



THE ARCHIPELAGO EXPRESS

June 2009

Final Tax Bill

2009 TAXATION REPORT

Reeve Peter Ketchum

Ted Christie, our Chair of Finance, told me he was taking a holiday from writing this year's Township Taxation Report. When Ted took on the task, I told him it was a difficult report to write, but it was even more difficult to write a report that *you* would read.

I told him that all the ratepayers cared about was to see how much their tax bill was. I told him that the majority mumbled a few unprintable remarks and then everybody threw the tax report away without even reading it. But Ted has proved me wrong. His creative style of outrage in writing the Taxation Report has resulted in a substantial readership.

“...this year's tax bill will not be as bad as you might anticipate.”

I cannot emulate Ted's style, but I do submit that this year's tax bill will not be as bad as you might anticipate. This is a terrible year for most of us. The recession is upon us and most, if not all, are affected. And then the Province timed it perfectly so that the new Provincial property assessments would hit at their all-time high.

The Township Councillors and staff felt we had to react and we reviewed the Township's strategic tax planning. We decided that for the year 2009, the Township would take a hold-the-line position. There will be no taxation increase in the Township portion of your property tax.

This action, however, does not necessarily translate into “no increase” in your tax bill. But any change from the amount that you paid last year is directly related to either downloading by the Province, or the effect of Provincial processes such as MPAC. The Township tax requirements will be the same.

You may well ask—this position is fine for 2009, but what about 2010? I can assure you we are not going to give you a double increase next year. Inflation in 2009 will be close to zero and therefore, staff costs in 2010 will experience little increase.



The Township has put together a number of plans and initiatives that should positively affect our bottom line in 2009, and we anticipate these initiatives will become even more effective in 2010.

“We will continue to strive for improved services for our ratepayers.”

For 2009 we have:

1. Merged the organizations of Planning and Building and thus, have been able to reduce one staff position for 2009.
2. Leveraged our capabilities to assist Carling Township administratively. We will reduce our costs through increased scale while helping Carling to reduce their administrative costs.
3. Improved the effectiveness of Public Works with the utilization of the new Public Works building. Here again, we expect reduced costs.
4. Improved garbage bin capacity through the use of garbage compression. The result will be reduced transportation costs.
5. Purchased a roll-off garbage bin transportation truck that will provide more dependable service and lower costs.

Council and Staff will make every effort to minimize tax increases in 2010. But, it is worth repeating, we will continue to strive for improved services for our ratepayers. Our goal in 2010 will be to increase taxes no more than the expected cost of living.

We live in interesting times. Staff will have a challenging year managing the above initiatives. We hope all of you will support the Township as we move forward.

Council and Staff wish you the very best for the upcoming summer season.



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