

DoKURA

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

PRESENTATION TO
THE HONORABLE DWIGHT DUNCAN
MINISTER OF FINANCE

ACTIVITIES OF THE
MUNICIPAL PROPERTY
ASSESSMENT CORPORATION

MAY 2010

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BACKGROUND

WHO ARE WE?

For READERS unfamiliar with DoKURA, we are an incorporated, Non-Profit Corporation under the laws of the Province of Ontario. 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.

Our organization is operated by a volunteer Board of Directors which is elected annually at a public meeting. We have four elected representatives who serve on the Kenora District Services Board.

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.

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%

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 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.

DoKURA conducted the first vote across the District, in 1996, and elected the first Unincorporated Territory representatives to the then, newly formed, Kenora District Services Board. DoKURA has four representatives on this Board; one from each of the four electoral areas our Association defined. The map on page 6 details the four areas.

Subsequent elections for representatives to the DSSAB have been the responsibility of the KDSB, however they have down loaded such responsibility to our Association, under contract.

In 2001, we obtained funding from the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines 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.

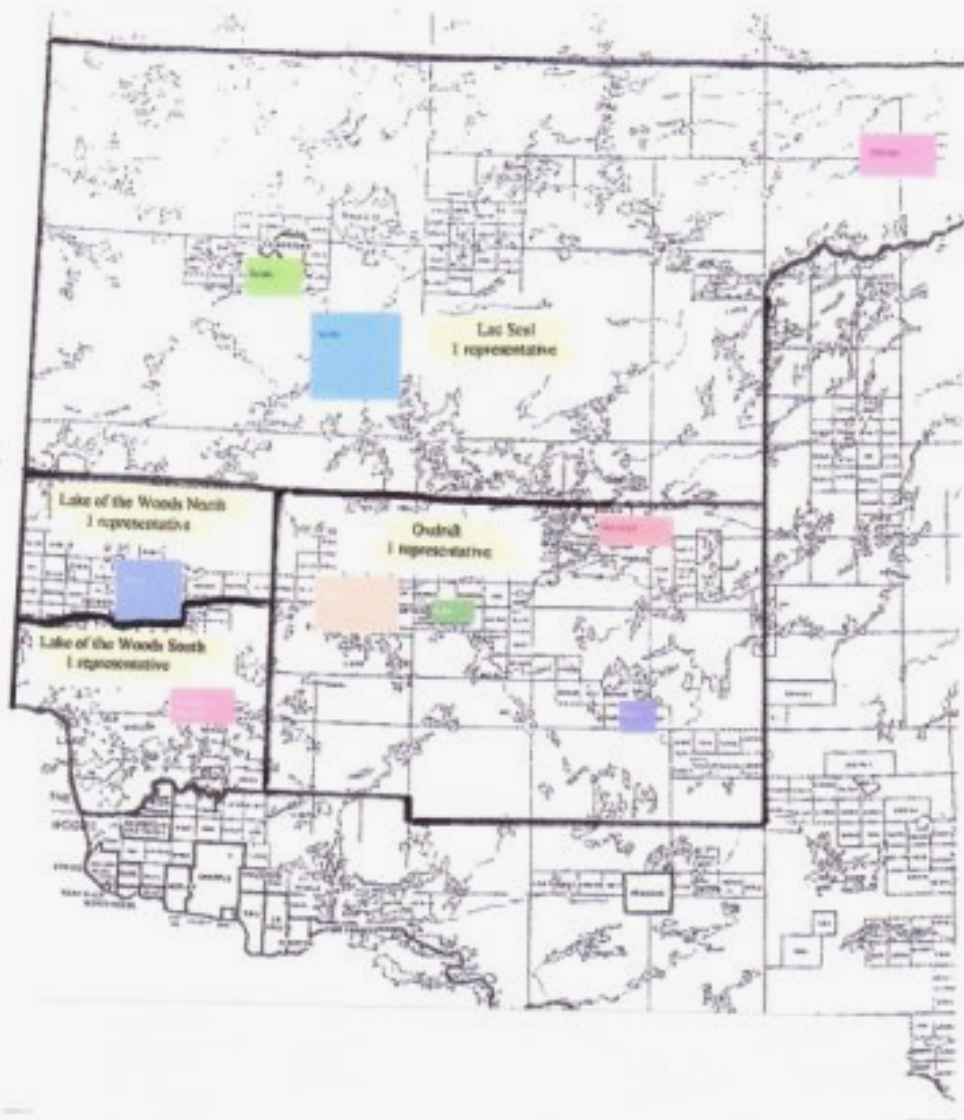
The Unincorporated Areas and the majority of the Municipalities voted in favor of an Area Services Board.

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

Our elected representatives, acting on behalf of DoKURA, have made several presentations to various Provincial Cabinet Ministers, on the need for reform allowing for expansion of services by the existing Services Board or replacement of the Board with something closer to an Area Services Board.

Our most recent meetings with a Provincial Minister, Minister Madeleine Meilleur, the Minister of Community and Social Services, during the summer of 2009, and subsequently with her senior staff, have led to this presentation today. They understand the problems we have relating to a proper voter's list and suggested we make them known to this body.

On the following pages, we have detailed our concern and suggestions with respect to two activities that appear to fall under the jurisdiction of your department and/or the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation.



DISTRICT OF KENORA UNINCORPORATED AREAS
 RATEPAYERS ASSOCIATION
 ELECTORIAL BOUNDARIES ON THE
 KENORA DISTRICT SERVICES BOARD

OUR THOUGHTS AND COMMENTS

We note from the Annual reports of the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation, that progress has been made with respect to the re-inspection of properties in the non-municipal territory (Unincorporated Territories in Northern Ontario).

The Ontario legislation commonly known as Provincial Land Tax Reform, promised fairness and uniformity to the entire Ontario property tax system. It was anticipated that MPAC would physically re-inspect each and every property in Northern Ontario's non-municipal territories.

Sections of the report – ie – page 16 of the 2007 report – notes revenue of \$10,000,000, up from \$7,000,000 the previous year. We interpret this additional \$3,000,000 as additional funding to enable MPAC to handle the additional work of re-inspecting ALL such non-municipal properties.

If you refer to the same section of the 2008 report, you will see that this “other income” has increased to \$14,100,000.

That's another \$7,100,000 over and above the normal amount of \$7,000,000, provided to MPAC.

Common sense would suggest that this additional income was there to complete the physical re-inspection of ALL non-municipal properties.

We want to point out that we have heard from many of the property owners we represent, commenting that they have not had their properties re-inspected. Some comment that they are happy that such a re-inspection did not take place as they have made substantial improvements to their dwellings that would have resulted in large increases in their assessment.

We don't think it fair that many go un-assessed and their share of the increased taxes produced by PLT reform is carried by those who happen to have been re-inspected.

With the additional “other income” that appears to be flowing to MPAC for this purpose, they should be instructed to complete the entire job, ASAP.

We feel that it is imperative that your Ministry follow up on this matter by issuing specific instructions to get the job done!

The second point of our concern relating to MPAC has to do with the preparation of a detailed preliminary election roll (voters list) for those in the Unincorporated Territories who are outside the school board boundaries.

In our particular case (The Kenora District) estimates put this number at well over 20,000.

Our Association contracts with the local District Social Services Administration Board to conduct the elections for the four representatives on that Board, who represent the Unincorporated Territories of the District. The DSSAB is responsible, under provincial legislation, to conduct such elections.

We have been the party contracted to conduct such elections ever since the formation of the DSSAB's, back in the late 1990's.

Unfortunately, the material given to us that is supposed to represent a voters list, is entirely inadequate.

In each such case we have been provided with a print out of the names and addresses of the land owners as per the Provincial Land Tax records.

No reference is made to who resides there.

If the property is registered in the name of a single individual, there is no information on whether or not there is a spouse or other family members who may be eligible to vote.

Many of the names shown have mailing addresses outside Canada.

We “suspect” they are not eligible to vote, yet they are listed on the copy of the list of electorates we are given and expected to work from.

The funding we are provided with to cover the cost of running the election is no where adequate to even cover the cost of the election, let alone make any attempt at providing a proper listing of eligible voters.

Reference is made in both MPAC annual reports of Enumeration and Election Roll Services provided for Municipalities and School Boards. MPAC is cited in Provincial Legislation as the source of preliminary election rolls for Municipalities and School Boards.

Unless the Government of Ontario expects the Provincial Elections Office to provide such preliminary election rolls, who else but MPAC is to do this work?

We note from a copy of a letter dated March 16th, 2010 written by Carl Isenburg, President and CAO of MPAC, that 2010 is the first year that MPAC has had the authority to do a enumeration in the DSSAB electoral areas.

Previously, all they have done, in the way of an enumeration in DSSAB areas outside Municipalities, is with respect to School Boards.

From it's property assessment records, MPAC has the base information from which to start.

We note from information received in connection with this fall's election, that our efforts appear to have been successful in at least one area. Now the definition of who can vote will mirror that of Municipalities and School Boards.

Our Association has met with the Minister of Community and Social Services, the Honorable Madeleine Meilleur, on two separate occasions, and separately with some of her senior staff, to discuss this, and other concerns.

In our meetings with the Minister and her staff, one of the topics we raised was the matter of the lack of proper enumeration of the Unincorporated Territories.

Their answer is that it is not their responsibility to produce such a list!

In the most recent meeting we held with that Ministry, the ADM we met with specifically suggested that we take the matter up with your department.

Hence, the reason for this presentation.

We feel that your Ministry should issue specific instructions to MPAC to produce just such a preliminary electors list and to get the job done ASAP.

It's still not too late for this fall's elections.

There are many students looking for summer employment who are more than capable of doing the leg work required to produce a proper list.

If there is anything our Association may be able to do to assist you with either of the two points we have raised herein, we would be more than happy to help out, within the limits of our volunteer Directors and financial resources.

We look forward to hearing from you shortly.

COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS

This presentation has been prepared, reviewed, edited and is fully endorsed by DoKURA and it's Directors.

Written questions and comments can be directed to the organization at the following address;

DoKURA
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P0X 1C0

Or, they can be sent by "E" Mail to the following address;
dokuraorg@hotmail.com

Respectfully submitted by

DoKURA

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