

MUNICIPAL MATTERS

Spring/Summer 2022



TAX RATE DECREASE IN 2022—2023 FISCAL YEAR

The annual tax rate for Region of Queens Municipality's 2022 –2023 fiscal year decreased by three cents per one hundred dollars of assessment to all tax rates in the Municipality. Residential and resource tax rates in Districts 1-12 are \$1.07 per \$100 assessment, and in District 13 (Liverpool), are \$1.93 per \$100 assessment. The commercial tax rate in Districts 1–12 is \$2.17 per \$100 assessment, and \$3.03 per \$100 assessment in District 13 (Liverpool). An area rate of \$0.06 is applicable on all tax rate classifications in Districts 5 & 6 (Brooklyn). In Region of Queens Municipality, tax rates are inclusive of services such as fire hydrants, street lighting, garbage collection, and paving, which are often collected as area rates in other Municipalities. With the tax rate decrease of three cents in residential, resource and commercial rates, residents will have a savings of \$30.00 for each \$100,000 of assessed value. Tax bills have now been mailed, and there is no interest added if paid by June 30, 2022.

UNEXPECTED BUDGET SURPLUS ALLOCATED FOR CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW LIBRARY

Throughout the 2021 –2022 fiscal year, Council was mindful of budgetary constraints and, despite receiving double federal gas tax funding, provincial funding to mitigate financial effects of COVID-19, and higher than anticipated deed transfer tax, Council did not stray from the established budget for 2021-2022. The result of this prudent spending and restraint was a year end unplanned surplus of \$3.4 million. This significant surplus was discussed during budget planning for 2022-2023's budget, and it was determined that the unexpected funds would be best used to build a much needed new library which will be created to ensure long-term sustainable free access to library services for all. The surplus was put in operating reserves, with \$3 million earmarked to construct a new library, to begin this year.

A six member steering committee has been struck, consisting of two library users, two library staff and two Queens County representatives of the South Shore Public Libraries Board, with Thomas Raddall III serving as Honourary Chair. Meetings have started, and the steering committee will provide Municipal Council with educated, knowledgeable, and practical first-hand advice, education, and recommendations for the design, layout, placement, programs and services for a new Thomas H. Raddall Library.

SUMMER IS ON THE WAY: SWIMMING LESSONS ARE BEING PLANNED AT OUR OUTDOOR POOLS

Summer is nearly here, and planning is underway to open the North Queens Aquatic Centre and Milton Centennial Pool for programming and swimming lessons. Details will be released soon regarding opening dates, registration information, and schedules for each of the outdoor pools. This information will be posted online on the Municipality's website (<https://www.regionofqueens.com>) and social media pages.

This season, the Lifesaving Society's Swim for Life® swimming lesson program will held; the change in swimming lesson program was required as Canadian Red Cross has discontinued its swimming lesson program. Swim for Life® is a complete learn-to-swim program from Parent & Tot through to Leadership, and a major, national program that teaches hundreds of thousands of Canadians how to swim every year.



Swimming lessons this summer and on-going will be conducted using the Lifesaving Society's Swim for Life program. Swimmers who previously took Red Cross lessons will be placed in the equivalent Swim for Life level.



A MESSAGE FROM MAYOR NORMAN

It's springtime and we're growing in Queens. Literally speaking, Pine Grove Park in Milton will be absolutely spectacular with new growth until the end of June as hundreds of rhododendrons come into bloom. The walking paths were recently resurfaced making for excellent accessibility so please, venture into this beautiful park. Thanks to efforts of community organizations, outdoor spaces, trails and other infrastructure are also emerging and growing stronger within Queens. A perfect example is the Greenfield Community Park which is well in the planning stage and spearheaded by community members. It is wonderful to see Seaside Centre in Beach Meadows flourishing once again thanks to infused enthusiasm from people who reside in the area. Queens County Fairground Association is currently completing upgrades to their site and adding accessible washrooms made possible with ACOA's support and \$25,000 from the Municipality. Community growth is alive and well. Within this newsletter you will read of a number of interesting and exciting developments the Municipality is engaged in. It is exciting that events are now being planned after several years of being on hold. Community dinners, garden parties and fun socials provide much needed operational money for our not for profit organizations. Some of our more notable functions - Privateer Days (June), Hanks Snow Summer Festival (July) and Mini Tribute (August), Queens County Fair (September) have established their dates. Please attend your favorite events and maybe try one or two you have yet to attend. Region of Queens Municipality is pleased to be hosting a July 1st event on the Liverpool waterfront! I welcome spring and summer with open arms and hope you do as well. I am proud to live where "community" is thriving and alive. With room to roam and nature's rewards all around us, we are very special.

COUNCIL MEETING SCHEDULE Region of Queens Municipality's Council meets on the 2nd Tuesday of each month at 9 a.m. and the 4th Tuesday of each month at 6 p.m. in Council Chamber at the Municipal Administration Building, 249 White Point Rd., Liverpool, NS. Meetings are open to the public. The meetings are recorded, with links to the audio and the video promptly posted on our website. Those present at meetings may speak for up to 5 minutes during the public comments section of the agenda. If you are unable to attend, contact your Councillor or Mayor Norman to bring your question forward. Agendas are posted online by noon on the Friday prior to a meeting: <https://www.regionofqueens.com/council-governance/council-agendas-minutes-audio>.

COUNCIL IN YOUR COMMUNITY

As part of Council's ongoing efforts to connect with residents and enable easier access to information, four times a year, an evening Council meeting is held off-site in a community hall in North, East, West, and South Queens.

Dates and Locations in 2022:

April 26 - Hunts Point Community Hall,

June 28 - Pleasant River Community Hall,

October 25 - Port Medway Fire Hall,

January 24, 2023 - **To be confirmed.**

YOU MAY BE ELIGIBLE TO SAVE ON MUNICIPAL TAXES

In the 2022 - 20223 taxation year (April 1, 2022 until March 31, 2023), applicants with a household income of \$30,000 or less are eligible for a Municipal tax exemption of up to \$300. A copy of the applicant's 2021 Notice of Assessment from Canada Revenue Agency is required with the application.

Deadline to apply is February 28, 2023. For more information and to download the application form, go to: <https://www.regionofqueens.com/municipal-services/finance/property-taxes> or visit the Finance Department's staff at the Municipal Administration Building, 249 White Point Rd., Liverpool, NS, or call 902-354-3453.

CONNECTING WITH COUNCIL

When you have a question about the Municipality, we encourage you to reach out to Mayor Norman or your Councillor and ask them. They are passionate about their communities, and genuinely want to hear from residents.

Maps of Districts: <https://www.regionofqueens.com/council-governance/electoral-districts-for-cg>

For contact information for your Councillor or Mayor Norman, please go to our website:

<https://www.regionofqueens.com/council-governance/council-mayor-for-cg>

UNIVERSALLY DESIGNED PLAYGROUND TO BE BUILT - ETLI MILITAMK: WE PLAY HERE

While many of the extras have been trimmed from this year's budget, a much anticipated project will be moving forward with no impact on the tax rate: the Etli Militamk Queens Universally Designed Playpark, the result of several years of fundraising by the Queens Universally Designed Playpark Committee and partnership with Autism Nova Scotia. This wonderful new accessible and inclusive playground and splash pad will be constructed on Old Cobb Barn Road, Brooklyn, adjacent to Mersey Skatepark, on the grounds of Queens Place Emera Centre. Site preparation work has begun, and the playground equipment has been ordered, however, due to supply chain issues, the equipment is not expected to be installed until fall 2022 or spring 2023. Check our website and social media pages for a grand opening date.



Etli Militamk Queens Universally Designed Playpark is the first playground for all ages and abilities in Queens County. It will have ramps to raised decks, braille and audio elements, a wheelchair spinner, multi-generational swing, areas for group and individual play, and pieces for varying abilities, all within a safely fenced in area.

Etli Militamk Playpark will exist because of several years of commitment, collaboration and fundraising by the Queens Universally Designed Playpark Committee. The fundraising was locally led and locally supported, with many residents of Queens donating to the project, as well as foundations and other funding partners. Over \$600,000 was received as donations for this impactful project.

Thank you to the Queens Universally Designed Playpark Committee for their passion in making this wonderful addition to the Municipality's infrastructure a reality, and it will be a lasting legacy to their vision.

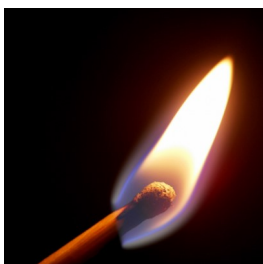
UPCOMING OPPORTUNITY: SURPLUS MUNICIPAL LANDS

Region of Queens Municipality is currently identifying surplus Municipally owned lands and will be offering these for sale in the coming months. Throughout Queens County, there are various small and large size parcels. It is the belief of Council that if these lands could be put to a better use, such as housing, economic development, etc. , they should be sold instead of remaining unused. In the coming months, information will be posted on our website and social media pages about available properties. Please check www.regionofqueens.com for updates, or sign up for updates at engageQueens.ca .

WHY PLAN?

Municipal land use planning provides a framework for the orderly, healthy, and sustainable development of our communities. It entails identifying the types and intensity of land uses a community feels are appropriate within a planned area, provides direction on sustainable development practices, and reduces conflicts between competing land uses.

The previous Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use Bylaw were approved by Council in 2009, and the update was approved May 24, 2022, for which a review began in 2019. These documents apply to all lands within the Region of Queens Municipality. Provincial legislation {Municipal Government Act} requires that a municipality review its planning documents periodically. The new documents have been submitted to Nova Scotia Department of Municipal Affairs for approval, and are available online at: <https://www.regionofqueens.com/municipal-services/planning/land-use-planning>



BURN SAFE

Did you know that wildfire-risk season is from March 15-October 15 in Nova Scotia? Before you light an outdoor fire of any type, be sure to check the Province's Burn Safe website to see if burning is allowed. Did you know that regardless of the conditions, outdoor burning is not permitted between the hours of 8 a.m. and 2 p.m.?

Go to website <https://novascotia.ca/burnsafe/> daily after 2 p.m. or call toll free for the daily burning restrictions: 1-855-564-2876(BURN) .

WATER UTILITY INCREASE

Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board recently approved an application by Region of Queens Municipality to amend its Schedule of Rates and Charges for Water and Water Services. The approved rates are in effect as of April 1, 2022, and will be charged on the July 1, 2022 invoice. The Municipality issues invoices for water and sewer quarterly, outlining charges for water consumption, and water and sewer service fees. Payment is due 30 days after the invoice date.

For information on the new rates and how to pay your utility bill, go to:

<https://www.regionofqueens.com/municipal-services/finance/water-sewer-billing> .

UPDATE ON LONG TERM CARE FACILITY TO REPLACE HILLSVIEW ACRES AND QUEENS MANOR

The Province has approved a new long term care facility for Queens County, which will replace Hillsview Acres Home for Special Care and Queens Manor Residential Care Facility. As the first step in the process, Tate Engineering was selected to lead the work of Queens Care Building Society over the next three years. Following the announcement of the new 96 bed facility, MLA Kim Masland's request was approved that the Province increase the size of the new facility to 112 residents to help relieve the crowding of acute care beds at Queens General Hospital. This increase in size means that additional staff will be hired for the new facility. As a result of the increased size and expected delays in sourcing materials, the anticipated completion date has been pushed to September 2025.

Tate Engineering and the Queens Care Building Society conducted assessments of potential sites for the new facility that meet the specific requirements outlined by the Province for locations of new facilities, among which are level ground, central to recreational and commercial services, near transit services, close to medical facilities and pharmacies, near transitional services, and access to central water and sewer services. Queens Care Building Society and the Steering Committee want the new home to be in the midst of the community so residents can see activities around them and can feel part of the community, which is not available at Hillsview Acres or Queens Manor, due to their locations being distanced from the "core" of their communities. Approximately 20 locations in the Liverpool area of about 10 acres in size were considered. As some of the properties were owned by the Municipality, no municipal representatives were involved in site discussions nor in the decision making process. A recommendation was made to the Province that the lands next to the Best Western Hotel in Liverpool fit the criteria, and is the preferred site. Planning will be based on this site, with details to be worked out in next steps.

A Request for Proposals (RFP) for Architectural and other professionals' services was issued on Friday, April 1, 2022, to four of the largest firms in Canada with extensive experience in designing and building long term care facilities. The RFP seeks explanation of how they will ensure their design and building ideas will create a "home" environment that is visible and the pride of the community, provide excellence in energy efficiencies, and have a shared focus on residents and staff comfort and safety. It is expected that the design "team" will be in place by the end of May, once the cost and hiring of the design team is approved by the Province.

Next steps in the process will be planning the layout of the facility, along with size and location of various spaces, and the overall flow of the building. This must follow provincial standards, and decisions made will be in consultation with residents and staff of the two facilities. Among the improvements in the new facility will be a private bathroom for each resident. The preliminary building and floor plans will be created for staff, resident and public input, and capital cost estimates, to ensure that the proposed building is in line with Provincial budget expectations.

The project is being led by Queens Care Building Society.

Check our website & social media for details about Canada Day 2022 events throughout Queens!



Region of Queens Municipality

www.regionofqueens.com

249 White Point Road, P. O. Box 1264, Liverpool, NS B0T 1K0

Phone: 902-354-3453 Fax: 902-354-7473 E-mail: info@regionofqueens.com