

NEWSLETTER – Fall, 2008

2009 BSRA Meeting Dates – Mark Your Calendar

June 6	Spring General Meeting
August 29	2009 Annual Meeting

BSRA – Its Purpose, Goals, and Current Priorities

Our Purpose

As outlined in the Association Constitution, our purpose is to **represent the interests of the residents whose property is west of Highway 21 within the Hay West and Stanley West Bluewater wards.** The term *residents* includes all persons in these wards who are taxpayers in Bluewater, or who are on the official list of municipal electors in Bluewater.

Our Goals

- To protect and enhance the interests of Bluewater shoreline residents and to act on behalf of our member associations and affiliate members.
- To communicate regularly with our Hay West and Stanley West Ward Councillors to ensure that they are aware of the concerns and views of shoreline residents.
- To provide positive communication with Bluewater's Councillor-at-large, Deputy Mayor, Mayor, other Councillors; the Bluewater administration; and also with other lakeshore organizations.
- To monitor and participate co-operatively in the development and implementation of local, provincial, and federal government policies for emerging issues that affect shoreline residents.
- To monitor, and adjust where necessary, those BSRA services to member associations that are either not readily available through other sources, or obtainable at lower cost through group purchasing.
- To communicate effectively with the shoreline community, the general public and the media through the *BSRA Newsletter* and website, e-mailings and media releases.

Priorities and Activities in 2008-09

- Attend all Bluewater Council meetings.
- Meet regularly with the Hay West and Stanley West Councillors and, as necessary, other members of Council and Bluewater Administration.
- Monitor and respond to Council-related issues that affect shoreline residents, such as ATV's on the beach, wind farms, planning issues, taxation levels, sewage treatment plans for the south part of Bluewater, etc.
- Continue to monitor water quality in Bluewater and investigate / implement ways to improve water quality.
- Track the impact of the 2008 assessment changes on the property taxes paid by Bluewater shoreline residents over the next 4 years.
- Communicate with shoreline residents by issuing the *BSRA Newsletter* three times each year, and communicate with the subdivision Contact Persons, using e-mail when necessary.
- Continue the redevelopment of the BSRA website.
- Initiate planning for the 2010 municipal election.

We All Benefit – How Can We All Contribute?

The collective efforts of shoreline residents through BSRA and its predecessor, the Stanley Township Cottagers' Association, have resulted in numerous achievements from which **we all benefit**, directly or indirectly. Examples include the availability of natural gas, the creation of shoreline wards to ensure more effective political representation, partial reimbursement of the expenses of maintaining unassumed roads accessing our residences, and municipal financial support for BSRA initiatives to improve the quality of surface water entering Lake Huron – to name just a few.

What is your responsibility as a member of your shoreline community?

- **Become knowledgeable about the various issues affecting us all.**
Talk about the issues within your subdivision association. Don't leave everything to the one representative from your subdivision. Attend the two BSRA General Meetings each year in June and August.
- **When you are concerned about an issue, take action – don't just talk about it.**
For example, virtually all lakefront property owners complain about the inequity of market value assessment on property taxes. However, did you vote in the last provincial election, and if so did your vote reflect the position of that political party or candidate on the issue of capping property assessments?
- **Most importantly, VOTE in every Bluewater municipal election.**
The quality of candidates elected to the 3 at-large Council positions (Mayor, Deputy Mayor, Councillor-at-large) is of vital importance to the interests of all Bluewater voters, including shoreline residents. Since these positions also represent Bluewater on Huron County Council, their decisions determine the majority of the expenditures supported by your property taxes. However, despite the ease of "voting-by-mail", too many of us failed to return our ballot in the last election. The next election occurs in the fall of 2010 – a 100% ballot return should be our target.

How can I contribute some of my time to my shoreline community?

Here are five ways, listed in order of increasing time commitment, one could assist in the work of BSRA:

- General assistance with tasks such as *Newsletter* distribution and arrangements for General Meetings.
- Ad hoc contribution of several hours of time in area of resident's expertise (e.g., wind turbines, health, legal, etc.).
- Responsibility assigned by the Board of Directors for particular tasks or functions, such as monitoring Bluewater and Huron County budgets, tax monitoring, unassumed road issues, etc.
- Member of a BSRA committee (e.g., Environment).
- BSRA Board of Directors positions.

If you can volunteer some of your time to contribute to the overall quality of our shoreline community, feel free to contact any member of the Board of Directors to express your interest. We are particularly interested in those shoreline residents whose personal circumstances would allow them to make the time commitment to serve on the Board of Directors.

Water Quality Developments

- In September/07, BSRA requested the County **Medical Officer of Health to conduct an investigation**, as required by the Health Protection and Promotion Act, to determine if a health hazard exists in relation to human recreational contact with ravine water in the south gullies of Bluewater. In March/08, the MOH replied stating that she could not comply with our request because the mandate of the Health Unit is limited to recreational water at public beaches. BSRA disagrees with this interpretation of the Act. Our subsequent request to meet with the MOH to discuss the matter was refused. As a result, in June BSRA referred the matter to the Minister of Health and Long Term Care for a determination. We are now awaiting a reply from the Minister as to whether or not the MOH is required to conduct such a health hazard investigation under the Health Protection and Promotion Act.
- It is anticipated that Federal/Provincial grants covering 2/3 of the cost of **upgrading the Zurich sewage lagoon** should result in some reduction in pollution in the St. Joseph ravine and the adjacent Lake Huron beaches.
- Municipalities along Lake Huron shores are actively pursuing the international **Blue Flag designation** for their beaches, primarily because of the perceived effect on tourism. Bluewater is seeking Blue Flag status for the Bayfield Marina and Beach. We applaud Bluewater's leadership in supporting BSRA efforts to improve water quality within our municipality, but given the history of unsatisfactory water quality tests in the Bluewater ravines, Blue Flag status for municipal beaches within Hay and Stanley West would appear to be a difficult goal to attain.

2008- 09 BSRA Board of Directors

Office	Name	Subdivision	Home (519)	<u>e-mail</u>
President	Jan Purvis	Houston Heights South Lake	663 - 2046 565 - 5263	
Vice-President	<i>(To be appointed by Board of Directors)</i>			
Communications	Paul Mennill	Cedarbank	238 - 1240	
Environment	John Gillespie	St. Joseph Shores	236 - 7285	
Membership	Grant Monteith	Bayview	236 - 7372	
Secretary	Harlie Johnston	Elmwood	238 - 2843	
Treasurer	Bill Smith	Lakewood Gdns South	236 - 4606	
Past President	Bob Campbell	North Houston Heights	565 - 5202	

Jan Purvis
President

Paul Mennill
Communications Director