come with an increasing demand for access to the lake and our drinking water. The IDP recognizes the pressure that long term growth can have on the watershed and sets out to reduce some environmental risks. The IDP outlines that the region will provide a new hand launch from Range Road 23 and a motorized launch from Range Road 22, both located across the lake west of Half Moon Bay, and that unofficial launch sites will be closed. The IDP also details a regional trail system connecting the eight municipalities, and provides a 30 meter water front development set back policy for all subdivisions. More updates will be available once the IDP has been adopted and the Intermunicipal Development Planning Committee is formed.

Birchcliff Community Piers

What we are doing?

- Eliminating access through Birchcliff reserves and road allowances to non-permitted pier and mooring facilities.
- Providing all Birchcliff back lot and semi waterfront owners with permitted access to the lake through our reserves in a controlled manner that respects the environment and adjacent property owners.

Why are we doing this?

- Providing lake access for Birchcliff semi waterfront owners began in 1999 when access was given to 21 semi waterfront properties at the west end of the village.
- Many municipalities on the lake provide back lot and semi waterfront residents access to the lake through environmental reserves which in some cases results in severe overcrowding.
- There are a number of non-permitted piers, cradles and anchors all along the lake and in front of Birchcliff reserves and there is an increase in the number of boaters from other municipalities using our reserves to access the lake.
- Under the proposed mooring standards being contemplated by the Province, Birchcliff has enough reserve shoreline to secure permitted communal locations for its residents without overcrowding or compromising the environment.

How will we do this?

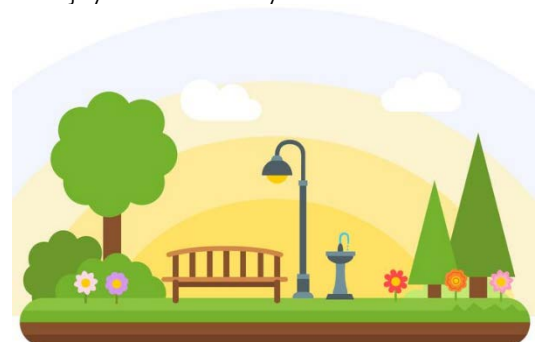
- Tanner Evans is working with Alberta Environment and Parks to ensure that all Birchcliff residents have sustainable permitted access to the lake.
- This year Council launched a pier pilot and provided access to back lot properties through one community pier located at OS8W as shown in the Open Space Master Plan (just east of the Church Camp entrance). The objective of the pilot was to test and learn from the operationalization of a controlled communal system that will later inform policy to be applied at the RA4, OS16 & OS19 locations for next year's open water season. The reason we selected OS8W as a pilot is because that location is suitable for a community pier and a local resident has historically applied for access to this location and has always been granted access.
- The model requires that the pier is user funded, including the startup capital required to purchase the pier and annual operating funding required to install, remove and store the pier. Operations will be managed by Administration. This model provides the discipline required to sustainably maintain our community pier program.
- We continue to work with the Province as it develops mooring directives. The directives were launched in June 2019 and then underwent a public consultation process in June of this year with plans for additional consultations this fall.

Providing Birchcliff residents with controlled permitted access to the lake makes sense because it builds community, incents behavior which helps to maintains watershed health as well as property value though improved stewardship while improving recreational enjoyment for many Birchcliff residents.

Adopt-a-Park

What are we doing?

- Implementing a volunteer program to assist with the maintenance of some of the reserve lands within Birchcliff.



Why are we doing this?

- More people are walking, jogging, riding bikes, exploring 'hidden places' and other activities that are neither noisy nor require special sports facilities. Birchcliff is blessed with 36 community open spaces, including 27 reserves and 9 road allowances, many with features that are suited to outdoor passive recreation and awareness of the Summer Village's natural beauty.
- Maintaining our reserves helps to reduce our village's wildfire and personal injury risks.

How are we doing this?

- This year Council launched an Adopt-A-Park pilot in OS16 to help determine how residents could participate in a volunteer program that would help to cleanup and beautify a few of the reserves.
- The program engages local area residents who commonly access the space and are interested in maintaining the shared space.
- In September, Council will consider creating a reserve fund designed to help our volunteers secure resources for maintenance activities.

Implementing an Adopt-a-Park program makes sense because it builds community, helps to reduce wildfire and injury risks while improving access and enjoyment for our residents.

If you are Interested in participating in the adopt-a-park program send your correspondence to info@sylvansummervillages.ca

Gated Community Policy

What are we doing?

- Developing a Gated Community Policy that can be used in applicable areas of the Village.

Why are we doing this?

- Providing conditions that help to keep our community safe and feeling safe is a primary objective for council and staff.
- Crime is 38% higher in rural Alberta than it is in urban areas; crime is on the rise for a number of reasons, including the increase in unemployment and substance abuse, as well as the lack of meaningful law enforcement coverage in rural locations.
- The Province has transferred policing services cost to our municipalities, yet we don't see adequate coverage and our current services contract shares one peace officer with Jarvis Bay, Sunbreaker Cove and Norglenwold.
- Gates are an affordable solution that can help reduce opportunistic burglaries.

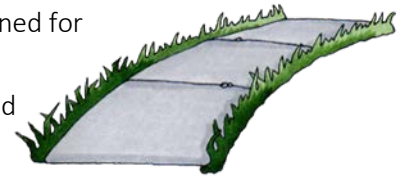
How are we doing this?

- Borrowing lessons learned from Lacombe County.

- Similar to the Community Piers, Gates will be user funded.
- Additional information on the policy, including eligibility, will be provided next spring.

Pathway Project Update

- We are putting in the first leg of the path from the Slopes to the east Church Camp entrance at Birchcliff Road. The path is entirely grant funded and will be built to a pavement ready standard with work to be completed later this fall.
- The second leg, also entirely grant funded, will continue from the south side of Birchcliff Road and will run up to Range Road 15 and is planned for completion next year.
- For now, additional legs will be provided by other municipalities and developers as directed by the Intermunicipal Development Plan.



Storm Water Drainage Update

Storm water runoff is chronically problematic in some areas particularly in the spring. We are grading the ditches between 309 and 363 Birchcliff Road and at the end of Range Road 15 as well as adding and upgrading a few of the culverts to improve and redirect the flow of storm water runoff.

Finance Update

Operating expenses continue to meet expectations, our 2nd quarter year to date expenses were \$194,584 with a forecast to come in at budget at the end of the year. Revenue was on target at \$429,025. Our run rate suggests that municipal taxes should remain flat through 2021.

10 Year Capital Plan

Managing the maintenance of our roads, ditches, sewer systems and reserves while adding value added amenities like our trail system requires some forecasting and an understanding of what our residents want.








The current 10 year plan includes road resurfacing at the east and west ends of the Village in 2025; the center of the Village in 2030; and phase 2 of the path in 2021. Council would like your feedback as we head into the September planning session on any other value added items that would benefit our community. Please send your correspondence to info@sylvansummervillages.ca

Enjoy the rest of your summer and stay healthy.

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SUMMER VILLAGE OF BIRCHCLIFF Open Space Plan Figure 5-1 Open Space Classification

-  Natural Area
-  Conservation Area Park
-  Viewpoint Park
-  Greenway Park
-  Community Green
-  Allowance Park
-  Municipal Boundary

NTS
MAY 2013

