

Quarterly ITEMS OF INTEREST

Town of Birch Hills

March 2019

New Town of Birch Hills Staff

Zachary Pitzel

The Town is happy to introduce Zachary Pitzel as our new Recreation Director. He joined our team on December 27, 2018....right in the middle of the holiday season. He moved here from Wynyard, Saskatchewan and hopefully has enjoyed his move to the community of Birch Hills.

Zac's interest in recreation led him to obtain his diploma in Recreation and Community Development at Saskatchewan Polytechnic.

Meaghan Pitre

The Town is also happy to introduce Meaghan Pitre. She has been hired as the office assistant at the Town Office and the bookkeeper at the Recreation Office. Meaghan joined our office on January 2, 2019.

Meaghan moved to Saskatchewan from Ontario in 2012, then to the community of Birch Hills in the summer of 2017.

We are very excited to have Zachary and Meaghan join our staff. Please help us welcome our newest staff members the next time you are in the Town Office or Recreation Office.

Introduction of New Staff

Town Office

126 McCallum Avenue
306-749-2232
Open Monday thru Friday from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm. (closed from 12-1)

Rec Office

146 Bellamy Avenue
306-749-7451
Open Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm. (may not be in the office normal hours during the other days—watch for the sign out front)

This issue of your Quarterly Items of Interest newsletter marks our 12th issue. This municipal newsletter was created to ensure, you as rate-payers, are well informed with the happenings, decisions, policies and procedures of your local municipality.

We hope you are finding our newsletter informative and we look forward to keeping you informed.

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- Presenting to Council
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- Website

time to
UPDATE



Time to Update your Contact Information

LAST CALL FOR Customer Contact Information

With so many homes disabling their landline telephones and as the generation is shifting towards more electronic communication, the town is having difficulty being able to communicate with our customers and ratepayers.

We have been working hard to update our customer contact information with little success. If you do not provide us with your contact information, we will not be able to communicate important information to you. You may not be happy if you are missed and suffer unfortunate consequences. So please, once again, see below:

If we have up-to-date contacts with an efficient and effective way to communicate, it will be easier to inform people of:

- project updates that effect your area of town.
- localized water advisories
- short notice water shut-offs due to construction, breakage, maintenance
- leak detection reports
- any changes effecting you or your property
- etc.

Help Us Keep You Updated!

Name: _____

Street Address: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Telephone Numbers: Home: _____

Cell #1 _____ Cell #2 _____

Email: _____

Town Office Statutory Holiday Hours

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

April 19, 2109 for Good Friday

April 22, 2019 for Easter Monday

May 20, 2019 for Victoria Day

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



As spring approaches and the weather gets warmer, we would like to remind everyone to watch for the increased number of pedestrians and children at play.

Help us keep our community safe for everyone.

Registering Concerns

Please remember common courtesy when registering concerns with the Town of Birch Hills. The Town policy is intended to set out the generally accepted procedures for residents when reporting concerns or filing complaints with Council or Staff. All concerns/ complaints must be clearly identified and must fall within the ability of the Town of Birch Hills to deal with under the current Provincial Legislation. Any action requested or taken must be clear and transparent by the complainant. Anonymous concerns/ complaints will not be given considerations.



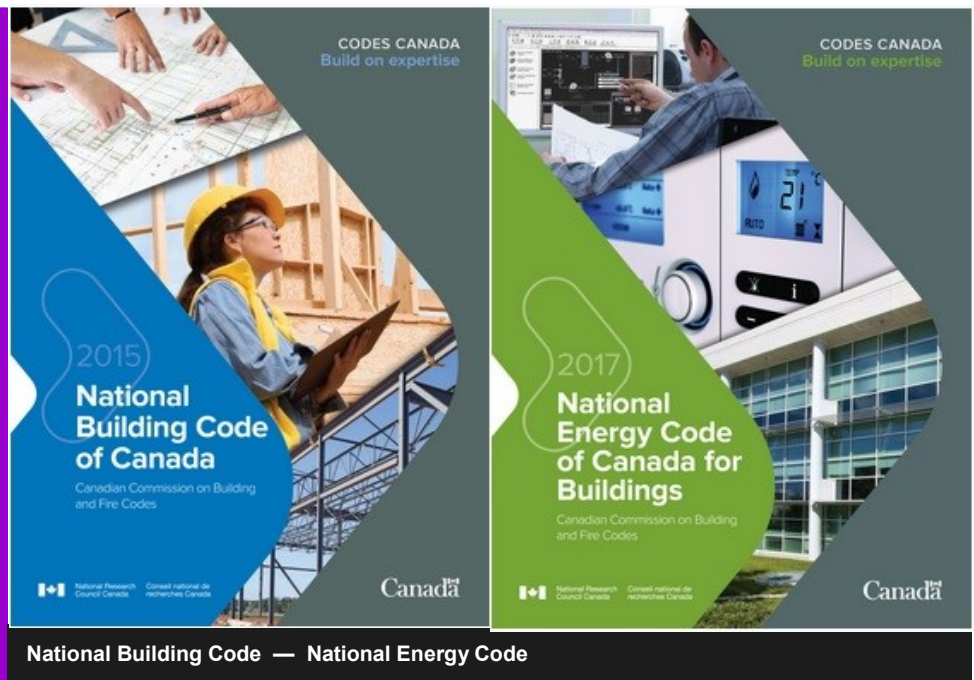
GO GREEN!

Receive your invoice by email

The Town sends out approximately 450 utility notices each month and we currently have approximately 60 customers signed up to receive their invoice by email.

Receiving your invoice by email will ensure you receive your invoice in a timely fashion. Currently, our local mail has to travel to Saskatoon before it is sorted and delivered to your post office box.

Sending our invoices by email saves the town time, paper, envelopes and postage.



Building Permits — National Energy Code

Effective January 1, 2019, the National Energy Code for Buildings 2017 (NECB 2017) and Section 9.36 of the National Building Code 2015 are now being enforced in the province of Saskatchewan. The new energy requirements will apply to building permit applications received on or after January 1, 2019.

Compliance is now required for all new buildings (residential and commercial) and additions. The requirements do not apply to accessory buildings such as detached garages/storage sheds.

An Energy Efficiency Compliance Form is required to be completed in order to provide the information necessary to demonstrate compliance with the energy code requirements. The required information will need to be submitted with the drawings and building permit application. Applications submitted without this information will not be reviewed. As a result of these requirements, hand drawn drawings will no longer be acceptable. Drawings will need to be prepared by a draftsman, architectural technician or other professional. Further information regarding the Energy Code Requirements can be found at the Town Office.

Please remember that construction is prohibited to start until the applicant receives all required approvals from Town Council and the Municipal Building Official. Applications need to be reviewed and approved at a Regular Meeting of Council then sent to the Municipal Building official for the required plan review before any approvals are granted to the applicant. The Town will forward all applicable approvals, with the building permit fee invoice to the applicant as soon as they are received in the office. Once the plan review and responsibilities are reviewed and the building permit fees are paid by the applicant, construction can commence.



2019 Property Assessments

Property Assessments

The Town of Birch Hills is preparing for another taxation year. Saskatchewan Assessment Management Agency (SAMA) have completed all maintenance and re-inspection inspections for the 2019 assessment year. There were approximately 30 changes in property assessment this year. Please remember that only the properties with changes in assessment or changes in ownership will receive an assessment notice.

If you have questions about your assessment or if you do not understand your assessment notice, you can contact the Town Office by calling 306-749-2232 or stopping by. You can also call SAMA toll-free at 1-800-667-SAMA (7262) and a SAMA assessment appraiser can answer your questions regarding your assessment.

You may also wish to look at the field sheet for your property online at <http://samaview.sama.sk.ca/sama/>. The field sheet will provide specific details about your property used to calculate the assessment like the size of buildings, condition of buildings, and size of lot.

The Town plans to have the 2019 assessment roll prepared by the end of March. All municipalities must give notice when the assessment roll is complete. Please watch for the notice of assessment roll in the local newspaper, Saskatchewan Gazette, website, Heartbeat, and municipal bulletin board.

Within 30 days of the assessment roll being advertised or of the mailing of assessment notices, any person with an interest in the assessed value or classification of a property can appeal the property assessment if they wish to do so. Notice of appeal forms will be sent with the assessment notice and are also available at the Town Office.

For more information on the appeal process please visit:

<http://publications.gov.sk.ca/documents/313/97762-assessmentappealmanualcitizens2017.pdf>

Paying your Water & Sewer Utility Bill made easy!

You can pay your utility bill by cheque, cash, debit, credit card, preauthorized debit, online bill payment, or E-transfer.

You can also receive your utility bill by email. Email consent forms can be obtained on our website or at the Town Office.

PREAUTHORIZED DEBITS—your payments can be withdrawn out of your account on the 20th of each month. Please fill out a PAD agreement if you wish to utilize this method of payment.

ONLINE BILL PAYMENTS—through any Credit Union affiliate, CIBC, Scotia Bank, TD Bank

E-TRANSFER—sent to birchhills.town@sasktel.net

Water & Sewer Utility Bill Payments

The Town Office would like to thank all those who gave our staff positive comments after the last couple snow storms. Whether it was on Facebook, relayed through council members, calls to the office or a friendly comment on the street, these positive words go a long way to encourage staff members that are bombarded with continued criticism.

Snow fall removal often begins on days off or in the very early hours of the day. The Town Staff work long hours to get the streets cleared for the citizens of Birch Hills and we appreciate those who appreciate the hard work put into the snow removal.

Council Meeting Minutes

Section 117(1)(d) of The Municipalities Act states "Any person is entitled at any time during regular business hours to inspect and obtain copies of the minutes of the council after they have been approved by the council."

Therefore, please feel free to stop by the office between the hours of 9:00 am and 4:00 pm to view the approved minutes of council. Please note the office is closed from 12—1 pm for lunch.

The minutes of council are also posted on the Town of Birch Hills website. Please remember that this is an extra service that the town provides that is not legislated by law. The minutes will be posted as soon as time permits. Normally, this can be done in a timely fashion after they have been approved but on occasion, things arise that will prohibit staff from being able to post them immediately.

Thank you for your patience and understanding. Minutes will be posted to the website as soon as time permits. But remember, they are available to view at anytime during office hours.



Meeting Minutes



Compostable Paper Bags

Only Compostable Yard Waste Paper Bags and Securely Tied Bundles will be accepted for yard waste collection.

Beginning with the first compost collection day, plastic bags will no longer be accepted or collected. The crew will only collect compostable paper bags.

Why did we change to compostable paper bags?

Plastic bags are not compostable and must be removed prior to the composting of the yard waste. By changing to paper bags, we are saving money and moving to a more environmentally responsible practice.

Will the paper bags hold up in the rain and other wet weather conditions?

Many other Canadian municipalities, including but not limited to, Regina, Windsor, Richmond and Cold Lake, have tested compostable paper bags. They were found to stand up well to rainy weather conditions. The paper bags have a protective wet-strength coating that resists the absorption of rain and water. These places also reported that residents were satisfied with the paper bags. As a precaution, it is recommended to store your full compostable paper bags in a dry place with the tops rolled closed, until collection day.

Are the paper bags convenient to use?

The paper bags stay standing up and open, which makes packing them more convenient. They hold a large amount of material and do not puncture easily, thanks to their thickness and protective coating.

Where can I purchase compostable paper bags?

The compostable paper bags can be purchased at local retail, hardware, garden and some grocery stores, the same places you would typically buy your plastic bags. Make sure they are compostable paper bags designed for yard waste.

Do stores have them in stock?

Known retailers and manufacturers of these types of supplies are well aware of the City of Prince Albert's change back in 2017, therefore they typically have an abundance of stock. Individual stores are responsible for stocking their products.

Are compostable paper bags more expensive than plastic ones?

Yes. Prices vary from store to store. The paper bags do tend to hold a large amount of material.

Are there environmental benefits to the paper bags?

Yes. These bags are 100 per cent compostable. They are made entirely of compostable material, including the coated lining. Therefore, the paper bags decompose along with the yard waste, and prevent all of those plastic bags from ending up in the landfill.

What other ways can I dispose of my lawn, leaf and yard waste?

In the summer, please remember to grasscycle. Leave your grass clippings on the lawn. Grass clippings decompose quickly, help reduce moisture loss and release valuable nutrients back into the soil — OR — Delivered to the waste site loosely or in compostable paper bags. If taken to the waste site in plastic bags, the person **must** debag at the drop off area and take empty plastic bags back to your curbside containers.

Can I use compostable or biodegradable plastic bags?

At this time the Town will not be picking-up compostable plastic bags. Despite the claims, they are not fully biodegradable and leave behind a mess.

Water & Sewer Utility Billing

Important things to remember

- Utility bills are generated on the first of each month. This bill is for water usage for the previous month.
- Water meters are read monthly. Therefore, all monthly bills are based on actual consumption.
- Penalty of 10% will be added to all outstanding water and sewer accounts at the date of next billing.
- If a Utility account remains outstanding more than 60 days, the Town will disconnect services.
- Upon disconnection for non-payment, the utility service will be reconnected only after all arrears and reconnection fees are paid in full.
- If any accounts remain unpaid for 120 days, the outstanding amount may be added to and thereby form part of the taxes on the land or buildings with respect to which service was provided.

HOW TO READ YOUR WATER METER



The Water Utility will read your water meter for billing purposes, but **should you wish to monitor your own consumption**, here's how:

- ♦ Shine a flashlight over the flashlight icon (located on the register) to activate the LCD display *
- ♦ Take a reading at a set time of the day
- ♦ Take a 2nd reading at the same time the next day
- ♦ The difference between the two readings is your daily water consumption

* Note: when the register display is first activated via a flashlight, all icons will be briefly displayed followed by firmware information. The register display will then toggle (every 4 seconds) displaying the reading and then the flow rate. The flow rate is per minute. When the display indicates "RATE", the flow rate is being displayed.

Leak Indicator
Displays a possible leak

- ♦ **OFF** – indicates no leaks
- ♦ **Flashing** – water usage for more than 50% of time in 24 hour period
- ♦ **Continuous ON** – there is most likely a leak in your home



The LCD figure displays your meter reading in cubic metres. The last 4 digits are decimal points. (e.g. – 26.3987 cubic metres) (decimal will be displayed)

Flow Indicator
Displays direction of water flow

- ♦ **ON** – water in use
- ♦ **OFF** – water not in use
- ♦ **Flashing** – water is running slowly
- ♦ **(-)** – indicates reverse flow
- ♦ **(+)** – indicates forward flow

Unusual higher consumption (bills)? Check for leaks....most leaks are unnoticeable. Take a night water meter reading when you are done using water for the day, followed by a morning reading. Meter movement overnight may mean a plumbing issue. Also, check the Leak Indicator on your water meter. Please call your plumber to fix any problems.

One of the most common issues is a leaking toilet. A good test to use is the dye test. Put a few drops of food coloring in the tank of your toilet. Do not flush your toilet for at *least* 30 minutes. Food coloring should not appear in your toilet bowl. If the food coloring does appear, then your toilet is leaking and you should contact a plumber to fix the problem.

Plumbing leaks add up fast!

Drip—1 drip per second wastes 32.7 litres daily and 11,937.6 litres yearly

Dribble—3 drips per second wastes 98.1 litres daily and 35,813.2 litres yearly

Drool—5 drips per second wastes 163.5 litres daily and 59,688.6 litres yearly

Leaking Toilets—a running toilet could be wasting more than 750 litres in a day

Leaking Showerhead—a showerhead that drops 10 drips per minute wastes more than 1,800 litres per year

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

126 McCallum Avenue
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 the day before the Council 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