

DoKURA

DISTRICT OF KENORA
UNINCORPORATED AREAS
RATEPAYERS ASSOCIATION
A NON-PROFIT ONTARIO CORPORATION

MEETING WITH

THE HONORABLE MICHAEL
GRAVELLE
MINISTER OF NORTHERN
DEVELOPMENT, MINES AND
FORESTRY

KENORA, ONTARIO

AUGUST 2010

WHO ARE WE?

DoKURA is an incorporated, Non-Profit Corporation under the laws of the Province of Ontario.

It is operated by a volunteer Board of Directors – eleven in number – who are elected annually at a public meeting. Four of our Directors are elected by the public to serve on the Kenora District Services Board.

We were formed over fourteen years ago to represent the interests of the over 35,000 permanent and seasonal residents and ratepayers who reside outside the organized municipalities in the Unincorporated Territories of the Kenora District of Northwestern Ontario.

With one quarter of all the provincial Land Tax accounts in Ontario (15,682 out of a total of 60,000) located within the Kenora District, we provide a substantial portion of the local funding that goes towards the operation of the KDSB and other Provincial Government services directed to the Unincorporated Areas of the District.

Our Association operates entirely on the backs of those who serve as volunteer Directors. Yes, our Association has a small bank account. We are funded by generous donations from property owners, Roads Boards, Road Associations

and others, within the District. Unfortunately such revenue provides no where near the funding required to meet the needs of the four elected representatives. They are regularly called upon for help on issues area residents have, not just issues involving the DSSAB.

With the reform of the Provincial Land Tax (PLT) that took place in 2009, the share paid by the individuals we represent, towards the operation of the Kenora District Services Board, increased substantially. The following is a breakdown of the allocation, showing the changes that resulted from the new assessment figures.

It should be noted that with assessment values for the properties in the Unincorporated Territories of our Kenora District expected to out pace those of most of the Municipalities within the District, we anticipate that our share will continue to rise.

	PRE PLT REFORM	WITH PLT REFORM
Unincorporated (4 TWOMOs)	31.1%	45.2%
Kenora	26.7%	21.3%
Dryden	15.5%	11.7%
Sioux Lookout	9.0%	7.0%
Sioux Narrows/ Nestor Falls	5.9%	4.9%
Red Lake	5.8%	4.9%
Machin	2.7%	2.2%
Ignace	1.6%	1.0%
Ear Falls	1.3%	1.0%
Pickle Lake	0.5%	0.4%

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1 – Service Boards

Yes, we understand there has been some activity in the Kenora District regarding the formation of new Local Service Boards.

Unfortunately the legislation that covers such Boards does not go far enough in allowing local residents the options to address other matters of local concern, such as Land Use Planning.

From what we understand of Local Service Boards, they do allow for funding and administration of roads within their area, but, unlike Local Roads Boards, if a LSB takes over responsibility for roads, they do not receive the 50% provincial funding they currently receive as a Roads Board.

This point needs to be addressed.

In 2001, we obtained funding from your Ministry to conduct meetings within the District to see if there was sufficient interest to form an AREA SERVICES BOARD. Numerous public meetings were held, and in the end, a public vote was taken to decide whether or not to proceed.

The Unincorporated Areas and the majority of the Municipalities voted in favor of an Area Services Board.

Unfortunately, the government of the day chose not to proceed with this much needed reform.

We still feel there is a need for this type of area government and would like to suggest that the government you represent further review the subject.

2 – GROW NORTH

Last October, your Ministry, together with the Ministry of Energy and Infrastructure, published a document regarding a growth plan for Northern Ontario.

Submissions were requested and DOKURA was happy to contribute it's thoughts.

In the document we note that one of the plans relating to Regional Service Delivery is the establishment of a review team with representation on the TEAM form;

- Northern Municipalities
- Aboriginal Communities
- Service Delivery Organizations (DSSAB's we assume)
- UNINCORPORATED AREAS

We feel there is a need to act now to establish the "TEAM" and get on with the job.

DOKURA would appreciate any support we might receive from your Ministry to make sure that we have a representative appointed to the "TEAM".

With so much of Northern Ontario being Unincorporated Territory, we request that the "TEAM" not be overloaded with representatives from the Municipal side.

If the "TEAM" is to produce ideas and suggestions of use to those of us in Northern Ontario, it needs to be limited in size. Its membership should be limited to a reasonable number of individuals who can actually "get the job done". If the "TEAM" is too large, accomplishing anything may be difficult.

In addition to limiting the size of the “TEAM”, we feel it is important to set a firm deadline for the final report.

We trust your Ministry will take our thoughts into consideration. We look forward to participating.

3 – DOKURA FUNDING

Yes, we have addressed this topic with you in the past.

We met with you in Ottawa at the AMO conference in August of 2008.

Our concern is with respect to the ability of the four individuals we have as elected Directors of the Kenora District Services Board, to properly serve the residents of the Unincorporated Territories.

They have no funding available to cover costs involved in attending meetings with senior provincial officials, and politicians, who frequently visit the area. Our Municipal cousins are able to participate, covering their costs with local tax payer funding.

TWOMO representatives are constantly called upon by local residents and area organizations to assist them in matters of local concern. Unfortunately, many such requests have to be declined due to the lack of funding.

Following our meeting with you in Ottawa, you wrote us (October 1st, 2008) suggesting we approach the Kenora District Services Board for financial assistance. We addressed the matter with them and were told that while they understood our frustration, they did not have the authority under the DSSAB Act to use any of their funds for that purpose.

We have met with your Kenora area staff and discussed the matter with them. We have pointed out that your Ministry has provided funding for certain segments of local Municipal conferences, and suggested that they consider diverting such funding to cover the costs of our participating in such events.

Needless to say, we were unsuccessful.

We look to your Ministry as the one best positioned to deal with this matter on behalf of those of us in the Unincorporated Territories, and hope you can find some way to assist us.

4 – MEETING PARTICIPATION

Expanding upon what we have said about the need for funding for TWOMO/DOKURA representatives to attend conferences and meetings both within and outside of the Kenora District, we do note, from time to time, that various Provincial Government officials and Ministers travel to the area and hold meetings that include representatives from the area's Municipalities and First Nations.

DOKURA and the people we represent, are important to the District. We would like to be included in such meetings – or, at least, given the opportunity to participate.

The opinion of the AREA is not complete without input from those of us in the Unincorporated Territories.

We want to be included on the invitation lists.

No, due to the lack of funding we will not be able to attend each and every meeting, but with Directors spread out throughout the District, and such meetings usually held in one of the major District Municipalities, we may just be able to participate.

Please give us the opportunity.

Your local Ministry staff are usually aware of such meetings, well in advance, and certainly know how to contact us.

Your assistance in making sure that we are not forgotten, would be appreciated.

CONTACT US

You may contact our Association as follows;

DISTRICT OF KENORA UNINCORPORATED AREAS RATEPAYERS ASSOCIATION

A NON-PROFIT ONTARIO CORPORATION
P. O. BOX 1245 KEEWATIN POST OFFICE
KENORA, ONTARIO P0X 1C0
“E” MAIL DOKURAORG@HOTMAIL.COM

President

Bill Blower Lac Seul area

Vice President

Jack McKenzie Lake of the Woods South area

Secretary – Treasurer

Irene Kember Lake of the Woods South area

Directors

Bill Latham Oxdrift area

Ken Pride Lake of the Woods North area

Colin Hodgson Lake of the Woods South area

Gord Dingman Lac Seul area

Ray Leray Oxdrift area

Penny Lucas Lake of the Woods North area

Ian Clark	Lake of the Woods South area
Barry Baltessen	Lake of the Woods North area