



Happy New Year everyone! I hope that in spite of the nasty weather that you all had a good Christmas and celebrated the start of the New Year safely. There are reports of people having furnace problems and frozen water pipes around town but hopefully all is fixed without too much damage. I saw one office uptown that got soaked; my sympathy to those folks. The beautiful weather in November and early December were too good to be true, but of course winter finally did hit us. With a bit of a skeleton crew on due to the holidays, our Public Works staff has done a great job of moving and clearing snow in the main areas of Town. Many thanks to them for those early mornings, getting the streets cleared. PLEASE be patient and give them room to work while they are on the streets with their equipment. Having to stop and wait a little while may be inconvenient but staying out of the way helps get the job done quicker and safely. I am also very concerned that we have had near misses at some of our work sites during water break repairs. If you can't avoid driving past a site then please do so slowly and give a wide berth. Town Council, management and staff take safety very seriously and want to see everyone get home safe and sound every day.

In spite of the recent bitter cold most residents have done a great job of clearing snow from their sidewalks. Some municipalities require the walks to be cleared in 24 hours but our Bylaw says 48 hours from the end of the storm which is often ample time. Timely snow removal can help reduce the risk of people getting injured in front of our homes but when I saw -42 windchill the other day I personally decided to wait another day!

Every new year seems to bring new challenges and opportunities for each of us and for our community as a whole. 2018 should at least be interesting. What will the impact of windmill construction be on our Town and the County? What effect will the new labour regulations have on our small businesses and farmers? Will cannabis legalization solve any of the things the government is aiming for? Will it be a big revenue stream for the Feds and the Province or a bureaucratic and legal headache for municipalities, healthcare and law enforcement? What changes are actually coming to the Income Tax Act, especially pertaining to small business and farmers? Will the Leafs make the playoffs? Will anybody outside of Toronto care? Of course as the year progresses and we get closer to the next Provincial election things will get very interesting.

In the next couple of weeks Council will be reviewing and updating its strategic plan. We will travel all the way to the back room of the Town Office for a day and a half retreat to share ideas, set our goals and plan how to achieve them. We will begin work on prioritizing capital projects for the next 5 years. Soon after we will meet again to review the Town's economic development priorities and strategies as well.

Pricing should be available soon on the new lots in Westview and once the shallow utilities are installed construction can begin. The final phase of development on the west side will be a slab-on-grade subdivision in the southeast area, once the old pond is filled in. The goal here has been to have an area to locate affordable, manufactured homes. We may have a better idea of the timing for this project after our planning session.

Under the new Municipal Government Act we will be required to have agreements in place with bordering municipalities for Inter-municipal Collaboration and Inter-municipal Development Plans by June 30, 2019. We currently have some agreements in place with the County and Foremost, but they have to be formalized into broader, comprehensive agreements. The three municipalities have applied for a \$150,000 collaboration grant from the province to hire a consultant to put these agreements together for us in the format the government requires. With the grant in place there shouldn't be any cost to us. This process will be an opportunity to update existing agreements and possibly address other issues not currently covered. Most importantly they will be a vehicle to make collaboration easier and normal for future Councils.

I wish you all the best for a Healthy and Prosperous 2018.....Mayor Gordon Reynolds