

DOKURA NEWS

SPRING 2010

LOCAL ELECTIONS

This fall will see the Province of Ontario hold its Municipal and School Board elections, province wide, on the same day, Monday, October 25th. That includes us in the Unincorporated Territories of the Kenora District. Residents will be asked to select representatives to serve on the Kenora District Services Board for the next four years – January 2011 thru December 2014.

DOKURA has contracted to run the elections in the four Unincorporated Territory ridings, but, as with past elections, is faced with the prospect of having to run an election without a proper voters list. The Municipalities and the areas of the province served by School Boards, have a preliminary voters list prepared for them by the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation – a Crown Corporation. Unfortunately, this Corporation, while it has a listing of the property owners outside the school board boundaries in the Unincorporated Territories of Ontario, has not produced a list of eligible voters for our use.

In past Unorganized Territory elections that DOKURA has conducted, we have been provided with a copy of the Provincial Tax Roll for the Unincorporated Territories to use as a Voters List.

Entirely inadequate, as it lists just the name of the individual on the property deed and makes no reference to anyone else (spouse, tenant) on the property who may be eligible to vote. In addition, the list includes property owners who are not Canadian citizens, individuals not eligible to vote.

With the need for a proper voters list for the Unincorporated Territories, and the expectation that MPAC needs to “get on with the job”, DOKURA made a presentation to the Minister of Finance for Ontario, The Honorable Dwight Duncan. Briefly, the presentation asks the Minister to pressure MPAC to get a proper enumeration of the Unincorporated Areas, completed ASAP.

A copy of the full presentation can be found on the DOKURA WEB site.

PROPERTY ASSESSMENT

With Provincial Land Tax Reform, promises were made by various government agencies to do a complete re-assessment of ALL the properties in the Unincorporated Territories of Ontario.

Everyone received their new PLT Tax Bill last year, reflecting an increase in assessment based primarily on data collected previously, by the province. Unfortunately, the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC) has not completed the job. A large number of properties in the Unincorporated Territories have not had a physical inspection conducted.

DOKURA has heard of many situations where property assessment is based upon completely outdated information that would have been corrected IF MPAC had completed the job and had staff visit each location.

As part of the presentation made by DOKURA to the Minister of Finance, the request was made that that Ministry instruct MPAC to complete the on site inspections, so all tax payers in the Unincorporated Areas of Ontario will contribute on an equal basis.

GAS TAX REBATE PROGRAM

No, we don't have the news everyone is waiting for in the Unincorporated Areas.

The first five years of the program, that saw a portion of the Gas Tax Rebate flow to Roads Boards, is over.

Yes, the next four years (2010-11 thru 2013-14) of the program has been announced, and “APPEARS” to include funding for the Local Roads Boards. Unfortunately, no one has been able to tell the Local Roads Boards just how much they are going to receive as their share of the four year extension.

DOKURA has met with Kenora MP Greg Rickford and asked for his assistance in sorting out the matter. We understand he has been in touch with the Honorable John Baird, the Federal Minister in charge of the program.

And yes, DOKURA has followed up on the matter with yet another presentation to Minister Baird.

Unfortunately, the requests remain unanswered.

DOKURA has written Minister Baird and MP Greg Rickford again, asking for an explanation. The Roads Boards need to know what, if anything, they will be receiving, so they can fit the funding into their budget process.

AND for the Road Associations out there that have been excluded from the program to date, DOKURA has followed up on the request that they be added to the list.

Hopefully someone will wake up at the Federal level and we will have something positive to report in our summer edition of DOKURA NEWS.

WATER CONTROL BOARD

Many of the readers of DOKURA NEWS live on river and lakefront properties, the level and flow of which is effected by the actions of the Lake of the Woods Water Control Board.

Yes they have a WEB site that interested individuals can access (WWW.LWCB.CA) for up to date information. In addition they operate a toll free telephone recording service that provides regularly up-dated information on conditions on both the Lake of the Woods – Winnipeg River system and the English River System. This information can be accessed by dialing 1-800-661-5922.

REGARDLESS of the availability of accessing information over the WEB, or listening to information provided by a recording over the telephone, there is nothing like being able to actually talk to someone on the subject.

With this in mind, those interested in past, present and future conditions on both watersheds may want to take advantage of two public open house meetings scheduled for this month.

The Water Board staff will be hosting a open house style information session in EAR FALLS and KENORA. The meetings are very informal, with Water Board Staff there to explain the charts they have displayed, listen to property owner’s concerns and answer all questions as best they can.

So, if you are interested in attending either meeting, the times, dates and locations are as follows;

EAR FALLS

Ontario Power Generation Service Center
Highway 105
Ear Falls, Ontario
7:30 to 9:00 PM
Wednesday, June 16th,

KENORA

Best Western lakeside Inn
470 – 1st Avenue South
Kenora, Ontario
7:30 to 9:00 PM
Thursday, June 17th,

KENORA AREA NEW AMBULANCE BASE

Readers of some of the local media have no doubt seen the articles about the attempts to find a site for the construction of new Ambulance Base within the City of Kenora. Most of the articles have approached the topic as if the facility was for the service of the City of Kenora ONLY.

The battle, if that’s what you want to call it, has been going on for approximately ten years, ever since the need for a new base was established by the Kenora District Services Board ambulance committee.

Funding has been set aside for the construction of the facility. The delay in the start of construction has resulted from the problem of getting a site re-zoned by Kenora.

Several sites have been identified as suitable for the building, but in **every** case, the City of Kenora, and/or their planning department, have found something wrong with the site selected. The City has pressed KDSB to erect the new building at the location of the city's maintenance yard, locally known as the Barsky Hill site. The problem, with this site, from the point of view of the Director of the Ambulance Service for the Services Board, is the added response time that would be added to over 60% of the emergency calls. They note that their records show that the vast majority of all emergency calls are from the central core of that city. The added time and possible traffic delays in having to pass thru the railway underpass, rules out the Barsky Hill site.

It has been suggested that the City of Kenora should have more say in the selection of "IT'S" ambulance site, with the added suggestion that Kenora will contribute a large portion of the local monies that pay for the construction.

What is seldom pointed out, however, is that this base is **not** the City of Kenora's Ambulance facility, rather it is the facility that serves the City of Kenora AND the vast Unincorporated Territories west and north of the city (ie – Minaki, Redditt, Shoal Lake, Rush Bay, Clearwater Bay, etc), plus a good portion of the area east of Kenora (Storm bay Road, Longbow lake, Blindfold Lake, Jones etc).

Regarding the payment of the local share of the construction (and operating) costs, it should be noted that the City of Kenora, thru it's assessment by the Services Board, will pay just over 21% of the cost, where as the Unincorporated Territory Tax Payers – most of our readers – will contribute over 45% of the cost!

Perhaps it's time to forget about the City of Kenora and start looking for a site in the Unincorporated Territories!

Readers may be interested in knowing that over \$100,000 has been spent already in trying to come up with a suitable site – or at least a site acceptable to the City of Kenora's council and planning committee.

While all of this has been going on, the Kenora District Services Board has been successful in selecting a site for a new Ambulance Base in Sioux Lookout. Sioux Lookout is in the process of constructing a new hospital, and in an effort to help out with this new ambulance facility, the Sioux Lookout Hospital has provided a piece of property, adjacent to the hospital, AT NO COST to the Services Board, for the building. In addition, the Planning Department of Sioux Lookout has worked with KDSB to ensure the necessary rezoning proceeded in a timely manner.

SAVE THE DATE!

DOKURA has set the date for their Annual Meeting. Experience in experimenting with different summer dates has shown that a late August meeting attracts the largest crowd.

So – with this in mind, Directors have set FRIDAY, August 27th at the day for this year's Annual Meeting. It will be held in the Senior's Center in Vermillion Bay, commencing at 7:00 PM.

The summer edition of this newsletter will have more details regarding the meeting. At this time, DOKURA Directors would like everyone to note the date, and plan on attending. If you are having, or are involved in a local community function over the summer, please take a moment to let those attending know of the date and encourage them to attend.

"E" MAIL

We've heard from a good number of you, not only providing an "E" Mail address so we can contact you, but also corrections or additions to the mailing address we have for you or your organization. To this we say "Thank you" as it helps to keep our information current, and builds the data base we can draw on if we need to contact certain areas on local matters, quickly.

So – if you haven't provided us with an "E" Mail address for your group, or have some additional addresses you would like to see us add to our mailing list, PLEASE take a moment and send the information in an "E" Mail to our Secretary – Irene Kember – at dokuraorg@hotmail.com.

LOCAL SERVICES BOARDS

No, we don't have any news on the activities of the various local groups attempting to form Local Services Boards.

The Oxdrift area board was approved late last summer, and the Clearwater Bay board has proceeded to the point where a formal application is in the hands of the appropriate Provincial Minister.

DOKURA understands that a group is active in moving forward with a proposal for the area served by the Pellatt Fire Team,. On the other hand, the subject has been explored by another group in the area served by the Longbow Lake Fire department, and the decision was not to proceed with such a local board.

Hopefully, DOKURA will have some additional information on this subject in time for the summer edition of DOKURA NEWS.

FIRST RESPONSE TEAM FUNDING ASSISTANCE

One of the items in and out of the draft budgets prepared by the Kenora District Services Board for their Director's consideration, was the sum of \$50,000 that would go towards assisting area First Response Teams. The final budget presented to the Directors at their May meeting, left this important item out.

Before voting on the final budget, Directors, at the urging of the representatives of the Unincorporated Areas, moved to have the item added back in to the budget prior to the final vote. They were most anxious to see this funding re-instated, in part because over 45% of the local share of the item would be paid for by the Unincorporated Area Taxpayers. All but three of the Volunteer First Responder teams identified as the groups who would receive the majority of the funding, were located in Unincorporated Territory.

Well, they were successful in having the funding added back in, and the budget passed.

Since then, the Services Board's Ambulance Director has written a large number of groups in the District, letting them know of the program.

DOKURA wants to MAKE SURE that ALL in the Unincorporated Territories know of the funding, and have an equal opportunity to apply. The following is part of the notice sent out, and provides a good over view of just what is involved. The directive, reads in part, as follows;

“The KDSB has allocated funds to assist First Response Teams to access training and equipment related to the provision of emergency medical care.

Requests for funding must be from a municipality, Local Roads Board, established First Response Team, or other Non-Profit Association with a commitment to providing emergency medical care in various locations throughout the District of Kenora.

Requests may be submitted at any time and will be assessed for eligibility based on the criteria for training and equipment as outlined.”

It should be pointed out that the maximum annual funding assistance amount (combined training and equipment) for each organization is \$5,000.00. Groups who are interested in more information on this program should contact Peter Marshall who is the Director of Emergency Medical services for the Services Board. His office is located in the Dryden office of the Board and he may be reached by phone at 807-223-2100 extension 2230.

GROW NORTH PLAN FOR NORTHERN ONTARIO

Last fall, the Province of Ontario came out with it's GROW NORTH PLAN which it calls it's twenty five year blueprint for prosperity in Ontario's Northern Region. Public meetings were held in November, which DOKURA attended. Subsequent to the meetings, DOKURA submitted a formal report on it's view and position on a number of the subjects.

One of the most important items in the document, from DOKURA's point of view, was the promise of the Province to establish a Review Team to look into ways of enhancing planning and service delivery, throughout both the incorporated (municipalities) and Unincorporated Territories of Northern Ontario. They promise representation on this “team” from not only the municipalities in the north, but also the Unincorporated Territories.

With this commitment by the Province, DOKURA included a section in it's presentation detailing why DOKURA should have representation on this “TEAM”.

Subsequent to that presentation, letters have been sent to the various Ministers involved, pressing for our participation. Hopefully we will be included and can make sure that the views of those of us from the Unincorporated Territories, are heard.

Readers interested in reviewing a copy of the presentation DOKURA compiled, can find it on DOKURA's WEB Site.

NEWSLETTER DISTRIBUTION

District of Kenora Unincorporated Areas Ratepayers Association (DOKURA) tries to send copies of it's newsletter to more than one individual on the various Roads Boards, Road Associations, Local Service Boards, Volunteer Fire Departments etc., Unfortunately, we are not always 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 in your area. If you would like a number of copies sent to your for distribution, every time we publish a newsletter (four times a year) please let our secretary know and we'll be happy to send you the required number.

CONTACT US

The following is a listing of the volunteers who make up the Board of Directors of DOKURA. Readers are invited to contact any of them if they have a matter they think should be brought to the attention of the Board.

If your organization – Local Roads Board, Local Services Board, Road Association, Fire Team, Recreation Committee, etc – is planning an annual meeting, please be sure to let the Director in your area know of the date and location. Based upon time commitment, most will be happy to attend your meeting and answer questions on DOKURA.

President	Bill Blower	Lac Seul
Vice President	Jack McKenzie	Lake of the Woods South
Secretary-Treasurer	Irene Kember	Lake of the Woods South
Director	Bill Latham	Oxdrift
Director	Colin Hodgson	Lake of the Woods South
Director	Gord Dingman	Lac Seul
Director	Ken Pride	Lake of the Woods North
Director	Penny Lucas	Lake of the Woods North
Director	Barry Baltessen	Lake of the Woods North
Director	Ray Leray	Oxdrift
Director	Ian Clark	Lake of the Woods South

DOKURA FUNDING

Readers of this newsletter are no doubt aware that ALL of the activities of DOKURA are carried on by the volunteer -efforts of those who serve on it's Board. No one is paid for their services.

DOKURA has been successful in building up a small bank account, thru the generous donations of a few. The need continues for funds to cover the on going costs related to meeting with government officials, as well as preparing and delivering this newsletter.

That's where you come in, as an individual or community group. DOKURA has no formal membership fee schedule, rather is open to all in the Unincorporated Territories of Ontario's Kenora District. What they do ask for, however, is a voluntary donation to help with their activities.

The response this year by individuals and Roads Boards/Associations has been wonderful, but with the number of activities DOKURA is involved in, we are constantly looking for more donations.

To those who have contributed, we say THANK YOU. To those of you who feel that our activities are worthwhile, and worthy of your support, a donation form follows at the bottom of this page.

Please take a moment to send us your check. It is appreciated.

DONATION TO DOKURA SPECIAL ACTION FUND (for government advocacy and consultation)

_____ \$20 _____ \$30 _____ \$40 _____ \$50 _____ \$ Other

Name _____

Address _____

Total enclosed \$ _____

PLEASE MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO DOKURA
MAIL TO DOKURA
P.O. BOX 1245 KEEWATIN POST OFFICE
KENORA, ONTARIO
POX 1C0