

DOKURA NEWS

FALL 2014

PROVINCIAL LAND TAX REFORM

In the last issue of this publication, we noted that the Ministry of Finance of the Province of Ontario was going to be holding a series of non-public meetings with various groups, looking at possible changes to the Provincial Land Tax.

DOKURA was one of the organizations selected to participate in the initial round of discussions. Three DOKURA Directors spent approximately an hour and one half with Ministry of Finance staff discussing the subject.

No, nothing has changed yet. What has happened to date is the conclusion of the first round of what we understand will be a series of meetings where the Ministry gathers comments and suggestions.

The first point that DOKURA brought up during their meeting was the idea of making the tax rate in the Unincorporated Areas the same, regardless of where the property was located. Other matters were discussed, such as the Ministry making sure the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation does a proper job in assessing ALL PROPERTIES in the Unincorporated Areas of the Kenora District. DOKURA pointed out that there were just too many properties that had not been assessed and that if the Ministry of Finance was looking at ways to increase their revenue, that they might start with making sure everyone paid their fair share.

Yes, DOKURA expects to be involved in more meetings on this subject and would like to hear from any and all property owners in the Unincorporated Areas of the District with their thoughts on this subject. The best way to reach us is via the Internet. Just put your thoughts down on paper and send them along to;

HYPERLINK "mailto:dokuraorg@hotmail.com" dokuraorg@hotmail.com

To those who have already done so, DOKURA says "Thank you". Your input is appreciated. For those of you who may have some thoughts to pass along, please do so ASAP. Your comments will be read and taken into consideration.

Want some additional information on the subject? One of DOKURA's Directors has spent quite a deal of time preparing an information article on the subject that makes for good reading. It is posted on DOKURA's WEB site;

HYPERLINK "http://WWW.DOKURA.com" WWW.DOKURA.com

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**LOOKING OUT FOR THE INTERESTS OF THE RESIDENTS FROM THE UNINCORPORATED AREAS
IN THE DISTRICT OF KENORA**

NEWSLETTER DISTRIBUTION

The District of Kenora Unincorporated Areas Ratepayers Association (DOKURA) tries to send copies of it's newsletters to more than one individual on the various Local Roads Boards, Local

Road Associations, Local Services Boards, Volunteer Fire Departments and other organized community groups it has been able to identify in the Kenora District. Unfortunately, we are not able to identify everyone who might like a copy, so PLEASE help us out. If you are the only individual in your organization receiving this publication, we hope you will make copies available to others. If you would like extra copies sent to you for distribution, every time we publish a newsletter, please let our Secretary know. We'll be happy to send you the number required.

That goes for this issue too. If you would like additional copies, please call our Secretary, Bob Stewart at 807-548-2344 or send him an "E" Mail at [HYPERLINK "mailto:dokuraorg@hotmail.com" dokuraorg@hotmail.com](mailto:dokuraorg@hotmail.com) and he'll be happy to send them along.

Remember, each of our newsletters is posted on our WEB site so if you have people in your area who would rather access it that way, please refer them to the site.

OCTOBER ELECTION

Yes, permanent and seasonal residents of the Unincorporated Territories of the District of Kenora participated in the election this past October 27th. They were asked to elect four representatives to serve a four year term, on the Kenora District Services Board.

The election was broken down into four wards, namely the Lake of the Woods North, The Lake of the Woods South, Oxdrift and Lac Seul. Three of the four wards saw their seat filled by acclamation, with just the Lake of the Woods South ward being contested.

Efforts were made to try and improve the voter turnout this time around. Voters were invited to vote in an Advanced Poll, held on the Monday of Thanksgiving Weekend. This advanced poll opportunity was specifically designed to give seasonal residents who might not be in the area on the last Monday of October – voting day – the chance to participate. The poll was set up in the Clearwater Bay Firehall, but this, plus the four polls located across the Ward on voting day, Monday October 27th, still did not produce anything near a respectable voter turnout.

In the end, after the few votes were counted, Bob Stewart of the Longbow Lake/Storm Bay Road area was declared the successful candidate in the Lake of the Woods South Ward, defeating Jack Bound of the Lake of Two Mountains area.

The following is a list of the successful candidates for the four wards and **YOUR** representative for the next four years;

Lake of the Woods North	- Barry Baltessen
Lake of the Woods South	- Bob Stewart
Lac Seul	- Mark Sobchuk
Oxdrift	- Ray Leray

VOTER ENUMERTION

Readers of this newsletter may recall previous articles on the quality of voters lists provided by the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation for our use in the election we are mandated to conduct every four years.

Unfortunately the list for this year's election was little better than what we were given last time around. The first edition, broken down into 27 wards (remember we have just four) was in an electronic version – the apparent expectation being that we could use it in our various polling stations.

Little did the individuals in Southern Ontario, who produced the document, realize that in most of the locations we rent as polling stations, we are lucky to have heat and electricity, let alone

internet service.

Luckily we were put in contact with a local representative of that corporation, based in Dryden, who was able to produce a hard copy list, which we used. By our estimates, it was about 80% correct in so far as listing the individuals in the correct areas. From numerous cross reference examples of individuals we knew who should have been on the list, they were missing. It appears the information we were provided contained just the names of those located within the school board areas of the District.

In discussions with the local representative, we were told that one of their first projects following the election was going to be sorting out the information they had into the proper four ward system so we had something correct to start with.

Yes, we discussed the missing information, and while sympathetic to our situation, it does not appear MPAC has the resources to conduct a proper enumeration.

Our hope is that once we get a proper list that we can switch from the current program of having physical polling stations that require people to show up to vote, into one where we send everyone a ballot by mail, which they can complete and mail back to us.

LAND AMBULANCE

In our efforts to find individuals to run for office in the recent election for the four seats on the KDSB, DOKURA talked to numerous individuals in all corners of the District. The one thing that was very apparent was the fact that practically everyone had no idea what the Kenora District Services Board did. They had no idea that the ambulances they see on the roads of the area were owned, operated, staffed and controlled by the Services Board. They were surprised to learn that THEIR Provincial Land Taxes contributed substantially to the cost of running the service.

We've included in this issue, a picture of one of the area's many ambulances. Note the name of the door. It's the Kenora District Services Board's ambulance! The individual you just elected is one of the individuals responsible for providing this much needed local service.

FEDERAL GAS TAX REBATE PROGRAM

In the last edition of this publication, we made mention of the fact that we were still waiting for word on the renewal of the program. We noted that DOKURA had written many letters to various levels of government, both Federal and Provincial, reminding them that those of us living in the Unincorporated Areas of the province were tax payers too. That we needed not only the renewal of the program, but also its expansion to include those residing on roads classified as Road Association Roads, not just the Roads Board roads.

Well, someone must have been listening as just about the time we mailed our newsletter out, word was received that the program had indeed been extended for the Roads Boards of the area.

That's great news, but what happened to the equally as deserving Road Association roads?

As the funds originate from the Federal Government, DOKURA had written many letters to local federal MP, Greg Rickford, asking for his help in making sure that this time around the Road Associations would be included.

We haven't heard anything in the way of a reply from his office. We have followed up with another letter asking why the Road Associations were not included – again. We'll let readers know what we hear.

DOKURA'S DIRECTORS

The following is a list of the current Directors of DOKURA. Please feel free to contact them if you have any comments on what they are doing or you have any concerns on local issues that you would like to see DOKURA become involved in. You can reach them by mail by writing them c/o DOKURA, P. O. Box 1245 Keewatin Post Office, Kenora, Ontario, POX 1C0 or by "E" Mail at

HYPERLINK "mailto:dokuraorg@hotmail.com" dokuraorg@hotmail.com

Past President	Bill Blower	Lac Seul
President	Jack McKenzie	Lake of the Woods South
Vice President	Gord Dingman	Oxdrift
Secretary	Bob Stewart	Lake of the Woods South
Treasurer	Irene Kember	Lake of the Woods South

Director	Ray Leray	Oxdrift
Director	Barry Baltessen	Lake of the Woods North
Director	Ken Pride	Lake of the Woods North
Director	Phyllis Hannon	Oxdrift
Director	Mark Sobchuk	Lac Seul
Director	Bill Deschamps	Lac Seul

Their next board meeting is scheduled for 1:00 PM on Thursday, November 20th in Vermillion Bay, so if you have something you think they should consider, get your thoughts in quickly.

DOKURA FUNDING

Readers familiar with the operation of DOKURA are well aware that all of the activities of the organization are carried out thru the efforts of the volunteers who serve the Association. Outside of the elected officials who sit on the KDSB Board, no one is paid for their work.

DOKURA has been successful in funding it's activities, to date, thru the generous donations of a few. The Association has a few dollars in the bank, but no where near enough to cover the cost of all it is called upon to do. There is a constant need for funds to cover the cost of sending representatives to meetings with various levels of government to promote and/or defend issues of local concern.

That's where you come in, as an individual or community group.

DOKURA has no formal membership fee, rather membership is open to all in the Unincorporated Areas of the Kenora District. What DOKURA does, however, is ask for a voluntary donation from individuals or community groups.

Please consider sending us a donation. No amount is too small.

KDSB is offering a home repair program for eligible homeowners that reside in the District of Kenora. The Ontario Renovates Program is a component of the Investment in Affordable Housing for Ontario (2014 Extension). Approved homeowners can receive up to \$50,000 as a forgivable loan for structural, electrical, plumbing and heating, and fire safety repairs, as well as remediation for an overcrowded dwelling.

Deadline for application is
December 15th, 2014
at 3:00 pm CST.

For further information or to obtain an application package, contact Robynn Maluga at The Metis Nation of Ontario, Toll Free 800-891-5882 Ext. 28 and leave a message.