

Dickens Needs Survey – January ‘07:

This survey is being sent to all the people on Bob O’s “Aylen email list” with the hope that you will take a few moments to let me know what issues are in greatest need of attention, *keeping in mind the overall importance to you of freezing or even reducing taxes if possible.* (i.e., if freezing taxes is your primary concern, other possible upgrades in service may have to wait...) Under “comments” please indicate your ideas for how you think improvements could be made.

NUMBERS IN RED BELOW INDICATE # WHO RATED THE Q. AT THAT LEVEL:

1. Freezing/lowering taxes:
 Top priority 1 2 3 4 5 less important than added
 services **10** **1** **2** **0** **0**
 Comment:.....

2. Improved waste management:
 High 1 2 3 4 5 low priority
 1 **2** **7** **1** **2**
 Comment:.....

3. Better road surface:
 High 1 2 3 4 5 low priority
 2 **2** **5** **0** **4**
 Comment:.....

3. More winter road plowing:
 High 1 2 3 4 5 low priority
 0 **2** **2** **1** **8**
 Comment:.....

4. Preservation of water quality:
 High 1 2 3 4 5 low priority
 10 **1** **1** **0** **0**
 Comment:.....

5. Hospital/local health provision:
 High 1 2 3 4 5 low priority
 2 **5** **4** **0** **1**
 Comment:.....

6. Fire fighting services:
 High 1 2 3 4 5 low priority
 4 **2** **1** **2** **3**
 Comment:.....

7. Other issues (please specify, adding pages if necessary):

COMMENTS FROM THOSE SURVEYED ON AYLEN IN JAN. '07

TAXES:

1. No ridiculous huge increases as in the past but keeping up with cost of living
2. Lowering Taxes for existing ratepayers is very important to me
3. – I don't think cottagers have ever demanded much in the way of services. We want the road maintained and a basic way of getting rid of trash. Now our taxes are moving way out of proportion to these basic requirements.
4. The two main issues are taxation and environment. FOCA was formed in the mid-1960s to fight 'taxes' and it is still an issue ... with minimal (if any) successes. Fair assessments should be a priority. If someone chooses to build a large 'home-like' year round structure on a road property, that is their choice. And if it is 'valued' at \$300,000+ that is fine. BUT, smaller, seasonal properties with water access should not be penalized.
5. If a more practical/fair way of determining taxes was established, taxes would automatically lower. Until a proven improved way of calculating assessments and mill rates is devised, I believe taxes should be frozen. I also would like a detailed explanation of the life process of tax dollars from the moment funds are received in the Township account to disbursements. I really don't think the general public realizes the entire process. What goes to the feds and why and how it is recovered and the politics behind it all etc. Perhaps the S.A.T web site will eventually provide this information.
6. Ultimately, we cannot stop taxation, we can only fight for fair taxation. I'm not sure what services or improvements could be made to support increased taxation.
7. There is a clear problem with the low year round population being able to support basic services in a cost effective way. I don't think this situation can be improved at the local level until the province does something to deal with it. This involves all the hot button issues including taxation, the downloading of services, provincial funding and Regional boundaries.
8. Many cottagers who inherited their properties, or are on limited incomes (e.g. single parents, retirees) may have difficulty keeping their properties if taxes continue to climb based on a perceived increase in the property value. The owner of course sees no benefit from this increase until they sell.
9. Yes!!!! In the larger cities and urban centers there are no waterfronts for a tax-base, thus I may be naïve to think that these areas are subject to a somewhat, services oriented tax-base. As we all know the services in rural areas are not that of the cities. Living on waterfront, poses it's own unique basis. Our federal (Fisheries and Oceans

Canada) and provincial (Ministry of Natural resources) suggest allotting approx.30% of our shoreline for recreational pursuits (docks, decks, beachfronts, etc...) thus aiding to a healthy waterfront and shorelines. Yet I believe a good part of the taxation to waterfront properties is based on the amount of frontage we own. As our population ages and there are more rural areas becoming populated it is important to retain the few services we receive and diligently increase services to these locals. A tough task for sure, but we can all agree the current real estate based system is unfair and MPAC is a shambles

WASTE MANAGEMENT:

1. Recycle furniture and other large objects with a shelter located at the dump site

2. I would hate to see the South Algonquin dump site closed

3. - Proper recycling is important. Our cottage takes all bottles, cans, etc. back to Toronto rather than putting them into the garbage pickup. We also 'compost' and 'burn' as much paper, cardboard, etc as possible. The trucks – twice a week – in July and August and bins (possibly more) the rest of the year is fine. We only get 'garbage' pick up in the city once every two weeks, alternated with recycling. Green bins are weekly. Why should there be more at a 'cottage'? People who 'dump' garbage at the side of the bins should be penalized ... it may not be feasible/legal to fine them, but they could certainly be embarrassed --- i.e. license plates or names published in the newsletter; on the message board at the Landing, etc.

4. Garbage pick-up twice a week during July and August ... more than adequate. Let's ensure that the Sunday pick-up is late in the day ... to accommodate weekenders leaving Sunday afternoon/evening.

5. We need a proper recycling programme – perhaps 4 dumpsters – glass, metal, paper and vegetable waste. Wouldn't need to empty all four every week

6.. More bins in the shoulder-season (May – June, September – October) to eliminate dumping at the side because they are full. Encourage reporting of license plates, etc. of offenders who dump garbage at side of road.

7. Generally, I believe the waste management is quite satisfactory. Although, it would be nice to have the opportunity do our part in reducing waste by recycling. I understand that S.A.T. has no recycling due to the cost factor. If there has been a recycling plan drawn up in the past, I am sure your constituents would find it interesting and it may give them the information necessary to determine if recycling is even practical for such a small area. Based on reading material and documentaries, if a dump site is properly built and maintained it can be a useful source and does not have to be detrimental to the environment. Many cottagers take recycling products back to the city with them and reduce their garbage as much as possible while at their cottage. Perhaps, a "tips" sheet could be sent out to encourage cottagers that are not doing this.

ROADS:

1. as a full time resident, the damage created to our vehicles due to pot holes, gravel, and calcium are quite substantial. Complete paving of the road is our desire; however, I imagine is cost prohibited. I believe tar and gravel may be feasible, and would reduce/eliminate this damage as well as reduce vehicle accidents on Aylen Lake Road especially. There are also some low lying areas and corners that need attention. I.e. culverts, barriers installed.

2. I am not too interested in the surface changing with proper care existing is fine. For safety reasons though, (a concern for council I hope?) I would like to see the township reshape(crowning) the roads, some widening of certain areas, also ditching, drainage, and better care in general to “all roads” at Aylen not just the main service road

3. Get rid of the soft, wet spots and keep it as a good quality gravel road

4. We are currently getting excellent ploughing service

WATER QUALITY:

1. It would be very sad if our water quality deteriorated. Maybe need a publicity campaign (signs etc.) to educate people re preservation of clean water in the lake

2. There are a number of cottages that either have very old septic systems or none at all. Also, some outhouses are too close to the water. Whether or not these situations are causing any contamination to the lake is unknown. We are fortunate, in that we have much rock in the area which may provide us with the necessary cleansing before reaching the water. However, I believe an independent study of the water quality should be undertaken to determine if quality is even a concern. There have been two studies since we have been here (8years) but I have yet to see the results of either one. I asked one of the environmentalists for a copy of the results but never heard from them and did not follow up.

3. highest priority. Need to preserve the quality Aylen lakers are accustomed to. One of the best attributes of the lake.

4. FOCA's Environment Committee has developed and co-sponsored countless programs over the years. ALCRA should get involved. There should be constant

monitoring of septic systems ... many road access properties have septic beds that are quite old. When was the last inspection? What about outhouses? There are many points of spring run-off around the lake and outhouses could be situated on or near them ... without the property owners being aware of what is happening.

5. The environment is something that we can do something about ... through council and through ALCRA.

6. Township/MOE/MNR sponsored septic inspections.

7. Spring testing of run-off into lake to catch any residual effects of outhouses.

9. Water testing programs through MOE/FOCA.

10. Transient boaters bring foreign substances to the lake – somehow educate or monitor.

HOSPITAL:

1. The Bay's little hospital does a fine job – just need to maintain this quality.

2. Barry's Bay Hospital care/accessibility is superb. However, the choice of General Practitioner's is of concern. As in most areas in Ontario, new residents are unable to find a doctor that will accept new patients.

FIRE SERVICES

1. Maybe a large map at the Landing to indicate addresses and location of the fire pumps on the lake

2. I believe this service is as good as it can get given our remoteness. We have had two major fires since we have been here and both instances were handled to the best of the ability of the resources available. There was also 1 forest fire scare, which was responded to by the Madawaska fire dept. in a most professional and satisfactory manner. Police response has also been of the highest quality in all instances and we have had many.

3. I believe that we have a great system on Aylen Lake for fire protection! We have over 40 volunteers with 6 pumps. The township fire department works only as a backup because of the travel time required from the village of Madawaska. Each fire that our volunteer group has attended has been extinguished prior to the arrival of the township trucks.

4. I realize that there is a liability issue for the township if they supply equipment so we must continue to act as ALCA volunteers. Like I said at New Years: If it isn't broken ---Don't try to fix it!!! You mentioned a township boat to transfer fire personell to remote properties! This is probably not necessary as it would need to be maintained! If the township would like to improve on our system they could make a donation of older hoses / pumps to our association.

In the event that the ALCA does not want to maintain the current pumps they should be turned over to the individuals that are currently maintaining them . I believe that we will continue to have excellent fire protection on Aylen Lake.

Equipment required to provide service to road access properties is already in place – water access properties (a very high percentage at Aylen Lake) do not benefit from Township fire services in any case.

5. Concerned that with the fire of 2001 Madawaska advised that since the fire was boat access only they couldn't assist. Does the Township have plans to investigate options? ie Township owned Boat for accommodating those remote areas?

OTHER ISSUES

1. Where does the new council want to take the township? Do they have any goals as a township? What does the future hold for South Algonquin? (ie: a retirement community?, a recreational playground?, industry?) I realize it may be too early to tell, but with everyone all up in arms over taxation issues, perhaps council can take the township into the future, with forecast objectives and work together with the community to achieve them.

2. One issue that I would like addressed, although minor, is some sort of document (official letters, signage) at the government docks as to the time limit a boat can be parked at either government dock. Some boat owners have been told of a three day time limit; however, I have never seen any official documentation to this effect.

3. Speed of access to emergency issues like flooding, emergency road repairs, fire dept. response, ambulance response and where to call if these services are required

4. I would like to see our Aylen Lake Community association become the Dickens ward recreation association! The township `s blanket liability insurance would then cover our association for liability insurance. It would also cover the errors and omissions liability. Our ALCA insurance costs of over \$2,000.00 per year could then be put either into our own recreation or into the hospital where it is needed. Where I reside in Bromley/Admaston township (Renfrew County)we have been doing this for the last 20 years at no extra cost to the township. All that they ask for is a list of names of the volunteers in January of each year.

A few years ago this was done in Dickens with Janice Henry being our rec representative. I believe that she left the post when she became pregnant and did not have a replacement appointed. Whatever changes need to be done to reinstate this are surely warranted as I see the \$2,000.00 plus being spent on insurance is a huge waste!!!!

5. Continued maintenance/improvement of the public docks. Some policing/fining of those who leave their boats at the public dock for more than 48 hours.