



Town News

THE BLUE MOUNTAINS NEWSLETTER

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www.thebluemountains.ca



Town Hall, 32 Mill St.
Thornbury ON, N0H 2P0



Hours of Operation:
Monday to Friday
8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

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To sign up, visit:

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Please Recycle
After Reading

Volunteer Recognition Awards & Community Volunteer Fair

The Town of The Blue Mountains is pleased to announce the return of the 2nd annual Volunteer Recognition Awards event happening on Saturday, April 22, 2023 in celebration of National Volunteer Recognition Week.

The Town's annual Volunteer Recognition Awards event aims to celebrate and honour outstanding residents, community groups and organizations who work to enhance the quality of life in The Blue Mountains.

The nomination period will be open from March 7, 2023 until March 21, 2023. When open, nominations can be submitted on the Town website. All residents are encouraged to submit nominations for those individuals or groups that have made a significant contribution to our community. One individual award and one group award is available per category unless otherwise stated.

New this year, the Town has partnered with The Blue Mountains Seniors Network to host the event and to offer a community volunteer fair immediately following the award presentations. The volunteer fair will feature various organizations and groups that are actively seeking new members and volunteers. The fair will be an excellent opportunity for residents to learn how to get involved and support the local community.

Award Categories:

1. Arts & Culture Award
2. Sustainability Award
3. Heritage Award
4. Sports and Recreation Award
5. Good Neighbour Award
6. Blue Mountains Community Builder Award
7. Outstanding Community Group Award

To learn more about the award nomination process or the volunteer fair, visit: www.thebluemountains.ca/volunteerawards

MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR

Andrea Matrosovs



Greetings from Council in this first quarterly newsletter of 2023. This newsletter features important updates on projects including the 2023 Budget, launch of Phase 2 for the Official Plan Review and an update on the rehabilitation work scheduled for the Victoria Street Water Tower.

One of our guiding strategies as we make progress in 2023 is our Integrated Community Sustainability Plan known as *The Future Story*. Adopted at the end of 2022, it provides us with a framework for decision-making, priority-setting and ongoing performance management that will help shape a sustainable community both now and for future generations. *The Future Story* has six focus areas including the natural environment, built environment, economy, community and culture, social well-being and governance,

I encourage you to visit *The Future Story* webpage to learn more or drop into Town Hall to request a copy. Council, staff and community volunteers continue to work together to create a place for all ages and stages of life to live, work and grow in our community. As we enjoy the last part of the winter season, I hope that everyone is able to enjoy time outdoors and our beautiful landscape.

Andrea Matrosovs



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Explore the Potential

www.exploreblue.ca

2023 Tax Bill Information

The enclosed 2023 Interim Tax Bill is based on 50% of 2022 total taxes and is payable in two instalments dated March 24, 2023 and May 24, 2023. The 2023 Annual Tax Bill to be mailed in July will indicate the total tax for 2023 less the interim tax amount.

Tax payment options are noted on the reverse of the Tax Bill.

Please Note:

If tax is paid by pre-authorized withdrawal "PAP" or with your mortgage, the interim tax bill is for your records only – no payment is required.

Tax Inquiries?

If you have questions about your tax bill, please email tax@thebluemountains.ca or call **1-888-258-6867 ext. 221**.

Assessment Inquiries?

For information on your property assessment, please contact the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC). Please call **1-866-296-6722**, email enquiry@mpac.ca or visit mpac.ca

Online Information

To view your tax and utility account detail online, or to receive future bills by email, please visit: <https://vch.thebluemountains.ca/VCH/>

To activate an online account, you will need the customer ID and your name exactly as it appears on your tax or utility bill.

Example: Customer ID: SMITH0001, Name: SMITH JOHN.

For more information, please visit www.thebluemountains.ca/property-taxes or email tax@thebluemountains.ca

Resident Parking & Paid Parking Pass Reminder

The Town enforces paid parking at various Town-owned parks, beaches and properties throughout the community. Every vehicle must either display a valid Resident Parking Pass, have the vehicle's license plate registered under the paid parking program, or pay for parking. All paid parking locations are clearly marked by signage.

Two 2023 Resident Parking Passes are included in the interim tax bill mailing and will be valid for the remainder of the calendar year. Residents with more than two vehicles can register additional vehicles at Town Hall by providing proof of residency and vehicle registration information. Residents that registered their vehicles in 2022 are required to renew their registration with the Town for 2023.

Revenue collected from the paid parking program is used to support and offset maintenance costs associated with the use of parks, beaches and Town facilities, including cleaning, waste collection and by-law enforcement.

For more information, to view a list of FAQ's and to see paid parking locations, please visit: www.thebluemountains.ca/parking



Business Spotlights

The Blue Mountains is home to a variety of boutique shops and service providers, unique culinary experiences, artists and artisans, farmers, growers and producers.

Meet Our Local Businesses

www.exploreblue.ca/business-spotlights

2023 Town Budget Process

The 2023 Proposed Town Budget was released on January 13, 2023, and was formally presented to Council at the February 1, 2023, Special Budget Meeting. The Town’s budget timeline was extended this year to align with the 2022 Municipal Election and to accommodate the training, orientation and onboarding process for the new term of Council.

Despite the extended timeline, the process of developing the 2023 Town Budget began last fall. The first draft of the budget was developed based on 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.

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 held in early February, Council reviewed and discussed the proposed budget and approved a series of changes to incorporate within the updated budget document. On February 14, 2023, the updated Town Budget was posted to the Town website, reflecting Council’s changes and direction.

Receiving feedback and input from all residents and stakeholders is a crucial part of the Town’s annual budget process. A public meeting has been scheduled for Tuesday, March 7, 2023, beginning at 9:30 am. The public meeting provides the opportunity for members of the public to address Council directly or to submit an email or letter that will be read aloud by the Town Clerk.

The feedback provided at the public meeting is considered by Council through their review and while making changes to the budget.

The 2023 Town Budget aims to deliver the needed services that residents, businesses, and visitors rely on while keeping property taxes and user fees at a level that ensures growth, prosperity and community investment. The annual budget process is a balance between addressing current needs and financial planning for the future.

Residents are encouraged to review the budget on the Town website and share feedback at the Public Meeting on Tuesday, March 7, 2023. To view the budget documents and for more information about the budget process, please visit:
www.thebluemountains.ca/budget

Get Involved in the 2023 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 7, 2023 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 2023 Budget Process:
- January 13, 2023 – 2023 Proposed Budget posted on the Town’s website
 - February 1, 2023 – Budget Meeting #1
 - February 2, 2023 – Budget Meeting #2
 - February 3, 2023 – Budget Meeting #3
 - February 6, 2023 – Budget Meeting #4
 - February 14, 2023 – Updated 2023 Town Budget posted on the Town’s website
 - March 7, 2023 – Public Meeting for the 2023 Draft Budget and Fees & Charges
 - March 13, 2023 – Staff report presented to Council outlining the public’s comments from the Public Meeting
 - March 27, 2023 – Council to review and approve the final 2023 Town Budget

Preparing for the Outdoors in The Blue Mountains

Winter recreation in the Town of the Blue Mountains is aplenty. Skiing - alpine and cross country, snowboarding, snowshoeing, snowmobiling, winter hiking, bird watching, and more are common activities enjoyed by many. There's no shortage of ways to stay active outdoors during the winter months, but with the fickle weather and natural environment, winter recreation comes with a greater risk. Being prepared, planning ahead, and sticking with what (and where) you know is the best way to mitigate the risk. Whether you're fat biking along a well-trodden trail or exploring a new snowshoe route, there are several actions you should take beforehand to ensure your adventure is safe and fun.

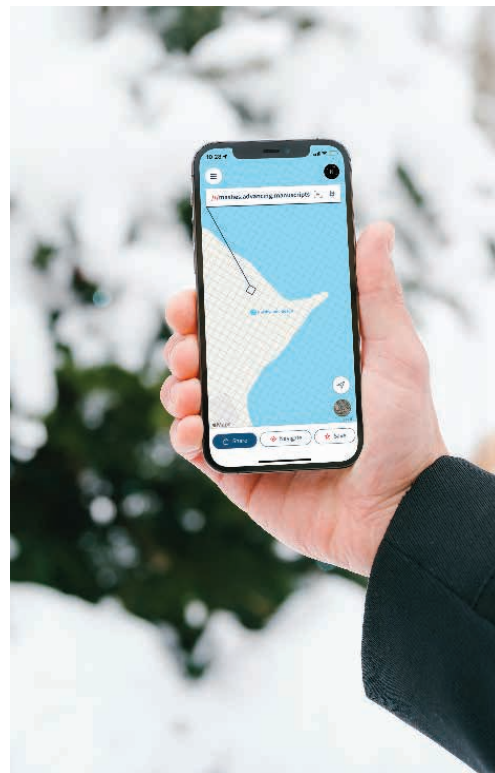
- ✓ **Know your route and stay informed of trail closures**
- ✓ **Check the local weather forecast**
- ✓ **Dress appropriately**
- ✓ **Hydrate & pack snacks**
- ✓ **Stay within your limits**
- ✓ **Download What3Words (W3W)**

Most of these tips are familiar to outdoor enthusiasts, but they're helpful reminders, nonetheless.

One item that may be new to you, may also happen to be one of the most valuable actions you can take toward emergency preparedness.

What3Words (W3W) is a free mobile application to download to your phone. Its tagline boldly states ***Never get lost again.*** The application works using GPS coordinates to pinpoint your precise latitudinal and longitudinal position. Unless you're experienced with orienteering, you likely won't know your GPS coordinates, which is where W3W comes in handy. The application has divided the entire world into 3m squares and given each square a unique combination of three words. W3W is used and recognized by emergency responders who are able to locate you if you're lost, injured, or unsure of your exact location. It has been useful in saving hundreds of lives and rescuing people who are hurt and require emergency medical attention.

Town of The Blue Mountains Fire Chief Steve Conn encourages residents and visitors to be proactive and download the free application, especially if they plan to be out in the wilderness. He also notes that its use goes beyond recreational. "What3Words can be incredibly useful for farmers, for example, who may not be close to their dwelling and have an emergency." For the vast acreage of agricultural lands within The Blue Mountains, this is especially helpful.



Although not particularly useful this time of year, W3W can also be used on the water in case of an emergency - an all-too-frequent occurrence on Georgian Bay with novice boaters and paddlers in the summer months.

There are many ways and a multitude of equipment to help you stay safe while enjoying the great outdoors this winter - helmets, warm layers, technical footwear, etc - but the one tool that is appropriate for all situations and scenarios is What3Words.

For more information on winter hiking, including general tips and tricks, please visit: www.ontarioparks.com/parksblog/safe-winter-hiking/

What3Words App

Recreation at any time of year is best enjoyed when you take the time to plan ahead. Before heading outdoors in the Town of The Blue Mountains, download the What3Words app, and take time to review local trail statuses. To learn more and to download the app, scan the QR code or visit: www.what3words.com



Official Plan Review

Looking Ahead at Phase 2

Last year, the Town of The Blue Mountains began the process of updating its Official Plan. When complete, the Official Plan will guide all future land-use decisions in the Town, including residential, commercial, and other forms of development. Policies are being developed to consider how to manage growth, and for items related to permitted housing, density and intensification standards, protection of the environment, how agricultural and natural features will be protected, and more. As required by the Planning Act, the Official Plan must be reviewed and updated every five years.

This review, led by Council, is divided into three phases. Phase 1 has been completed and was approved by Council in principle late last year. The approval was a non-binding position endorsing the intent and direction of the Phase 1 outcomes, with the final decision being deferred to the current term of Council.

Phase 1 assessed high-level action items, including the Official Plan vision, guiding principles, goals, and objectives. Growth management, and changes to housing, density, height, and character, were developed and incorporated into the Phase 1 Official Plan Amendment, known as Official Plan Amendment No. 3., a copy of which can be found on the Official Plan Review project webpage.

Following the endorsement of Phase 1, Town Staff launched the second phase of the project, which takes a closer look at topics related to the natural environment, climate change, source water protection, rural/agricultural lands, parks and open space, servicing, commercial/employment lands, transit and transportation, and downtown area building heights. Concurrent with the Phase 2 work, the Town is undertaking a detailed review and proposed updates to the Community Design Guidelines, a key document providing expectations intended to facilitate the high-quality design of the built environment throughout the Town.



Throughout Phase 2, residents and stakeholders will have many opportunities to share their feedback and vision for the Town's future by participating in Public Information Sessions, completing a public survey, and attending a Public Open House and Public Meeting. In addition, members of the public can share feedback directly with the Official Plan project staff at any time through the contact form on the project webpage.

To learn more about the Official Plan Review project and to stay up-to-date on Phase 2, visit: www.tbmbblueprint.ca



www.thebluemountains.ca/current-projects

Lead Abatement on the Victoria Street Water Tower

The Victoria Street Water Tower in Thornbury is scheduled for rehabilitation this year to ensure it's able to continue providing reliable service to residents of the community. While work is being completed, scaffolding and plastic shrouding will be erected around the tower. These measures are required as the Town's consulting engineering firm has confirmed the presence of a lead-based primer on the tower.

Lead-based paint was commonly used on structures through the 1980s and into the 1990s, and as a result, the presence of lead-based primer on a tower of this age is not out of the ordinary. To ensure safety during the stripping and recoating process, the plastic shrouding is a common practice in rehabilitation projects of this type.

Contractors that engage in this work are experienced and familiar with the mitigation measures, and the risk level of exposure is very low when these measures are in place.

1. Containment

The abrasive blasting work to remove the existing primer and paint will require the installation of a full scaffolding structure and plastic shrouding around the entire water tower to facilitate the work.



Example of scaffolding and shrouding installed as part of the lead abatement measures on a water tower rehabilitation project in Ingersoll, Ontario.

The scaffolding structure and shrouding will act as a barrier to contain any hazardous material, and protect nearby properties from contamination of paint chips, dust and grit.

2. Testing

Air monitoring stations will be installed around the construction site during the blasting process. The filter elements from each monitoring station will be sent for laboratory testing to ensure the containment is functioning as required. All workers who enter the shrouded structure during the blasting process will have their blood tested for lead exposure before and after the job, and workers will also exit the structure through a decontamination area.

3. Disposal

Tarps will be placed at the bottom of the enclosure to collect the waste created by the abrasive blasting process. All waste will be vacuumed up and tested to verify whether the amount of lead present is deemed hazardous or not. Any hazardous waste will be disposed of according to regulated guidelines.

The Town has engaged CIMA+ to provide consulting engineering services on this project. CIMA+ has been in business for more than 30 years, and has consulted on similar tower rehabilitation projects across Ontario, including multiple projects for the Municipality of Chatham-Kent.

To learn more about the Water Tower Rehabilitation project, visit: www.thebluemountains.ca/watertowerrehab

Follow This Project

For more information on the Victoria Street Water Tower Rehabilitation, and to subscribe to receive timely updates regarding the project, visit www.thebluemountains.ca/watertowerrehab or scan the QR code.



Staff Spotlight: Evan Hancock

In each Town newsletter a staff member will be highlighted, providing a glimpse into their roles and responsibilities and how their service impacts the community.

Since joining the Town last year, Evan Hancock has been busy supporting the Planning and Development Services Department as a Development Engineering Reviewer. His prior work experience in the private sector for a local engineering consulting firm made the transition to the public sector smooth.

At the Town, Evan’s primary responsibility includes reviewing detailed engineering design submissions from developers. The review process that Evan conducts includes detailed checks to ensure that the submissions meet Town and Provincial Engineering Standards, and reflect leading/ sustainable engineering practices. In most cases, the review process for engineering design submissions involves multiple rounds of review and revised submissions from the developer. Evan and the Town’s Development Engineering Team

work diligently to ensure that professional standards are maintained throughout the entire detailed review and development construction process.

After the plans are approved and when construction starts, site visits are a regular part of Evan’s responsibilities as he conducts inspections to ensure that the work is adhering to the accepted plans. When work on a site begins, Evan is often a key point of contact for residents to ask questions and to meet and chat on-site to address concerns.

Evan’s motivation to make the switch from the private to public sector boiled down to balance. “Working for the Town of The Blue Mountains provides a great work/life balance compared to consulting. It’s been very welcoming and is a great fit for a young family.” Outside of the office, Evan takes advantage of the many recreational offerings throughout the community. For Evan and his family, the move to the area was a win, both personally and professionally.



Working for the second fastest-growing municipality in Canada, Evan and the entire Development Engineering Team play a crucial role in ensuring that growth is managed responsibly. By working closely with developers, the Development Engineering Team has their finger on the pulse of all development projects throughout the Town from concept through to completion.

RETRO MARCH BREAK

AT L.E. SHORE LIBRARY
173 BRUCE ST. S. THORNBURY

MON MARCH 13

11am
Bubble Party

Kick off March Break with a fun and interactive giant bubble party with JoJo Fun Entertainment.

TUES MARCH 14

11am
Radical Friendship Pins

1pm
No-Sew Pencil Case

WED MARCH 15

11am
Shrinky Dink Design

1pm
Friendship Bracelets

THURS MARCH 16

11am
Glow in the Dark Slime

7pm
After-Hours Teen Night

FRI MARCH 17

11am
Yarn Art

1pm
Nail & String Art

Register Online for all Events
www.TheBlueMountainsLibrary.ca



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