

Pontiac Council meeting - mud and potholes on ch Braun

Mo Laidlaw

It was difficult to enter the hall for the regular meeting of Pontiac municipal council on Wednesday, 11th December 2019, at the Luskville community centre. Lucinda Sanschagrin staged a one-woman protest, almost blocking the entrance to the hall with her wide placards, and saying that the mayor “doesn’t understand democracy,” because she was not allowed to stage a protest inside the hall. She asked what can be done about goats dying on her farm at 2330 ch Westbrook, which she attributes to contamination from the Moss Mine, several km away to the northwest. A stream on her farm flows west to join the stream (Mohr creek) coming from the old mine. Mayor Joanne Labadie said she has spoken to the owner of part of the abandoned mine who has frequently tested the water with no problem results. She is in regular communication with the NCC. Mines are in federal jurisdiction, and agriculture and environment are provincial: there is no municipal jurisdiction in this matter.

Braun road in poor repair

Mike Mongeon, representing owners on ch Braun, reiterated the problems with road maintenance that were brought to a special meeting of council on November 6th. Since then no grading has been done. No gravel has been added for three years. There are 49 houses and two businesses on the 2.1 km road, leading to considerable traffic. He suggests that the tar and chip system used in the Lusk project might be cheaper than asphalt. Paving with asphalt would have cost him \$800 a year for 20 years, and was rejected by residents. Labadie apologized for the lack of response by Public Works to the huge number of complaints. She noted that there has been a lot of rain this year, and there is no gravel left for the grader to work on. Priority number one is drainage. One problem is that the Nature Conservancy who own the Breckenridge Nature Preserve, does not want the wetland drained, as it is one of the sites for the rare western chorus frog. Mongeon said that the BNP property is only 250 m and the rest of the road is well drained and can be fixed. It will be on the agenda for the Public works committee, meeting soon, and the local councillor Isabelle Patrie will follow up.

The budget

The meeting to pass the budget is on 18th December, 7:30 in Luskville. Carl Hager asked if money is being put aside in the budget for fixing ch de la Montagne (yes, \$2 million borrowing bylaw); and dealing with derelict buildings on ch River (there are delays because the town planning department lacked a building inspector for a year; one is starting in January, meanwhile many demolition permits have been issued for flood-damaged buildings). He also asked about finishing the community centre parking lot that “looks like a flood zone”. Labadie replied that the budget for the community centre did not include money for landscaping, and because the surroundings *are* in the flood zone the municipality has to work with the Ministry of Environment. The Waterfront Revitalization Committee may fundraise to cover this work. Public Works started work on the concrete steps and slab, but rain and freezing temperatures have halted work. There is a temporary rented ramp. The community centre was used for the Santa Claus Parade, and will be used for a private party on New Year’s Eve. It is hoped to fix any start-up issues before an official opening perhaps at the end of January.

More flood damaged properties acquired

Owners of three more properties in the Plage Charron area at the south end of ch Kennedy have accepted the Ministry of Public Security's buy-out for residences flooded in the spring. The municipality will acquire these for \$1 each and may be able to claim legal transfer fees from MSP: 921 ch du Ruisseau, 1551 ch du Rubis and 945 ch de la Topaze. As usual, the building must be demolished and the lot cleared and made safe.

The latest information about the ZIS has caused some confusion. Areas marked in yellow are those no longer considered flooded in 2017 or 2019 and removed from the previous map.

Fire Department

A report of activity was tabled. In 2019 the fire department responded to 59 vehicle accidents, 20 fire alarms, 17 complaints, 13 house or chimney fires, 13 brush or forest fires, 9 electrical fires and 5 vehicle fires. They assisted citizens, police or paramedics 14 times.

The updated bylaw (06-19) on the policy for managing municipal contracts was adopted. The change is to do with modifications to a contract after it is awarded (section 29).

Approved:

Invoices amounting to \$332,592, and fixed expenses, \$693,629 for November. There are no incurred expenses for December.

\$41,555 plus tax to buy a generator for the municipal complex "for disasters". This is for an effectively new generator from government surplus, that has only been used for technical tests.

Three contracts for skating rink maintenance at Soulière-Davis Park, Luskville park and Quyon, for just over \$9,000 each.

\$6,019 for a new furnace for the Luskville fire station.

\$4,055 as the municipal share of social housing.

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The municipal website is www.municipalitepontiac.com