

## **What is old is new again**

### **Rural Roads:**

This meeting started out pretty ordinary as usual and then transformed itself into the same old, same old of the past. I should focus on the main points however. The KPMG report suggested that this city spends far too much money on the maintenance of class 6 roads. So what does council do? they proceed to debate that the city should be fair to all cottage dwellers, and offer all of them the same level of service. In the past back door agreements were made with city hall officials to permit the maintenance of certain cottage roads. In today's political climate back door agreements are frowned upon and should not be continued. In one glaring example a road with only one resident is being city maintained. That one road known as the Peninsula road is primarily used for ice fishermen this is an example of tax dollars wasted. The new policy as outlined by Luc Duval recommends that cottage owners who want city services where their roads are concerned should first approach council with details on how they could rehabilitate their roads to accommodate the standards that the city would require before assuming any road. Councillor's hemmed and hawed about this, stating that the city standards such as 66 feet wide might not be doable for some roads even though historically many roads who do not even approach city standards are presently being maintained by city crews this demonstrates the inability of our council to make tough decisions where tax dollars should be spent. The new policy spells out quite clearly what is required prior to the city assuming the maintenance of any road. To this author it is a no brainer, and yet council still might not adopt this new policy even though it is in direct contradiction of the KPMG report. Council should vote with the total taxpayers in mind and not just a few. So here is a question I ask all of you. After driving our city streets is it wise for the municipality to assume more and distant cottage roads?

### **Transit pilot project Phase 1, Handy transit:**

After the 6 month pilot project was completed only the numbers were left to be considered. As it turns out NO calls, yes you heard it 0 calls were fielded for a ride on the handy transit bus within the new pilot project area. There were however two return trips to the pilot project area that was fielded. It was abundantly clear that the pilot project failed in it's attempt to prove the old adage "build it and they will come". Still after much discussion and impassioned words from councillor Campbell that Timmins has an ageing population, so we may as well continue on proactively, before this becomes a real problem down the road. After all the words nothing was decided. A good alternative was presented in the way of reaching an agreement with our local taxi companies to supplement the handy transit for unplanned and emergency needs. This would definitely offer flexibility to our already overtaxed handy transit system. To this end a report will be developed by our transit manager. Many items were discussed at length and many items were put off awaiting new reports.

### **Council Renumeration**

I wonder if any body other than myself caught this the other night at the council meeting. Mayor Black introduced an agenda item entitled "council renumeration for 2015" he then asked our treasurer Jim Howie to come to the front and speak on this item. Our treasurer said there was nothing to add to this and proceeded to hand some papers to council which of course the public is not privy to. My question here is why put this on a public agenda and then proceed to be secretive about it? I am very surprised that all those who ran on transparency did not complain about this. This has occurred before and if we don't put a stop to this, our city will be controlled by the bureaucrats.