

BIRD RIVER COTTAGE OWNERS' ASSOCIATION
Annual General Meeting – September 1, 2019

Executive Members in Attendance:	Brian Smiley	President
	Rudy Peters	Past President
	Carol Guicheret	Secretary/Membership
	Lynn Richard	Treasurer/Social Assistant
	Brad Wall	Director
Absent:	Leah D'Errico	Director
	Stephanie Jeffrey	Chair – Social
	Greg Milhausen	Web Site Administrator

1. WELCOME – INTRODUCTION OF EXECUTIVE

President Brian Smiley called the meeting to order at 10:02 AM with 42 people in attendance. He welcomed everyone in attendance and introduced the executive.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 2018 AGM

Brian asked everyone to review the minutes of the 2018 AGM which were distributed among the tables prior to the meeting. Carol reviewed a few items from the minutes.

Moved by Carol Guicheret; seconded by Rudy Peters

THAT the minutes of the Bird River Cottage Owners' Association 2018 Annual General Meeting be approved as distributed.

Carried.

3. MEMBERSHIP REPORT

Carol Guicheret reported that we have 62 up-to-date memberships which include three new members who joined before the meeting.

4. FINANCIAL REPORT

Copies of the Financial Report were available on the tables for member information. Current balance is \$4,465, but there are still a few outstanding items with regard to the Family Day.

Moved by Brad Wall; seconded by Cathy Stewart

THAT the Treasurer's Financial Report be accepted as presented.

Carried.

5. WATER TESTING

Cathy Stewart reported that there don't appear to be any significant changes in the factors that would impact the water quality. The executive is looking at water testing in the summer of 2020.

6. MANITOBA ASSOCIATION OF COTTAGE OWNERS (MACO)

MACO has been very active in advocating removal of school taxes from recreational properties. The Manitoba Government requested submissions from various jurisdictions asking for input regarding education funding to aid in their review of this issue. MACO submitted a white paper but they were not one of the organizations selected to provide a presentation. The paper is available on the MACO website.

The MACO President met several months ago with the Finance Minister to provide MACO's position on education funding through property taxes. A MACO fact sheet was distributed among the tables to aid members in questioning candidates on the topic in the upcoming provincial election.

MACO views the algae and zebra mussels in Lake Winnipeg as a major concern and would like to see remedial measures taken in this regard.

7. RM OF ALEXANDER UPDATE - WARD IV COUNCILLOR, MAC KINGHORN

- Ward IV Lagoon – More funding is being sought. A dividing wall will be inserted into the existing cell to make two cells.
- Grass Cutting – The second cut has been finished ahead of schedule. A third tractor and mower have been purchased.
- Boat Launches - The Bird River ones are working well. Launches throughout the RM have been repaired as the need arises. The RM will be assuming responsibility for the Auglen Park dock from their Cottage Association. A new plastic floating dock will be installed as in other areas.
- Seal Coating for Roads - has been done in some areas and is ongoing.
- Ditching is underway. Permits were delayed due to rule changes but were obtained in June/July this year. Most of the drainage problems in Stead area are now rectified.
- Signage - There is a new *RM of Alexander* sign on Hwy 313.
- Gravel and Dust Control - 300 loads of gravel have been distributed in the area (10% more than last year). Dust control has been provided in some areas.
- Moratorium on Development on the Bird River – The RM has developed a policy with regard to the moratorium due to ambiguities in the original document. There are to be no further subdivisions; however, if you own more than one lot you can move property lines around so that lot sizes are equal. Existing vacant lots may develop a single dwelling. A dwelling unit can be replaced but you can't add another cottage. If a lot is sold that is part of the moratorium, one dwelling can be erected.
- Occupancy numbers at Bird River Bible Camp – The recent agreement with the Bible Camp caps occupancy at 250, including staff. Mac advised that the RM administration established the number and he thinks it's realistic.

The following are paraphrased comments from people in attendance and responses provided:

PR 313 and side roads have been treated up to the junction of PR315 but not much seems to have been done past that point. Cutting has been reduced from two cuts a year down to one on PR 433 up to Cape Coppermine.

Mac: Highways Department won't give definite answers and they don't do anything they absolutely don't have to do.

Brian suggested calling the appropriate MLA and the Minister's Office to complain and don't stop until some action is taken. Now is a good time because there is an election coming up.

What is the status of the "skinny bridge" repairs?

Mac: They are on schedule. The scheduled completion date is December 15.

The boundary between the RM's of Lac du Bonnet and Alexander is irregular. It might be more efficient and cost effective if there were a road maintenance agreement between the two municipalities. Travel time and distance for road equipment could be reduced.

Mac: The boundary lines are complex, e.g. the boundary line runs down the center of Miller Road (east of the RM of Alexander sign)--one side of the road is Lac du Bonnet; the other is Alexander. Road clearing by

Lac du Bonnet would not be prompt. The RM of Alexander tried to negotiate co-operative agreements with Lac du Bonnet for some services but were not successful.

8. BIRD RIVER BIBLE CAMP (BRBC)

Kyle Sheppard, Camp Director of the BRBC, attended to give a presentation and answer questions regarding the Bible Camp.

The camp hosted approximately 1300 kids over 10 weeks. The last week wraps up tomorrow. Thirty-eight teens participated in the Three-Week Leaders Through Action program and they hosted 62 foster kids and 20 special needs campers over the summer.

Recently they have made significant improvements to the camp's water treatment and septic systems, recycling facilities, docks, and accommodations. An agreement was struck between the RM and the BRBC establishing a protocol for building replacement, number of occupants allowed at the camp, power boats, and seasons of operation.

They want to be good neighbours and keep the community advised of their activities. They strive to be environmentally responsible.

A copy of Kyle's complete presentation is attached to the minutes.

Objections to some activities of the BRBC were raised by certain individuals in attendance:

- Question as to why the Bible Camp doesn't take the ski boat out onto the lake where there is a lot more room to manoeuvre. Ski boat whips around three times a day causing shore erosion.
- Makes it unpleasant for non-powered water craft and Interferes with fishing
- Boat drivers cut much too close to docks
- Noise of outdoor activities can be heard 350 yards away
- New cottages are larger than structures being replaced

A member pointed out that the Bible Camp has been on the river since 1952. You can't compare the lodging and infrastructure needs of a single residence to those of the Bible Camp. Kayaks and other non-powered water craft can use the river in the morning and evening without interference.

The question was asked if the Bible Camp was concerned about the kids canoeing with the heavy traffic on the river. Kyle advised that they do have concerns but the campers are trained to handle the canoes.

Brian suggested those with questions could have a chat with Kyle after the meeting. He thanked the Bible Camp representatives for attending.

9. RECREATIONAL ACTIVITY ON THE RIVER

There was further discussion about bad behaviour on the river, i.e. unsafe operation of boats, drinking, driving too close to shore. Brian stated that this is a law enforcement issue (RCMP). One member stated his cottage is at the mouth of the river and there is heavy boat traffic there as well. There are sometimes 20 boats sitting in the bay. There are specific areas where boaters tend to congregate. The RCMP knows there are problems but they don't have enough staff for adequate enforcement.

Past President Rudy Peters observed that It's understandable that the BRBC wants to give its campers the experience of water skiing. The problem is that the river is small; there are only 289 acre feet of water. Most places require 10 acre feet of water per boat which would allow 28 boats on the river, but there are no standards in Manitoba. Several years ago 200 boats were counted on the river; there are probably more now. There is no obvious solution other than to be respectful of your neighbours.

Mac commented that there are rules which prohibit creating a wake within 100 feet of shore. Shorelines take a beating from frequent boat traffic. Hydro has shoreland management but is selective about where they

deposit rip rap. Mac cited a background statement that affirms that the addition of trailer parks increases area density and considerably adds to boat traffic.

A member asked, since there are regulations in place, whether there is an opportunity for the Association to post signs. Mac responded that signs can't be posted until approval is obtained from the coast guard. The comment was made that a speed limit would not solve the problem—people just need to practice good boating.

Brian stated that the Association would have discussions with Mac to try and identify some solutions. The river is narrow and over-populated and RCMP presence is rare. It's a gong show but you can't fix stupid. Sometimes the only answer is to accept the situation. An example is that, in spite of strict laws, people still drink and drive.

Discussion returned to issues around the BRBC.

Several people stated they support the activities of the Bible Camp. The improvements they are making are focused on preserving the environment and providing safe surroundings for the kids.

With regard to meetings at the RM regarding the BRBC's application for approval of their improvement plans, a member expressed the opinion that former President Wayne Stewart should have sought input from the membership before making representation at the hearings. Wayne responded by saying that, following discussions at the initial meeting, it was agreed further investigation was warranted and the meeting concluded without a decision. When it reconvened on May 28th, the RM advised that the investigation revealed that the BRBC variation would be considered replacement as opposed to development. Wayne saw no reason to oppose the BRBC application as it was within the parameters of regulations and did not contravene the goals and focus of the BRCOA.

It was suggested that the information video about the Bible Camp posted on the BRCOA web site could be a conflict of interest. A show of hands indicated that the majority of those in attendance had no objection to the video remaining on the web site.

10. 2019/20 BRCOA BOARD

Trish Leverick was nominated and agreed to let her name stand as a member of the BRCOA Board.

Moved by Wayne Stewart; seconded by Brad Wall

THAT nominations cease, and

THAT the BRCOA Board of Directors for 2019/20 be established as follows:

**Leah d'Errico
Carol Guicheret
Stephanie Jeffrey
Trish Leverick
Greg Milhaussen
Rudy Peters
Lynn Richard
Brian Smiley
Brad Wall**

Carried

Positions and responsibilities will be decided at the next Executive Meeting.

11. CHEQUE SIGNING AUTHORITY

Lynn Richard advised that a motion was needed to give Brian Smiley authority to sign cheques.

Moved by Brad Wall; seconded by Kyle Sheppard

THAT Brian Smiley be granted authority to sign cheques on behalf of the BRCOA.

Carried.

President Brian Smiley thanked everyone for attending and extended appreciation to Councillor Mac Kinghorn for his input.

Moved by Brad Wall; seconded by Wayne Stewart

THAT the meeting be adjourned.

Carried.