

ITEMS OF INTEREST

Town of Birch Hills

June 2017

Municipal Tax & Assessment

We were able to get our taxes out earlier than we had initially expected. Please look for your tax notice in the mail!!! And remember, there is a 5% discount on any amount of municipal taxes paid before June 30th.

The Town's assessment roll is open until June 13, 2017 and you are able to file an assessment appeal up until 4:00 pm that day. If you file and win your appeal, an amended tax notice will be issued. Your property assessment is not the same as your property tax. Council uses the property assessment to calculate property tax and you can only appeal your assessment value and not your property tax amount.

On May 10, 2017, Town Council passed the Budget and set the Municipal Mill Rate. The following Mill Rate, Minimum Tax and Mill Rate Factors were set:

Municipal Mill Rate : 9.0 mills
 Minimum Tax: Land—\$ 425.00
 Impr.—\$1,025.00
 Commercial Mill Rate Factor: 2.1



The Town would like to welcome Kelsey Clayton to our town staff. We are very excited to have Kelsey join our office staff and since her start date of April 18th, we have already noticed a world of difference in going from one part-time assistant to one full-time and one part-time assistant. Please help us welcome Kelsey the next time you are in the office.

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Assessment & Taxation

FIRE PITS

Open-air Fire Pit Permit is required in the Town of Birch Hills. You can obtain your Fire Pit Permit at the Town Office for a cost of \$5.00. Please remember to keep your fire well supervised and to not set open-air fires in windy conditions.

There shall be no burning of rubbish; garden refuse; manure; livestock or animal carcasses; or any material which when burned will generate black smoke or an offensive odour.

Open-Air Fire Pit Permits



Building Permits

Building Season is Upon Us!

Please remember that a building permit is required whenever work regulated by *The Uniform Building and Accessibility Standards Act* and *Regulations* is to be undertaken. Application are needed to erect, place, construct, alter, repair, renovate or reconstruct a building or deck. Building permit applications and forms can be obtained at the Town Office or on the town website at www.birchhills.ca, under forms & permits. All building permits have to adhere to the Town's Zoning Bylaw and Building Bylaw.

The Role of a Building Official

When appointed by a local authority, a building official has all the powers assigned to him or her under *The Uniform Building and Accessibility Standards Act*. A local authority may also pass a building bylaw that provides their official with a clear mandate to undertake plan review, inspection, and enforcement services for building projects within and on behalf of the municipality.

Town of Birch Hills Council Meetings

Please remember that letters addressing the Mayor and Council need to be submitted to the Town Office by 4:00 pm on the day before the council meeting is scheduled. This way we can make sure items are added to the meeting agenda in a timely fashion.

Even if you are addressing the Mayor and Council in your letter or report, and especially if you are asking for a decision to be made on a particular topic, you need to submit your correspondence to the Town Office so it can be added to the agenda so motion of council can be made.

Town Office Statutory Holiday Hours

Please take note that the Town Office will be closed on the following statutory holidays.

Monday, July 3, 2017 for Canada Day
Monday, August 7, 2017 for Saskatchewan Day

Regular office hours are 9 am to 4 pm, Monday through Friday.



Holiday Hours

Cats.

The Town office has received a large number of calls regarding cats running at large.

Please remember that the same laws apply to cats as they do to dogs. They need to adhere to Bylaw 04/12 of the Town of Birch Hills

The owner of a cat shall not at any time allow the cat to run at large within the town. Your cat needs a pet license and is required to be registered with the Town Office.

With the weather nicer and the sun shining, a lot of people are taking advantage of the outdoors.

Please remember to keep your yards tidy and clean. Nobody likes untidy and unsightly yards. Please avoid overgrown grass and weeds, dilapidated buildings, junked vehicles, etc.

The Town will be enforcing our nuisance bylaw. Please help keep our community attractive.

Tree Trimming

The Town of Birch Hills is going to be doing some tree trimming during the summer. Any trees or branches that encroach onto town easements or right-of-ways will be removed. This includes all streets, alleyways, sidewalks, pathways, etc.

Please help be a good neighbour and trim back any trees that grow onto your neighbour's property. It is ok to approach your neighbour and ask them to trim any trees that may overhang onto your personal property.

Please take extra caution when the town crew is in your neighbourhood to ensure your safety and theirs.



Field Scabious—Birch Hills

Field Scabious (Knautia Arvensis)

aka Blue Buttons, Gypsy Rose, Pincushion Scabious

Field Scabious is a highly invasive perennial plant native to Europe and is found on the "prohibited" list of weeds in Saskatchewan. Once established, Field Scabious is very difficult to eradicate requiring persistent and diligent control work. Each plant produces thousands of seeds that can remain viable in the soil for many years.

As you may know, Field Scabious has been found growing in and around Birch Hills. It is found in only two other locations in Saskatchewan.

Since 2013, the Town of Birch Hills has been partnering with the R.M. of Birch Hills, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Highways and Infrastructure, and the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities to help eradicate this weed. Barry Swanson, Professional Agrologist of Prince Albert has been appointed as Weed Inspector and has done an amazing job throughout the eradication activities.

We would like to remind everyone of this invasive plant problem that we are facing. If you spot and identify a Field Scabious plant in town, please report it to the Town Office or Weed Inspector.

Identifications:

Stems: Stems are erect and hairy and can grow up to 1.5 metres tall. The plant has an extensive, woody taproot that is often branched just below the surface.

Leaves: Leaves are hairy and coarsely toothed. Leaves growing at the base of the plant are 10 to 25 centimetres long and get smaller moving up the stem.

Flowers: Flower heads are similar to clovers and can range from violet-blue to pale blue or white in color, growing on the end of long, leafless stalks. Field Scabious typically flowers between July and September.

Seeds: Each plant is capable of producing up to 2,000 seeds that can remain viable in the soil for many years. The seeds are hairy and 5 to 6 mm long.



Poplar Subdivision Local Improvement

Town Council passed a resolution in March 2016 to proceed with the local improvement details for gutter and pavement in the Poplar Subdivision.

After some time working with our municipal engineers, the Town received the local improvement report on November 7, 2016. Town Council studied and reviewed the report and passed the required flankage bylaw on December 14, 2016.

The Town then submitted a local improvement application to the Local Government Committee and received the notification of approval on February 6, 2017.

After receiving the approval, the Town advertised the required notice of intentions on March 7, 2017 and March 14, 2017 in the newspaper, and mailed the individual notice of intentions to each property owner on March 10, 2017. The Town also held a public information night, in hopes to answer any questions and quell any false information. The time period from the notice of intention to the date that council proposed to meet allowed property owners to review, object or petition the proposed local improvement.

There was not a petition filed with the Town of Birch Hills and Council passed the construction bylaw on April 12, 2017.

To date, the local improvement tender packages were developed by our municipal engineers and advertised on May 19, 2017. The tenders close on June 1, 2017.

WHAT'S NEXT — After the work is complete, we will have the actual costs of the project, then we will enact a special assessment bylaw and prepare the special assessment roll.

15 days after completing the special assessment roll, the Town will publish and deliver the Notice of Special Assessment. The Board of Revision will process any appeals that might be received, then send invoices to the property owners. Property owners can prepay the assessment or apply the special assessment installments to their property taxes.

Electronic Notices, Internet Banking, Preauthorized Debits

The Town has been working very hard to make invoicing and bill paying easier and more convenient for all our customers. This also helps our office run more efficiently.

Get your water bill and/or tax notice by email!!! Just fill out an email consent form that can be found at the town office or website.

Preauthorized Debit (PAD) is also available, where your payment can be withdrawn on 20th of the month.

We also accept online bill payments through Credit Union, CIBC, Scotia Bank and TD Bank.

Invoices & Payments

Reminder that the Town Landfill (aka Dump) is strictly a compost site and the Town no longer accepts garbage refuse of any sort.

The compost site can be opened by the Town for a fee of \$15.00.

Communication

In a community survey, rate payers expressed their concern about “lack of communication” coming out of the Town’s office.

The Town sends quarterly Items of Interest Newsletters, we have introduced a brand new website, created a twitter account for the WTP, and post time sensitive matter on social media. We have also held various open meetings for the community such as an Official Community Plan Open House, Meet the Candidates Night, Crime Forum, proposed Poplar Subdivision Info Night, etc.

We have sent numerous mailers, such as, but not limited to: Q & A mailer, Crime Forum mailer, Field Scabious mailer, etc.

We feel we have made the effort to better communicate with you the rate payers, so now we ask that you return the favor. Please do not post “trash talk” on social media. It is very disheartening to hear this negativity and so many of the comments are simply not true. Our doors are open and we welcome you to a conversation at the office or with a member of council. Thank you!



Municipal Grants

Unconditional Revenue Sharing Grants Received by the Town of Birch Hills

2004—\$64,814.00	2011—\$186,921.04
2005—\$64,814.00	2012—\$214,817.00
2006—\$84,202.41	2013—\$239,482.00
2007—\$96,993.00	2014—\$232,819.00
2008—\$112,794.00	2015—\$240,470.00
2009—\$143,612.00	2016—\$246,161.00
2010—\$143,612.00	~~

Grants—Town of Birch Hills

There has been a lot of questions and discussions regarding grants for the Town of Birch Hills. We would like to reassure the community that the town receives notices of available grants and we do take advantage of whatever grant we can. Below is a rundown of grants that the Town of Birch Hills received over the past 12 years.

2005 to 2014—New Deal-Federal Gas Tax Fund. The Town received annual installments over 9 years totaling \$381,926.56 towards Water Treatment Plant Improvements

2006—Community Share Grant. Total of a \$32,758.00 unconditional grant.

2008—Building Canada Fund (BCF Grant). The Town received a grant for our new sewage lift station for a total approved project of \$1,340,00.00. The grant was 1/3 Municipal, 1/3 Provincial, and 1/3 Federal; for a combined provincial/federal grant of \$893,332.00 leaving \$446,666 to be paid by the Town.

2009—Municipal Economic Enhancement Program (MEEP). The Town received a grant to revitalize Bellamy Avenue (repair water lines & services, curb & sidewalk installation, street repair). The total approved project was \$180,624.03 and the province granted \$101,716.00

2011 to 2016—Saskatchewan Infrastructure Growth Initiative (SIGI). This was an interest reduction grant on long term borrowing for the Sewage Lift Station. The Town received a total interest reimbursement of \$110,848.00 over 5 years.

2012—Community Infrastructure Improvement Fund (CIIF). This grant was applied to the Civic Centre HVAC System. The total approved project was \$51,168.00 and the Town received \$25,584.00 in grant funding.

2014 to 2019—New Deal-Federal Gas Tax Fund. The Town is receiving annual installments for 5 years totaling \$314,305.50. This grant has been put towards the Poplar Subdivision Storm Sewer/Drainage and the Civic Centre windows & flooring.

2015—application to the New Building Canada Fund was made for the Water Treatment and Pumping Upgrades. Applied for a total estimated project of \$1,780,000.00 with a combined grant from provincial & federal of \$1,186,666.00 as our first priority. Second application was made for a total estimated project of \$1,200,000.00 for Storm Sewer Drainage with a combined provincial & federal grant of \$800,000.00 as our second priority.

2017—application to the Provincial-Territorial Infrastructure Component (PTIC)-Clean Water & Wastewater Fund (CWWF) for a total estimated project cost of \$3,700,000.00 for Water Treatment Plant Upgrades.

Website

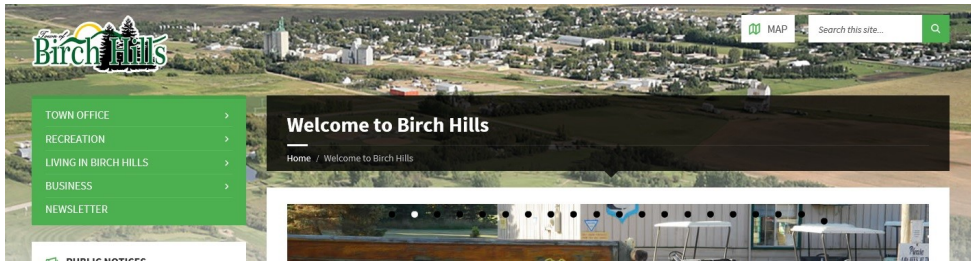
The Town's new website is up and running. Please visit our new website to find out information regarding the Town of Birch Hills.

You can obtain information on Bylaws/Policies, Minutes, Financial Statements, Forms/Permits, Taxes/Assessment, Utilities, and much more.

This will continue to be a work in progress. We welcome any suggestions or feedback of any problems that might show up or ideas to make the new site more user friendly.

Areas of the website will be updated as information is received at the Town office. Please submit any updated information or usable photos that can be used on our website to the Town Office.

Thank You!



The Town Office would like to update their customer contact information. As many homeowners may have discontinued land lines and are utilizing cell phones as their main contact, we do not have up to date information for some of our customers.

Help Us Know You Better!!!!

We Need Your Most Up-to-date Information

Name: _____

Street Address: _____

Box Number: _____

Telephone Numbers: Home: _____

Cell #1 _____ Cell #2 _____

Email: _____

Town of Birch Hills—Items of Interest

Contact Us

Give us a call for more information or if you have any questions.

Town of Birch Hills

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Box 206

Birch Hills, SK S0J 0G0

(306) 749-2232

birchhills.town@sasktel.net

Visit us on the web at
www.birchhills.ca

Regular Town Council meetings are held every 2nd and 4th Wednesday of each month at 7:30 pm. Agenda items should be brought to the attention of the Administrator no later than Friday before the meeting.

Elected Town Council

Mayor Dale Pratt
Councillor Barry Evans
Councillor Sharon Rolfes
Councillor John Herd
Councillor Keith Matheson
Councillor Graham Tweten
Councillor Owen Stubbs



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Also, read the blog at :
bhwaterplant.wordpress.com