

Date

To: Members of the Havelock-Belmont-Methuen municipal council

From: The Lake Kasshabog Residents Association

First, may we congratulate you on your successful election to the HBM municipal council. We look forward to working with you over the next 4 years as we address issues of concern to our members.

Also, thank you so much for attending the Kasshabog all candidates meeting and submitting the information we requested. This information enabled our members to make informed choices for the election.

One of the issues we raised was regarding Private Road funding. We know this proposal is being made well ahead of the budget submissions schedule for 2023, but since this was identified as a primary issue by both the 2022 HBM survey and the 2022 Kasshabog survey, we thought it prudent to get the new council members up to speed. It is hoped that some preliminary research and planning can take place by Council and staff to expedite approval of the Private Road Grant for 2023.

Please let us know if there is any other information you need to move this proposal forward.

History

In October, 2020, representatives from the Fire Route 82 Road Association made a presentation to council for consideration for the 2021 budget. That submission is attached. It clearly outlines the request (that HBM establish a road grant program of \$15,000 for road associations to apply for money for one-time costs) and the reasoning. This amount is less than 1% of HBM's total roads budget. It was not approved to be included in the 2021 budget due to a stalemate vote. However, there were a lot of emails written to council members in favour for such a project and it came back to council on April 20, 2021. At that meeting, council asked staff to look into making materials available for road associations to purchase at the township discount. FR 82 immediately wrote to council clearly indicating that we were not in favour of that and why. At the May 4 council meeting, staff indicated that the program was unfeasible so it was withdrawn (staff can provide the details as to why it wouldn't work). Then Councillor Hart Webb gave a passionate plea to his fellow council members saying that the majority of our taxpayers are asking for a simple grant program that will cost peanuts and "you are turning your backs on them". The result was that Mr. Webb and the clerk, Bob Angione, put forward a motion for the May 18th meeting.

Council met on May 18, 2021 and Councillor Hart Webb put forward a motion to have staff design a 'made in HBM' grant program for private roads. He indicated that they have been contacted by numerous residents in support of such a program. He emphasized that the program would be easy to implement and affordable, and that it would not "open a can of worms nor be a lot of work for staff." He asked the councillors who voted against this before to reconsider. Mayor Jim Martin asked for a seconder he but did not get one and without a seconder, the motion died. Please note that Jim Martin and Hart Webb were firmly in favour of establishing this program.

It is Time to Move on This Issue!

Why should HBM establish such a grant program?

- Other townships already have such a program.
- Road Associations cannot afford to maintain roads in adequate condition to safely/comfortably allow Emergency vehicles to operate. All Road Associations are run by volunteers.
- Many of the 100+ fire routes in HBM are small, serving only a few properties. The roads we are concerned about are the handful of long roads that serve over 50 properties and that see significant traffic due to the number of permanent residents, delivery trucks, new builds and service vehicles, etc.
- 81% of the roads in HBM are privately maintained. Note that this does not mean that they are on private land like driveways. While some do cross private land, most are on crown land.
- 55% of the kilometers of roads in HBM are privately maintained.
- 68% of residential properties in HBM are on private roads.
- 92% of the residential taxes paid to HBM are from township properties, while the village contributes 8%.
- Since 62% of the township properties are waterfront, it is safe to say that at least \$3,225,641 in taxes come from properties on private roads (likely much more since waterfront properties are generally assessed higher than non-waterfront properties).

In conclusion, the properties that pay the most taxes are also paying to maintain 81% of the roads or 55% of the number of kilometres of roads.

In 2022 a survey was undertaken by HBM to establish what the citizens thought should be prioritized in the 2022 budget. Roads received the largest attention with 35% prioritizing improved rural road upkeep, annual private road grants and improving George St. This report was presented at the Feb 15, 2022 council meeting (page 309 of the minutes).

Also in 2002, the LKRA undertook a survey of its members as to what issues concerned them the most. Private Road issues were rated second (67%) behind internet/cell coverage (85%).

FAST FORWARD

Leading up to the October 2022 Municipal election, we once again reached out the LKRA members. Next to Environmental concerns and Internet/Cell coverage, Private Roads were deemed the biggest concern and issue for residents.

We therefore asked all candidates to comment on this issue:

Q3 (Private Roads) Traffic on our local Fire Routes (82, 90, 75) has increased substantially in recent years and access for emergency vehicles is a big concern on these privately maintained roads. Looking to the future, what do you think the Township's responsibility should be in terms of the safety and maintenance of these roads? Would you support a Traffic Study and/or a Road Standards review on these roads and subsequently assuming maintenance of these three key roads? Are there other interim measures you can suggest to mitigate taxpayer costs and ensure safe 911 access to all cottages

Successful council members responded as follows:

<p>Jim Martin – Candidate for Mayor Having over 100 private road in our Township, it would be difficult to bring roads up to a municipal standard and assume them. I like to think outside the box and a Private Road Grant is something I have supported in the past that would benefit roads that need capital repairs, such as culverts or washouts, and I still support this. We have also looked at a process to help road associations to receive township pricing for gravel. Emergency vehicle access has not been a problem, as I have never received any complaints to date.</p>
<p>Hart Webb- Deputy Mayor- Acclaimed & Unable to Respond Given Personal Family Loss</p>
<p>Cathy Clement - Councillor at Large My husband and I drove the two of the three fire routes (93 & 75) and that was an eye opener. Previously I was told that the LKRA had asked for some assistance in buying gravel from the township. That is a perfect solution and I would back that a hundred percent. Also possibly looking at grading the beginning of the road until it the point where it would be safe to turn around. After travelling the two roads I realize that a regular snow plow or grader wouldn't be able to go the complete length of the road.</p>
<p>Jerry Doherty - Councillor Township Ward This is an item that no doubt will go back on the agenda for the new council.</p>
<p>Beverly Flagler - Councillor Village Ward I have driven on some of the Fire Routes and realize that there are issues with the maintenance of these roads on a yearly basis. Everyone deserves to have 911 access and I am willing to talk with all residents involved and move forward with a plan to address these concerns.</p>

They say that a picture says a million words. Late this October, when 132 residents were trying to navigate FR75 to close cottages etc., the condition of FR 75 for 6.2 kilometers was per the pictures below. Not the occasional pothole to drive around but the entire roadway undermined and ridden with hundreds of potholes. Residents on this road pay \$305 annually to maintain the road amounting to a budget \$40,260. This type of funding only allows Band-Aid grading, culvert repair and maintenance solutions. When major storms occur, such as happened this Spring, Fire Route roads experience major erosion and need for culvert repair. Case in point, FR82 cost \$30,000 to repair a culvert that was washed out by a burst beaver dam, and properties on that road were assessed another \$550 to cover the repair.



WE ARE LOOKING FOR HBM TO PROVIDE FINANCIAL SUPPORT IN 2023

In 2023, the taxpayers on private HBM Fire Route Roads would like to see a roads standards review undertaken on **key*** Fire Route Roads and an action plan suggested. In the interim, we would like to see a “made in HBM, affordable, fair, and easy to administer program Road Grant program” initiated by Council. It could be used for one-time costs like culvert repair or materials that could include dust suppression, gravel, fill, culverts, etc. To be eligible for a grant, the Private Road would have to have a bank account and an identified executive.

*Long Fire Routes serving many residents

Please advise us what if any other input you require to set up the Road Grant Program for 2023.