



**To All Poplar Bay Residents – Important Information from Council – Please Read to the End**

**IT APPEARS ANOTHER PETITION MAY BE UNDERWAY**

Residents, especially those who attend the Annual Information Meeting (AIM) each year, are aware of a small group of individuals in Poplar Bay who continue to oppose the wastewater system. In June 2015, this group unsuccessfully petitioned council to hold a vote to determine support for the wastewater system. A member of this group is also listed as one of the contacts on the recent "Did You Know" flyer, which contained many inaccuracies about wastewater costs.

On Saturday July 9, 2016, four representatives of this group arrived unannounced at the home of the mayor, who was in the process of entertaining guests and preparing for dinner. They demanded that council declare that tie-in to the local wastewater line will be optional. If council did not come back to them within a week with the response that they wanted, a petition for an investigation would be initiated. Before leaving, the group presented two documents that described the nature and scope of the investigation they intend to initiate.

Given councillors' busy schedules, one week to coordinate information, meet and respond appropriately is very aggressive, if not unreasonable. Although the four representatives were informed that council would be willing to review their request at the next scheduled council meeting on August 19, 2016, this was not acceptable to them.

On Tuesday July 12, 2016, the mayor received an email from the group reiterating their demands with one concession - that owners of septic fields must shut down their field system and must convert to a holding tank system and either connect to the local sewer line or arrange for regular pump out by truck.

Upon review of the documents, we discovered that the group intends to petition the Minister of Municipal Affairs to conduct an investigation into the operations of the Summer Village. The objective of the inspection process is to report on the management, administration and operation of the municipality and to identify matters that may indicate that the municipality is managed in an irregular, improper or improvident manner.

In essence what this group may be attempting to do is to create doubt as to the competency, cohesiveness and integrity of the Poplar Bay council and administration. May we state here for the record that the members of our Poplar Bay council work together extremely well and are united in our one mandate, which is to fairly and efficiently govern the affairs of the Summer Village of Poplar Bay.

Council is confident that such an investigation will result in a favourable report from the Minister. However, residents need to know that the Minister deems '*an inspection into the operations of a municipality as an extraordinary measure and is not undertaken lightly*'. Further, documentation from a similar investigation for another Summer Village indicates that the activities of the Summer Village may be 'frozen' while the investigation takes place – which can take between six months to a year.

Saddling this unwarranted exercise on our already extremely busy administration staff is in no way the best use of their time and may result in delays for day-to-day services such as permit processing, etc. Plus, there are the real costs of a Government appointed inspector to conduct the investigation, which may well be borne by all of us as residents.

Council's intent that all residents tie into the proposed wastewater system has been clearly stated from the beginning of this project back in 2004 and has not changed. While one Summer Village has recently announced that tie-ins will be optional, Poplar Bay's Wastewater Bylaw 232 section 3.5 states *"All wastewater-producing parcels within the Summer Village must connect to a Wastewater Collection System within one year of such system being provided."*

Reasons in support of all residents connecting to the wastewater system include:

- Significant cost savings to residents can be achieved if tie-ins are completed at the time of local line construction. The Building Canada grants can be used to offset 2/3's of the cost of directional drilling to the holding tank. Qualified contractors will be on hand to install the pumps and complete all other aspects of the tie-in at a price that takes advantage of economies of scale.
- Municipalities on the south side of Pigeon Lake have received well over \$13 million in funding from the Water for Life Strategy based on the understanding that all residents will tie into the system. As Gord Edwards, Executive Director, Alberta Water Council recently stated: *"This investment will build on an impressive list of projects to improve access to safe, reliable water supplies and wastewater solutions, particularly in small towns and rural Alberta, where it is needed most."*
- We can eliminate the 38 septic fields exist in Poplar Bay – with 22 of those being on lake-front properties.
- We have a June 15, 2015 letter from the Medical Officer of Health, AHS, Central Zone which states: *"The safe disposal of sewage wastes and the protection of well water from sewage contamination are of paramount importance to the protection of public health. In view of the background of sewage disposal related issues and concerns among residents and developments in the Pigeon Lake area, I strongly recommend that the municipal councils for the Summer Villages of Crystal Springs, Grandview, Ma-Me-O Beach, Norris Beach and Poplar Bay support the construction of a wastewater collection system that will service the respective municipalities on the south side of Pigeon Lake."*
- The wear and tear of trucking sewage results in costly repairs to our roads, especially during break-up.

As stated at the most recent AIM, council is committed to delivering a wastewater system that meets the needs of our Summer Village in the most cost effective way, looking for economies of scale, utilizing grant funding advantageously and capitalizing on the currently low contractor rates.

A copy of the Wastewater Update presented at the AIM has been posted on the Poplar Bay website: <http://www.poplarbay.ca/>. This is where you will get the most current and accurate information regarding the status of the wastewater system.

We sincerely hope that you will give this information serious consideration in the event you are approached to sign a petition. If you have any questions regarding this information, please contact any one of your councillors:

Brian Meaney (780-242-8172); Debra McDaniel (403-813-0253); Gary Carew (780-910-7310)