

Municipality of *Bluewater*

As we move forward into a New Year, it is important to take a moment to reflect on some of the accomplishments that we have seen in Bluewater throughout this term of Council, as well as more recently in 2017.

The completion of the Municipality of Bluewater Strategic Plan 2016-2021 was a priority achieved early in this term, and this document has become one of the driving forces behind the work that we do in Bluewater. The Strategic Plan is a guiding document, providing direction through the pillars of Infrastructure, Communication, Balanced Growth, Economic Development, Operational Excellence, and Quality of Life. Council provides direction to staff aligned with these pillars, which ultimately allows us to continue to work towards a strong and successful Bluewater.

Throughout this term of Council there have also been a number of changes to increase accountability and transparency, while streamlining local governance. These changes include reducing the number of Council meetings per month from three to two, updating the Procedural By-law, and creating a Council Action Items Status Report tool which provides a record of the action items Council directs staff to complete. Another example is the adoption of the Zoning By-law in 2015. The significance of this Zoning By-law is that it replaced the previous five separate zoning by-laws (Bayfield, Hay, Hensall, Stanley, and Zurich) that were in place.

The design of our Municipal website, www.municipalityofbluewater.ca has been updated, and there is a Municipal wide rebranding project well underway. More recently on the communication front, Council approved a social media policy, and Bluewater is proud to have an engaging online presence to increase interaction and share information with residents on both Facebook and Twitter. This is complemented by the recent implementation of an electronic newsletter, which will be circulated quarterly.

In an effort to strengthen relationships with other levels of government, Council has taken steps to work with neighbouring municipalities, the County of Huron, and has appeared as a delegation to various ministries over the past few years to address numerous issues. I am proud of the work that has been accomplished, particularly around the shared services agreement for a Fire Chief with Central Huron.

Another positive advance in 2017 was the adoption of Development Charges for the Municipality. Development charges are collected by the Municipality for the purpose of financing the construction of new capital infrastructure, as a result of the growth stemming from land development. In other words, as lands within Bluewater are developed, and municipal services are provided to these areas, development charges will lessen the impact on future budgets.

As we head into the 2018 municipal election, I anticipate a busy year for both Council and staff. In February 2017, Council approved the use of telephone and internet voting for the upcoming election, and preparations are well underway in the Municipal office.

Finally, it is important to note that much of what we have achieved in the past year has been due to the hard work of Bluewater staff. There have been a number of new faces in the Municipal Office in 2017 who have contributed to increased efficiency and effectiveness, and I believe our team is stronger than ever. It is thanks to the dedication of our employees across all departments that Bluewater has seen so much success in this year. I look forward to more exciting projects in the months to come.

On behalf of myself, and the Council of the Municipality of Bluewater, I would like to wish everyone a happy and healthy New Year!

Mayor Tyler Hessel
Municipality of Bluewater