








Town News

THE BLUE MOUNTAINS NEWSLETTER

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-  (519) 599-3131
-  info@thebluemountains.ca
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Thornbury ON, N0H 2P0
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Moreau Park Revitalization Project

The Thornbury-Clarksburg Rotary Club approached Town Council in September of 2022 with the concept of revitalizing Moreau Park in Thornbury under the theme, "Kindness at Play." The elements proposed included a new skate park for all ages and abilities, a year-round paved walking path, a sensory garden and an accessible playground.

This project presented the Town with a larger opportunity to consider incorporating previously approved or proposed projects and additional recreational elements that have been identified through the Town's Leisure Activity Plan and Resident Satisfaction Survey. The Town launched a survey in September to gather initial feedback and establish priorities

for elements to be incorporated in the conceptual designs.

The survey was open for three weeks and garnered more than 750 responses. The results will be presented to Town Council for their consideration and direction before the end of 2023.

Once Council has provided direction on the elements to be included, the Town will work on a number of conceptual designs that will be presented to the community for further feedback. It's anticipated that the funding for construction will be presented in the 2025 Town budget, with construction commencing in 2025.

Learn more about the project, and subscribe for ongoing updates, at www.thebluemountains.ca/MoreauPark



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Message from the Mayor

Greetings on behalf of Council as we head into a busy holiday season. Many great community events are scheduled throughout December, including the Clarksburg Merry Market, Olde Fashioned Christmas in Thornbury, Holiday Magic and the Holiday Light Trail at Blue Mountain Village and more. I'd encourage you to attend as many events as you can and soak up the holiday cheer!

The Fall was a busy time at the Town, with many important initiatives progressing through the stages and being completed. In September, the Town hosted the first Open Fields Farm Tour that welcomed over 2,500 visits to five farms throughout the community. The tour was created to strengthen the relationship between local growers and the public. In October, the Town announced the re-scheduled dates for Phase 2 of the Official Plan Review Project and the release of the background papers. The workshops included both large-format meetings and smaller drop-in sessions. In November, the Town launched a formal project to review the considerations and feasibility of implementing a Municipal Accommodation Tax. The project included two public surveys and direct engagement with accommodation providers throughout the community. A staff report with the research summary will be presented to Council in January.

As we look forward to a new year, I encourage all residents to visit the Town website and sign up for email updates and the monthly e-newsletter to stay engaged. I wish everyone a happy holiday season and a great new year as we look forward to 2024.

Andrea Matrosos

Natural Heritage Study

What makes the Town of The Blue Mountains a top outdoor destination in Ontario? From the sparkling shoreline of Georgian Bay to the rolling hills of the Niagara Escarpment and the winding of the Beaver River throughout the Beaver Valley, one thing is certain – the abundance of natural assets in our area makes this one of the most beautiful parts of Ontario. Underlying that beauty, the recreational amenities and inspiration this area provides are ecosystem functions, benefits and features that protect, serve and sustain our communities.

Understanding these natural assets, and ensuring that they are identified in Town policies and practices, is essential for their protection and the appropriate management needed to maintain a sustainable community for all future generations.

To this end, the Town is excited to announce the Natural Asset Inventory and Natural Heritage Study project, which aims to identify, characterize and make recommendations for the protection and management of natural features and systems in The Blue Mountains. The Town has retained two consultants, North-South Environmental and Green Analytics, who will be responsible for working with Town staff to complete the Natural Asset Inventory and Natural Heritage Study.

NATURAL ASSET INVENTORY

The Natural Asset Inventory will create an inventory of natural assets across the Town of The Blue Mountains. A natural asset inventory includes natural features that provide an ecological benefit to the Town, such as forests, tree canopy cover, wetlands, watercourses, and other naturally vegetated areas. These features are vital to citizen health, including water and carbon storage, water quality improvement, microclimate regulation and urban heat island effect mitigation.

NATURAL HERITAGE STUDY

This study will provide recommendations for natural heritage targets and will establish criteria for identifying features of importance to the Town's biodiversity and sustainable landscape planning and policies. The study will also provide tools, requirements, and standards that ensure appropriate management for the Town's natural environment in the long-term. The Natural Heritage Study will be



informed by the Natural Asset Inventory, a review of existing policies and practices, best practices in natural environment management, and policy-based requirements and opportunities to support the Town's vision and objectives for the natural environment.

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

Input from residents and stakeholder groups is an important part of the project. Two public open houses are planned for 2024 and will provide residents an opportunity to learn about the project and share their feedback and perspectives. The project team will also meet with community stakeholder groups to ensure that the final report and recommendations are well-informed.

Following public consultation, Town staff and project consultants will present the final Natural Asset Inventory and Natural Heritage Study reports to Council in the spring of 2024. The final report will include key outcomes and focus on recommendations, priorities, and next steps related to the management and protection of natural assets.

To learn more about the project and to participate, please visit: www.thebluemountains.ca/natural-asset

2024 Budget Process

Budget season is in full swing at the Town! The budget serves as the Town's financial strategy and foundation for decision making throughout the year. This process involves several months of careful planning and collaboration among staff, Council and the public, all with the overarching goal of ensuring the long-term economic sustainability of the Town.

The process to develop the 2024 Town Budget began in mid-2023 through a detailed review of all department budgets and previous year expenditures with the goal of developing a three-year operating budget and a five-year capital budget. The Proposed Budget also includes funding for items based on Council direction that were directed to be included in the budget discussions.

The Proposed 2024 Town Budget is expected to be posted to the Town website on December 15, 2023. It is important to highlight that the purpose of the proposed budget is to serve as a starting point for budget discussions with Council and members of the public.

Through a series of special budget meetings scheduled for early January, Council will review and discuss the proposed budget and approve a series of changes to incorporate within the updated budget document that is expected to be posted on February 7, 2024.

Following the initial discussions and after any adjustments, the updated 2024 Draft Budget will be presented to residents at a Public Meeting scheduled for March 12, 2024. This meeting offers residents and stakeholders the opportunity to provide comments and feedback on the draft budget. Town staff use this meeting as an opportunity to further refine the draft budget, which is subsequently presented to Council for their consideration and approval.

Together, Town Staff and Council look to balance the immediate needs of the Town with forward-looking financial planning. Residents are strongly encouraged to participate in the Budget Public Information Centre and Public Meeting scheduled for March 12, 2024.

For more information on the Town budget and how to provide your input, please visit:
www.thebluemountains.ca/budget

GET INVOLVED IN THE 2024 BUDGET

Council wants to hear from you. What Town services are important to you? What are your priorities and what would you like to see in our community?



Attend an in-person meeting

A Public Meeting will be held on March 12, 2024 where you can speak directly to all of Council. Everyone is welcome.



Contact a member of council

Council contact information can be found at www.thebluemountains.ca/council



Submit a letter or email

Correspondence can be sent to the Town Clerk by emailing townclerk@thebluemountains.ca

IMPORTANT DATES & BUDGET DOCUMENTS

The following is a list of important dates in the 2024 Budget Process:

December 15, 2024 – 2024 Proposed Budget posted on the Town website

January 8 - 11, 2024 - Committee of the Whole Budget Meetings

February 7, 2024 - Updated 2024 Draft Budget posted on the Town website

March 12, 2024 – Public Information Centre and Public Meeting for the 2024 Draft Budget

March 18, 2024 - Staff report presented to Council outlining comments from the Public Meeting

April 2, 2024 – Council to review and approve the final 2024 Town Budget

Beyond Recreation: BVCC is a Community Hub

With a 7-day-a-week operation from 7:00 a.m. to midnight, managed by a crew of four full-time employees and one manager, the Beaver Valley Community Centre and Arena is a well-oiled machine that delivers not just recreational programs, but a central place to connect and meet other members of the community.

In a typical year, The Beaver Valley Community Centre and Arena hosts tens of thousands of users both locally and from out of town. The numbers speak for themselves:

- Georgian Shores Minor Hockey Association has 16 teams with home ice shared between the BVCC Arena and the Meaford and St. Vincent Community Centre
- 12 hockey tournaments hosted annually
- Figure skating & power skating groups practicing weekly with the Beaver Valley Athletic Association
- 15 days of curling provided through the Blue Mountains Curling Centre
- 72 hours of pickleball per week
- 6.5 month long ice season

In addition to hockey, figure skating, power skating, and curling, the focus of the Community Centre has transitioned to active and healthy living in the hall, hosting walking groups, tai chi, early ON groups, and pickleball.



Facilities Manager & Facilities Maintenance Coordinator Aaron McMullen has worked for the Town of The Blue Mountains for 28 years and credits the positive feedback he's received to a good Council that provides adequate budgetary funding to keep the facility up to par, good staffing that understands that a clean and high-functioning facility is part of customer service, and good user groups who take pride in their small town. Says McMullen, "I often hear from out-of-town teams that are impressed at the age of the facility and how good of shape it's in given the size of our community."

For those not registered in a seasonal or ongoing program, there are opportunities to enjoy the facility, stay active, and interact with TBM staff and members of the community. Weekly adult skating, parent & tot skating, puck & stick sessions and open skating are just some of the public programming on offer. Once you've worked up an appetite, enjoy a hot lunch prepared daily by staff and volunteers from Events for Life at the concession.

For McMullen, there hasn't been a day in his 28-year tenure that he hasn't enjoyed. He believes that working in recreation should be fun and he hopes to pass that along to everyone who walks through the doors of the BVCC and Arena, "I want each person to come in and leave and say, 'That was a great arena! The staff was great, the canteen was great!' I want it to be a good experience overall."

To explore programming at the Beaver Valley Community Centre and Arena, visit:

www.thebluemountains.ca/bvcc-arena



Staff Spotlight: Bobbi-Jo Duff

With 21 years under her belt in Toronto as a Special Constable for campus police, Bobbi-Jo Duff brought a wealth of knowledge and experience to her role as a Municipal By-Law Enforcement Officer with the Town of The Blue Mountains in 2020, but the early days weren't easy. Starting in the height of the pandemic made it difficult to get to know her co-workers and the residents of TBM - masks were mandatory and social distancing was enforced. "Learning how to interact with the community safely was challenging," says Duff. Thankfully as restrictions loosened, relationships grew, as did Bobbi Jo's love for her new role. "This has been the best transitional job, from law enforcement to by-law enforcement. It was a matter of learning the by-laws in The Blue Mountains and I've had great co-workers who have helped along the way. The spirit of collaboration is alive and well here!"

No two days are the same in this line of work, By-law investigations run the gamut from illegal STAs, dogs off leash, parking, construction noise after hours, and more. Seasonally, calls regarding long grass, drainage, and weeds in spring, summer & fall, or snow in the winter, keeps the Town's By-Law Enforcement Officers busy year-round.

Compliance is the ultimate goal for a Municipal By-law Enforcement Officer and Duff is proud to report that they almost always achieve that when situations are approached with a lens of education and awareness.



While enforcement is part of the job, there's much more to it, and Duff hopes that the public can see beyond the uniform and get to know her and her fellow By-law Officers personally, "We're humans too and we're nice people! Getting to know residents and listening is a big part of our job."

Beyond her role with the Town, Bobbi Jo has been attracted to the outdoor lifestyle the Town of Blue embodies and has been visiting the area to snowboard and mountain bike for 20 years. In fact, she loved it so much that she and her spouse were married atop the escarpment! Nowadays, hiking, snowboarding, SUP'ing, and most recently yoga at Yoga Journey fill her free time. For someone who was already so invested in this region, working for the municipality has been a match made in heaven. Next time you're in Town and see Bobbi-Jo or her By-Law Enforcement colleagues, don't be scared to strike up a conversation!



Overnight Winter Parking Restrictions

Overnight parking is prohibited on all Town streets from 2:00 a.m. to 7:00 a.m. These restrictions remain in effect until April 1, 2024.

Thornbury West Phase 1 Update

Since preliminary engineering on Alice Street West and Elma Street South began in 2016, the Thornbury West Reconstruction project has evolved into the largest urban capital infrastructure replacement project in the history of the Town of The Blue Mountains. This past summer, Arnott Construction completed work on Phase 1A of the project which included portions of Victoria Street South, Beaver Street South, Elma Street South, Louisa Street West and Alice Street West. The scope of work included the full reconstruction of all aboveground and underground infrastructure including sanitary sewers, watermains, storm sewers, sidewalks, boulevards, street trees, road surfaces and the construction of a new parkette on Beaver Street.

With Phase 1A completed, the Town is looking ahead to the construction of Phase 1B which will begin in the spring of 2024. This phase will include Louisa Street West from Bruce Street to Elma Street, Elma Street South from Louisa Street to Alfred Street, Park Lane, Lorne Street, the remainder of Alice Street West from Bruce Street to the end of the Phase 1A construction boundary and the construction of a new parkette on Louisa Street.

Over the past year, the Town has committed additional time to thoroughly evaluate the design of Phase 1B with Tatham Engineering.

Through these efforts, opportunities to retain existing mature trees within the project boundaries have been identified.

However, significant tree removals will still be required throughout this area due to tree health, grading, road cross sections and conflicts with drinking water, storm sewer and sanitary sewer services. Trees slated for removal were marked by the Town's project team in early November and will be removed through the winter. An inventory and health assessment of all trees within the project boundaries was completed by an arborist in February of 2021, and health and conditions have been monitored since that time. Deterioration has been noted amongst multiple trees located in close proximity to properties that have seen significant renovations, new builds or service pipes replaced.

The Thornbury West Reconstruction project will ensure the Town's vital infrastructure systems are prepared to continue reliably serving residents for years to come. It's anticipated that the construction tender for Phase 1B will be awarded in late 2023 or early 2024.

For ongoing updates regarding the project, visit the Town's project web page at www.thebluemountains.ca/ThornburyWestPhase1 and subscribe to the project email list.



Ontario Provincial Police Auxiliary Program

On behalf of the Collingwood and Blue Mountains Ontario Provincial Police, Detachment Commander Loris Licharson would like to share information regarding an opportunity for residents to volunteer with the Auxiliary Program to help support the local community.

The OPP Auxiliary is a volunteer position that works with regular force OPP officers to ensure safety and well-being for the local communities throughout the Province. Duties may include patrols with regular members and assisting with community events, seat belt clinics, RIDE initiatives, safety displays, presentations, victim assistance and ceremonial duties.

Locally, the Auxiliary Unit helps support various initiatives, including food and toy drives, lock it or lose it campaigns, traffic control and support for community events such as the Coldest Night of the Year, Collingwood Santa Claus Parade and the Collingwood Pride Parade.

"The Auxiliary program is a great opportunity for residents to be involved with the local community," explained Detachment Commander Loris Licharson. "The Auxiliary Unit works alongside our regular force members to make a difference throughout Collingwood and The Blue Mountains.

To learn more about the Auxiliary program, including the qualifications and application process, visit:
www.opp.ca/careers



For a complete listing of holiday events, visit: www.exploreblue.ca/events