

# Quarterly ITEMS OF INTEREST

Town of Birch Hills

December 2019

## Water Treatment Plant Upgrades

After the usual bureaucratic red tape that goes with grant funding, we have finally got the upgrades up and running.

There has been a concrete pad poured for the new natural gas generator which is going to be a great addition. If the power goes out, this generator will automatically start up the distribution pumps giving us uninterrupted water services, thereby eliminating the possibility of a PDWA. A new natural gas service and electrical service will also be installed into the plant early in December.

An insulated shed was built around the manhole to the outside storage reservoir. A bypass pipe was installed inside the plant that will hook up to the outside reservoir and feed the town when reservoir #1 is out of commission. This will be done by three submersible pumps with backup power.

This will be the temporary water supply starting in January as the inside storage reservoir will be drained down and cleaned out. When this is empty some new piping will be installed into the reservoir and a new ladder installed for access.

The lab/office area has been gutted and scaffolding is installed over the distribution pit. Steel beams have been placed and a galvanized steel floor base welded onto the girders. In the first week of December the concrete floor will be poured and allowed to cure. Grating will be placed over the access holes and a new ladder as well as stairs installed to allow easy access and egress to the pit. There will also be a gantry crane installed for lifting/lowering heavy objects into the pit.

The ceiling tiles as well as strapping and insulation are removed and new material will be installed soon. After that is done a lab/office area will be constructed sealed off from the rest of the plant. This will save instruments and computers from the moisture that can accumulate inside the plant.

In January 2020 new electrical panels as well as all new pumps and piping will be installed. The current pumps and piping are long overdue for replacement and have exceeded their life expectancy many years ago.

During this upgrade there should be no disruption to your water supply. Some areas may find a small change in water pressure as the water will be supplied from only one distribution source. This should be a minimal or even a nonexistent change in pressure.

The following are the companies working on this project:  
Engineering done by Catterall and Wright from Saskatoon.  
The general contractor for this project is VCM Construction based out of Saskatoon.

Mechanical/piping will be done by Suer & Pollon Mechanical of Saskatoon. All the electrical work is being handled by Flyer Electric right here in Birch Hills.

*The Town of Birch Hills would like to wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!*

*May Christmas bring joy to your heart and happiness to your home!*

## In This Issue

- Water Treatment Plant Upgrades
- Property Taxes
- Tax Arrears
- Holiday Hours
- Municipal Street Lights
- Email Notices
- Rollout Curbside Bins
- E-Transfers
- Town Christmas Tree
- Website—Pictures
- Cats at Large



## Past Due Taxes

### Property Taxes

Property Taxes are due by December 31st of each year. As of November 30th, 2019, 85% of the 2019 property taxes have been paid. This leaves 15% of the 2019 taxes unpaid. Reminder letters were recently sent out to those who have not yet paid their 2019 property taxes. Please remember to have your taxes paid before December 31st. Unpaid taxes after December 31st are considered arrears and are subject to tax enforcement.

Tax Enforcement proceedings have started against properties that have not paid their 2018 property taxes. The list of arrears has already been submitted to Council and advertised in the local paper. The following step is to place a tax lien on the properties that remain unpaid after January 22, 2020. Therefore, please have your arrears paid by this date to avoid a tax lien on your property.

#### Tax Arrears

The Town is diligently enforcing the *Tax Enforcement Act*. The total amount of unpaid municipal & school property taxes from 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018 is **\$77,882.51**. This includes 13 properties that currently have a tax lien registered against their property. These 13 properties include 1 property with unpaid taxes from 2015, 4 properties with unpaid taxes from 2016, 7 properties with unpaid taxes from 2017 and 1 property with unpaid taxes from 2018. There is also 7 properties with unpaid taxes from 2018, that have just begun the enforcement proceedings and will be subject to a tax lien if they remain unpaid after January 22, 2020.

### Municipal Street Lights

Did you know that the Town of Birch Hills has 143 Street Lights? Did you know it is a flat rate per street light whether the light is working or not?

These street lights are owned and maintained by SaskPower and are considered residential street lighting.

If you notice a street light not working, contact SaskPower at [www.saskpower.com](http://www.saskpower.com) and follow the links OR call 1-888-757-3637 OR contact the Town Office. Your assistance in reporting street light outages helps the Town make sure they are receiving the services that are being paid for.

## Town Office Statutory Holiday Hours

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

- December 25, 2019 for Christmas Day
- December 26, 2019 for Boxing Day
- January 1, 2020 for New Year's Day

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



## Holiday Hours

### Speed Radar

**August**—Total vehicles count was 16,078—Number of Speed Violations was 14,055—Number Respecting Speed Limit was 2,023—**88%** of vehicles were speeding

**September**— Total vehicles count was 16,649—Number of Speed Violations was 14,913— Number Respecting Speed Limit was 1,736—**89%** of vehicles were speeding

**October**—Total vehicles count was 17,116—Number of Speed Violations was 15,246—Number Respecting Speed Limit was 1,870—**89%** of vehicles were speeding

**November**—Total vehicles count was 14,398—Number of Speed Violations was 12,695—Number Respecting Speed Limit was 1,703—**88%** of vehicles were speeding

## Town Christmas Tree

You may have noticed the Town Christmas Tree is not in its usual spot. It is located on the empty lot on main street .

Due to SaskPower regulations, the Town is no longer able to run cords or lights from the power poles to light the Christmas Tree. SaskPower will only allow the pole decorations if they meet a certain standard and size.

For this year, our widely known tradition of "a Christmas tree in the middle of town" is not an option. The Town will look at other viable options to have the tree in the middle of the intersection for future years.

The Town of Birch Hills would also like to thank the Community Church and Saron Lutheran Church for decorating and hosting the Christmas tree lighting event again this year.

They would also like to thank Cornerstone Insurance for the use of the lot.



Rollout Bins

## Curbside Pickup

Garbage Pickup (Brown Bin) is every Wednesday

Recycle Pickup (Blue Bin) is every other Tuesday

Calendars outlining the scheduled pickup days were sent out with your monthly utility bill. They can also be obtained from the Town Office or the Town of Birch Hills Website.

There seems to be a growing number of bins being left out on the streets again. Please keep in mind that there were articles or reminders in the May 2016, September 2016, December 2016, March 2017 and December 2017 Items of Interest Bulletin. As you can see, the Town diligently tried to educate the community for a year before the first fine was issued in June 2017.

Thank you to all those who have abided by the Bylaw and continue to remain compliant in the Town's efforts to correct this problem.

## GO GREEN! Receive your invoice by email



*The Town sends out approximately 450 utility notices each month and we currently have approximately 75 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.*

## The Town Accepts e-Transfers!!



The Town is starting to see more and more customers paying their bills by e-transfer. This can be a much more economical way for some of our customers to pay their bills.

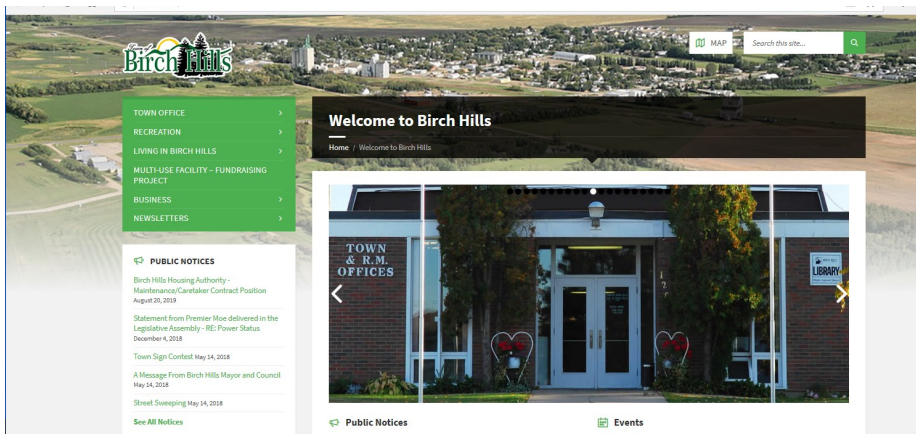
We would like to ask our customers to use the message option in the e-transfer to specify what they are paying. We are receiving payments for anything from Utility Bills, Taxes, Civic Centre Rental, Animal Licences, Business Licences, Custom Work, Fire Recoveries, etc. If you specify what you are paying, there is a lot of less room for error. Thank you!

# Town Website

The Town launched their new website in 2016. We see that the pictures that were supplied at that time are already outdated. If you have some pictures of our great town or any event, and you are willing to share them, please let the Town office know.

Also, if anybody has ideas on what can be added to the website to promote our town, please send us your ideas.

Anybody's help is greatly appreciated!



# CATS

Remember to not let your pet cats run at large!! We are facing another problem with many cats running loose around town. Pet cats are required to be licensed in town and there are fines for failure to license and running at large.

With the colder weather here, cats are roaming in search of warmth. Please remember, if you are trapping stray cats on your own accord or taking stray cats in that you don't intend on keeping, it is not the responsibility of the Town to collect and dispose of these cats. If you are continuously feeding and caring for a stray cat, the animal becomes your responsibility — whether you adopt it or find it a home.



# 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](mailto:birchhills.town@sasktel.net)

Visit us on the web at  
[www.birchhills.ca](http://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](http://bhwaterplant.wordpress.com)