




THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF
SAUGEEN SHORES

STAFF REPORT

Prepared By: Lori Sweiger, Treasurer
Approved By: Larry Allison, CAO 
Date: March 8, 2010
Subject: 2010 Consolidated Fees and Charges By-law

RECOMMENDATION

That the 2010 fees and charges proposed in Schedule A be approved and that the Consolidated Fees and Charges by-law be presented to Council for adoption.

BACKGROUND

The Town of Saugeen Shores has a number of by-laws that include fees and charges for the range of goods and services that we provide as a municipality. All municipalities are required to provide the public with access to a consolidated list of fees and charges. This document is available and is posted on the municipal web-site. In the interest of ensuring that all of our fees and charges remain current and are reviewed on an annual basis, it is proposed that the Town adopt a consolidated fees and charges by-law that will incorporate the fee schedules from the various by-laws that all into one document for adopted by council. A consolidated schedule of fees and charges is attached to this report and identifies the 2009 fees and the proposed 2010 fees for adoption. The majority of our fees have been reviewed on an annual basis and 2010 adjustments range from no increase up to approximately 5%; however there have not been any changes to building permit fees, roads, cemetery, fire and animal control for a number of years. The information provided in this report is intended to highlight the major proposed changes to our fee schedule.

ADMINISTRATION

Tax Certificate and Water Certificate fees – increase from \$35.00 to \$50.00 per request. A tax or water certificate is primarily requested when there is a transfer of property ownership. The current rate of \$35.00 has been in place since 2006.

Planning Fees

It was discussed during budget deliberations that the Town has not been recovering its costs associated with processing planning applications and holding the public meetings. The attached fee schedule proposes a \$125.00 fee for zoning, minor variances, severances and official plan amendments and a \$150.00 fee for a combination of any two applications received at the same time.

The following significant subdivision planning fees are being introduced: Road closure deposit – the balance will be refunded once all related costs have been paid; Final approval of subdivision/phase being registered - \$1,000 applicable to all draft plan applications received after March 22, 2010; Appeal to Ontario Municipal Board - \$5,000 deposit – the balance will be refunded once all costs have been accounted for; Deeming by-law – refundable deposit is increasing from \$500 to \$1,000 to better reflect the legal fees related to this process.

The timing of the receipt of planning applications has also been reviewed, it is now proposed that the Town of Saugeen Shores collect fees related to subdivision development at the time the developer is submitting an application for draft plan approval. The town incurs costs related to plan review and establishing draft plan conditions as soon as a draft plan is submitted.

Animal Control

We are proposing to introduce an increased annual fee for dog and cat licenses purchased after the June 1st due date. The fee payable up to June 1st will remain at \$10.00 per animal, but will increase to \$20.00 per animal if paid after June 1st.

FIRE FEES

Many of the fire related fees are only collected when a particular service is requested – a number of services are provided at no charge as part of the day to day operation of the Fire Department and as part of our Fire Prevention Program.

Burn Permits:

Previously burn permits were issued on a daily basis only. Many controlled burns require additional days to burn responsibly. A weekly permit fee and a monthly permit fee are being proposed for those occasions when a controlled burn is expected to take longer than a day. The intent is to encourage the permit holder to finish burning in a predetermined time period.

File Search Letters:

Lawyers, Insurance companies, Real Estate agents and Home inspection services occasionally request file search letters to determine if a building has any outstanding fire code violations. By setting the fee for the file search at the same fee as for an inspection, it is hoped that there will be more requests for a full fire inspections. Issuing

a fire inspection report is a more accurate and up to date way of ensuring the building is in compliance with the Ontario Fire Code.

Standard Incident Reports (SIR) – new fee \$100

Lawyers and insurance companies occasionally request the SIR that has been completed and submitted to the Ontario Fire Marshal's Office.

Request Fire Inspection: range from \$100 to \$500

The higher fee for larger buildings or multi unit buildings recognizes that in a larger facility more staff time is required to complete the initial inspection and follow-up inspections may be required to achieve compliance.

Fireworks Inspection: New Fee - \$250

Retailers in Saugeen Shores wishing to sell fireworks must apply for a license to sell fireworks as per by-law 53-2006. As part of the Licensing process a Fire inspection must be completed of the premises where the fireworks will be stored and/or displayed for sale. Often the inspection of these facilities requires multiple follow-up inspections before a license is issued; and subsequent complaint inspections during the sale periods. The proposed Fee would help to recover costs of the required inspections for a yearly sale period

False Alarm Charge – after one false alarm

If the Fire Department attends at a property in response to a fire alarm activation and upon conducting an investigation the Fire Department determines that the alarm activation was a result of equipment or operator failure, the property owner shall be charged the fee of \$500 per response. Property owners shall be allowed one activation in a calendar year, subsequent calls to that property will be invoiced.

In the past false alarms were subject to a charge following three false alarm responses in a calendar year.

Response due to negligence or an illegal act: New fee \$350.00 per hour

If the Fire Department responds to an incident and following an investigation, it is in the opinion of the Senior Officer at the incident that the request for service was the result of gross negligence or as the result of an illegal act the response will be billed at MTO rates applicable at the time of the response.

Hazardous Materials: New fee – actual cost plus 10%

If the Fire Department responds to a pollutant spill or a release of hazardous materials which has caused or is likely to cause an adverse effect, the owner of the pollutant and/or the person having control of the pollutant shall be charged the expenses incurred by the Fire Department for responding to the spill.

**Extraordinary Expenses/Specialized Equipment Or Services:
New fee – actual cost plus 10%**

If the Fire Department responds to a fire or other emergency at a property and the Senior Officer at the incident determines, that it is necessary to retain a private contractor, rent special equipment, or use more materials, equipment or labour than are provided on a first alarm response in order to suppress or extinguish a fire, preserve property, prevent a fire from spreading, determine the cause of a fire or otherwise control and eliminate an emergency, the property owner shall be charged the expenses incurred by the Fire Department for retaining a private contractor, renting special equipment and/or using more materials, equipment or labour than are provided on a first alarm response, as applicable.

**Fire Department Assistance Beyond Normal Circumstances:
New fee – actual cost plus 10%**

Assistance beyond normal requirements could include: “Stand-by” fire protection, posting a “fire watch” of buildings with disabled alarm systems, “Boarding up” of buildings damaged by fire and assistance to other agencies.

Carbon Monoxide Alarms: - New fee \$60.00

When the Saugeen Shores Fire Department responds to an activation of a carbon monoxide (CO) alarm, at more than 90% of the responses the activation of the CO alarm was due to equipment failure. Responding crews provide a “loaner” alarm so the occupant is not left unprotected. Residents use the alarm until the next business day and return the “loaner” alarm to the Fire Station after they have purchased a new alarm. The proposed fee is recommended to allow us to recover the costs of the loaner alarm when the resident has not returned the CO alarm.

BUILDING PERMIT FEES

Building permit fees have not increased since 2003. The proposed fee increases bring our building permit fees in line with those charged in surrounding municipalities. The significant increase is the change to the square foot cost for new main buildings or structures from \$.45 to \$.65 per square foot and for new accessory buildings from \$.20 to \$.25 per square foot.

A new rate of \$200 plus \$7.00 per \$1,000 of estimated cost of construction has been introduced for a Designated Structure and for Solar Collector.

The base fee for additions and renovations has not increased however in addition to the base fee we were collecting \$6.00 per \$1,000 of estimated cost of construction – it is proposed that this additional fee increase to \$7.00 per \$1,000.

A number of increases are recommended for the permit fees for additions or renovations to farm buildings.

SIGN BY-LAW

Nominal increases are proposed for a number of sign categories and a new category has been created for special occasion signs. In addition we are introducing a fee of \$670.00 for a minor variance application to the conditions of our Sign By-law. Minor Variance applications are typically handled through Bruce County Planning, however we are proposing that a sign by-law related minor variance application would be administered through the building department, with the Planning Advisory Committee as the group that would decide the application. The fee of \$670.00 is intended to be cost recovery.

ROADS FEES

While not used often, the labour charge out rate has increased to take into consideration the 2010 increase to the union contract rates and the equipment rate has been up-dated to better reflect the market rate for equipment rental.

Water and Sewer Fees

The 2010 budget does not include a rate increase for the water consumption or water fixed capital contribution rates, but does include the second phase of the sewer fixed capital contribution rate.

As part of the 2009 budget discussions, the monthly equivalent household fixed sewer capital contribution was scheduled to increase from \$11.75 per month to \$15.00 per month effective February 1st, 2010. All of the borrowing that we anticipated is not in place yet, allowing us to delay the next step in this increase to June 1st, 2010. The consolidated fee schedule includes the change to the sewer fixed capital contribution and notes an effective date of June 1st, 2010. No other water and sewer fee changes are proposed at this time.

The impact to the average residential consumer based on 18 cubic meters of consumption per month is a 5.75% increase or \$39.00 per year increasing the average water and sewer bill from \$678.36 to \$717.36 annually.

Waste Management

The Pay as You Throw waste management program was implemented to achieve two principal goals: One to increase waste diversion from our landfill and two to eventually make waste management a 100% self funded program. Two years into the program we have made great strides and have exceeded our expectations with the diversion rates that have been achieved to date. To ensure that our waste management program continues to move toward a 100% self funded program an increase in waste management revenues is proposed in the 2010 operating budget. While initially staff was proposing an increase in the bag tag fee to bring the Saugeen Shores bag tag rate in line with the average per bag fee charged in nine of the closest municipalities with a mandatory bag tag program, the same goal can be achieved by increasing the per tonne rate charged at the landfill site. As an alternative It is now being proposed that the current rate of \$80 per tonne for sorted household, concrete, brick and shingle

waste be increased to \$100 per tonne and the unsorted household rate of \$110 per tonne be increased to \$125 per tonne.

The disposal fee for tires has been removed as Stewardship Ontario provides funding for tire disposal.

Cemetery Fees

The Town of Saugeen Shores has not increased fees and charges at our three cemeteries since 2001. Currently the cemetery revenues from plot sales, burials and interest from care and maintenance reserves cover about 40% of the costs to operate the cemeteries. To try and reduce the deficit between revenues and expenses the town has reviewed fees from several cemeteries throughout Southern Ontario. What we found was that our fees were approx ½ of the average of the cemeteries we surveyed. Based on the survey results it is recommended that Saugeen Shores adjust its current cemetery fees to slightly above the average of the fees charged by the other cemeteries that were surveyed. This reflects a significant increase in some of our current fees but is justifiable when comparing to other cemeteries. Cemetery fees must be reviewed by the Ministry of Consumer and Commercial Relations prior to coming into force.

Removal of Non Resident rates

The Town of Saugeen Shores does not have a substantial amount of non resident plot sales or burials (3 in 2009); however the few that we process are typically non residents that grew up in the area or have relatives in the area who would like to purchase a plot and see the additional fee as an unfair charge. Over half of the cemeteries surveyed do not have a Non Resident rate. As a result of the small number and the local connections, it is recommended that the Non resident Rate structure be removed from the by-law.

COMMUNITY SERVICES REVENUES

The majority of revenues related to Community Services programs and facilities will not change to any significant extent. Council has already reviewed the harbour and tourist camp rates and the proposed up-dated rates are included on the schedule.

Programs

The Community Services Department offers a number of day camp programs throughout the year during the summer, Christmas, March Break and on P.D. days. In addition special interest programs may be introduced on a cost recovery basis where there is sufficient interest to run the program.

Passive Parks

Late last fall the concept of a facility rental charge was introduced for several of our park locations. The town offers several public park locations that can be reserved for private events. Reserving the sight ensures that the location is flagged for an individual's use and avoids the potential for duplicate bookings. The nominal fee recognizes that the

town maintains the location and has had staff provide an extra level of service at the site in advance of the use. In the case of Pioneer Park it is proposed that the fee collected be forwarded to the Propeller Club as they maintain this park on our behalf. The ability to reserve a specific location is limited to the North Shore Park Pavilion; the Long Dock Pavilion; Pioneer Park; Fairy Lake Bandshell and Emmett McGrath Bandshell. Groups and individuals may continue to use all of our park facilities at no charge if they prefer not to go through the formal booking process.

Rink Board Advertising

The opportunity to provide rink board advertising was extended to the Coliseum in 2009 as a test market at a reduced rate compared to the Plex rink board advertising. Rink board advertising is gaining in popularity and it is being recommended that the Coliseum rates be increased in 2010 to bring them closer in line to those in place at the Plex. The purchase of a 4 x 4 or a 4 x 8 advertisement includes the initial purchase of the decal. Replacement decals can be purchased on a cost recovery basis at the rate of \$115.00 for a 4 x 4 decal and \$175.00 for a 4 x 8 decal.

Aquatics

Nominal fee increases are proposed for the majority of our aquatics programs; however it is recommended that the fee for Bronze Star and Bronze Medallion be lowered to be comparable with the fee charged in neighbouring municipalities for this program. We have also introduced a Pool Operator Course program that is offered to staff from other Pool facilities.

The punch card and membership program that is offered for public swim, lane swim and aqua fitness remains popular and still offers good value for the public even with the proposed fee increases.

A complete listing of the consolidated fees and charges is attached

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The proposed fee increases have been built into the draft 2010 operating budget.