

DoKURA NEWS

Fall 2017

GONE DIGITAL

The District of Kenora Unincorporated Areas Ratepayers Association has now completed its transition to using email and other digital formats for distributing information to its members, including newsletters and meeting notices. The change, approved at the 2015 AGM, was made to reduce costs and make it easier to remain in touch with the those on our mailing list. If you had this newsletter forwarded to you by someone else and wish to receive future copies directly, please contact us with a current email address to ensure you continue to receive information from the association dokuraorg@hotmail.com

Over the winter months the association will be working to update its website - www.dokura.com - to further improve its contact and information sharing with members.

AGM

The association held its Annual General Meeting on Sept. 9, 2017 at the Oxdrift Community Hall. Association president Jack McKenzie presented his President's Report highlighting the work done by the association over the past year.

Key points were:

- The ongoing work by DoKURA to provide input into several initiatives that will impact the unincorporated areas including the Common Voice, Northwest Group and the Provincial Land Tax review.
- Attendance by unincorporated area elected representatives to the Kenora District Services Board at various regional and provincial level meetings
- Continuing to work towards using vote-by-mail for the 2018 Kenora District Service Board elections for unincorporated areas elected representatives
- Participation in the ongoing DSSAB (District Social Services Administration Board) Act review by the province.

Board elections were held:

2018 DoKURA Board:

Officers

Jack McKenzie - President
Vice-President - Gord Dingman
Treasurer - Irene Kember
Secretary - Bob Stewart

Directors and terms of office

Ray LeRay - Director - KDSB (Oxdrift) 2015/2018
Phyllis Hannon - Director at Large (Oxdrift) 2017/2018
Barry Baltessen - Director - KDSB (Lake of the Woods North) 2015/2018
Jack McKenzie - Director at Large (Lake of the Woods North) 2018/2019
Bob Stewart - Director - KDSB (Lake of the Woods South) 2015/2018
Irene Kember - Director at Large (Lake of the Woods South) 2018/2019
Mark Sobchuk - Director - KDSB (Lac Seul) 2015/2018
Gord Dingman - Director at Large (Lac Seul) 2017/2018

SERVICE BOARD REVIEW

Jack McKenzie, Phyllis Hannon and Gord Dingman met Oct. 12 with consultants involved in the provincial review of the District Social Services Administration Board Act. The consultants were in Dryden for two days of consultation meetings with Kenora District Service Board staff, board members, municipal representatives and other groups including DoKURA.

Jack McKenzie noted it was good session lasting nearly two hours.

From comments made by the consultants it appears DoKURA was the only organized group to make a presentation on behalf unincorporated area residents from any district the review team had visited.

DoKURA's presentation included recommendations that the full cost of elections for unincorporated area representatives be included in a revised DSSAB Act. Currently the government covers those costs but is not obligated by legislation to do so.

Other recommendations focused on expanding the allowable services for DSSABs currently limited to social services and land ambulance, to include land use planning and garbage and recycling collection on a district wide basis. This expansion of services was recommended due to the fact the government has in the past rejected proposals for the creation of an Area Services Board to deliver such services.

PLT REFORM

The association continues to be involved in the province's Provincial Land Tax reform process. In September the PLT Reform office held another round of public consultations. Although participation was restricted to representatives from Local Roads Boards and Local Service Boards, several DoKURA directors who are involved with those boards took part.

In addition to discussions about how the province can improve its services to Local Roads and Service Boards, input was sought on further changes and adjustments to the provincial Land Tax itself, including a move to a single residential tax rate. Currently there are two tax rates – one for residential and farm properties within school board tax areas, and one for properties outside school tax zones. Other PLT property classes – commercial and industrial – pay a single rate no matter where the property is located.

DoKURA has always advocated for a single residential rate as the major services funded through the PLT – policing, social services, land ambulance, public health and local roads board and local service board support are not related to the education tax.

Phased-in increases to achieve a target, universal residential rate of \$250 per \$100,000 of assessed value was outlined in the government's Fall 2017 Fiscal Update.

TABLE 5.2 Provincial Land Tax Annual Residential Rate Changes (Per \$100,000 Assessed Value)

Property Class	2018 Rate Change	2019 Rate Change	2020 Rate Change	2021 Rate Change
Residential: Inside School Board	\$5	\$5	\$5	\$3
Residential: Outside School Board	\$40	\$40	\$40	\$15

Current (2017 tax year) rates are \$232 and \$115 respectively per \$100,000 of assessed value. The phased increases will raise those rates to \$237/\$155 in 2018; \$242/\$195 in 2019; \$247/\$235 in 2020 and \$250 for both in the 2021 tax year. Officials also noted during the September consultations that PLT changes since 2013 have more than doubled PLT revenues from \$11 million annually to \$26 million, addressing a key government concern that unincorporated area property owners needed to contribute more to the \$65 million annual cost of services being delivered in their areas.

MEMBER INVOLVEMENT

DoKURA continues to look for people – year-round or seasonal residents – from the unincorporated areas interested in serving on, or working with the board. DoKURA has been asked if it would like to become involved with several groups from the region dealing with a variety of issues including health care and economic development, but have had to turn down the requests due to limited time available for current board volunteers.

The DoKURA board makeup allows for two directors from each of its four wards or areas, Directors At Large are elected (two each year) at Annual General Meetings and serve two-year terms, the district's four publically elected Kenora District Service Board members serve as the second director for each ward or area and serve for their term office on the KDSB.

If you are interested in serving or working with the DoKURA board please contact us at dokuraorg@hotmail.com

MEMBERSHIP

DoKURA has no membership fee, membership is open to all in the Unincorporated Areas of the Kenora District. It receives no regular government funding and its directors serve as volunteers, efforts are made to keep general operating costs under \$1,000 a year. But there is a need to cover costs for sending representatives to meetings with various levels of government to promote and/or defend issues of local concern. That's where you can help, as an individual or community group, through a voluntary donation to the association. Donations can be sent to: DoKURA, Box 1245, Keewatin Post Office, Kenora, Ontario P0X 1C0