

# **DoKURA**

## **DISTRICT OF KENORA UNINCORPORATED AREAS RATEPAYERS ASSOCIATION A NON-PROFIT ONTARIO CORPORATION**

**PRESENTATION TO**

**DSSAB REVIEW TEAM**

**OCTOBER 2017**

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# **BACKGROUND**

## **WHO ARE WE?**

For readers unfamiliar with DoKURA, we are a Non-Profit Corporation incorporated under the laws of the Province of Ontario. We were formed in 1996 to represent the interests of the over 35,000 permanent and seasonal residents, and ratepayers, who reside outside the organized municipalities in the Unincorporated Territories of the Kenora District of N. W. Ontario.

Our organization is operated by a volunteer Board of Directors which is elected annually at a public meeting. We have four elected representatives who serve on the Kenora District Services Board.

With one quarter of all the provincial Land Tax accounts in Ontario (15,682 out of a total of 60,000) located within the Kenora District, we provide a substantial portion (approximately 50%) of the local funding that goes towards not only the operation of the KDSB but also other Provincial Government services directed to the Unincorporated Areas of the District.

It should be noted that with assessment values for properties in the Unincorporated Territories of our Kenora District expected to continue to out pace those of most of the Municipalities within the District, we anticipate that our share will continue to rise.

DoKURA conducted the first vote across the Kenora District, in 1996, for the four representatives on the then newly formed KDSB. While subsequent elections have been the responsibility of the KDSB, in each case the responsibility to conduct the actual election has been downloaded to DoKURA, under contract.



# **OUR THOUGHTS AND COMMENTS REGARDING THE DSSAB REVIEW**

## **A – ELECTION FUNDING**

As noted earlier in this presentation, our organization has contracted with the KDSB to operate the election for TWOMO representatives to the KDSB, ever since the inception of the DSSAB's.

Under existing regulations, the KDSB SHALL conduct said election.

The DSSAB's are allowed limited funding with which to do the job.

In 2010 they were allowed \$15,000.00 for this purpose.

In 2014 the amount was increased to \$20,000.00.

Any cost in excess of this amount is the responsibility of the local DSSAB.

In 2010 we saw two of the four Wards in the Kenora District, contested. The cost of conducting the election came to \$27,551.84.

In 2014, just one of the four wards was contested and the cost came to \$28,951.73.

In both cases, the KDSB had to advance money from their own funds to cover the excess costs and then appealed to the Ministry, after the election was over, for recovery of the money they had spent. Fortunately the Ministry had surplus funds available, from DSSAB's who had not spent their allocation, to cover the full amounts.

Had each of the four wards been contested, and we had had to conduct an actual vote in each, the cost would easily have exceeded \$75,000.00.

Hence, we would like to see the Review Team suggest that the Ministry either set a limit of – say \$30,000.00 per Ward, or agree to pick up the entire cost incurred by each individual DSSAB.

Yes, DOKURA will be conducting the election again in the fall of 2018 and in an effort to keep the costs down, is exploring changing the system of voting to that of a vote by mail system. We are not sure how much saving can be achieved thru this change, however we fee it may be a better way to increase voter turn out.

## **B – LAND USE PLANNING**

**Our original expectation when the DSSAB's were formed across Northern Ontario, was that their areas of operation would be expanded from the present four services (Land Ambulance, Social Housing, Ontario Works and Childcare) to include other services needed in our Unincorporated Areas.**

**The roads in the TWOMO Areas, for the most part, look after themselves via the Local Roads Boards system.**

**In addition, Fire and First Responder service is provided via local Volunteer Fire Departments, again a service that meets the needs of the Unincorporated Areas.**

**The one service that is needed that we would like to see the DSSAB's authority expanded to include, is that of Land Use Planning.**

**In 2001 our Association obtained funding (approx. \$100,000) from the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines to conduct meetings across the District to see if there was sufficient interest to form an AREA SERVICES BOARD. Numerous public meetings were held to solicit the public's thoughts and comments, and in the end, a public vote was taken to decide whether or not to proceed.**

**The Unincorporated Areas and the majority of the Municipalities voted in favor of an Area Services Board.**

**Unfortunately, the government of the day chose not to proceed with this much needed reform.**

**Had the will of the majority in the Kenora District been respected, the DSSAB's as we know them today, would have been included in**

**the Area Services Board and such services as Land Use Planning been included.**

**It should be noted that several years back, an attempt at a form of land use planning was undertaken in a portion of the Lake of the Woods South ward via the introduction of what is known as a “Restricted Area Order”. This order was an attempt to restrict/control development and in the Clearwater Bay/Shoal Lake areas.**

**The operation of this “order” falls under the responsibility of the Ministry of Natural Resources, who would really like to hand it off to some other organization, only, at present, there is no one else to give it to.**

**Extending the operation of the DSSAB’s to include such Land Use Planning, would solve the problem.**



## **C – WASTE COLLECTION AND DISPOSAL - GARBAGE**

In addition to Land Use Planning, there is a need in the TWOMO areas to deal with the collection and disposal of garbage.

Yes, a few of the TWOMO areas have some garbage collection sites, however they are few and far between.

We would like to see the DSSAB's power expanded to allow them to establish and operate garbage collection and disposal sites.

As to funding for both additional services, (Land Use Planning and Garbage) the additional revenue produced thru PLT reform is one source. Remember, that when PLT Reform was first introduced, that the government in Queen's Park committed to using the additional revenue produced in the area. If that is not possible, there is no reason why they couldn't be funded thru an additional tax added to the Provincial Land Tax bills, similar to how the Local Service Boards and Local Roads Boards are funded today.

It is our wish that the DSSAB operating authority be expanded to allow it to include this service that would have been made available in the Kenora District had the Area Services program been enacted.

## **D – ENUMERATION AND ASSESSMENT**

**We mentioned the need for MCSS to pick up the cost of conducting the TWOMO elections. We would like to see MCSS put some pressure on MPAC (Municipal Property Assessment Corporation) to get out and do their job, when it comes to the information they are supposed to provide in the TWOMO areas.**

**As an example, in conducting the election in 2010 and 2014, the voters list provided is less than adequate.**

**They have yet to provide a voters list broken down into the four TWOMO wards, rather what they provided is a mish mash of groupings that did little more than “resemble” the wards.**

**In conducting the actual vote, we have resorted to having the voter sign a document stating that they reside in the ward in which they are casting their vote.**

**We have been able to identify case after case of individuals whose names are missing from the lists, individuals we know who have resided in the area for many many years.**

**A quick review of the lists suggests to us that the majority of the missing names are from areas outside the school tax boundaries.**

**We have offered to work with them in the years between elections in an effort to conduct a proper enumeration, however our offers have been ignored.**

**They have suggested to us that they try to keep their records up to date thru incorporating information from such sources as drivers license changes. We are quick to point out to them that the majority of the voters in some of the wards (ie - Lake of the Woods South and North) are not residents of Ontario, hence do not have Ontario drivers licenses, but are eligible to vote.**

**We further point out that with the lack of development control in most of our TWOMO areas, there are many properties that have been developed or expanded that are improperly assessed, or not assessed at all. We encourage them to get out and do the physical inspections to bring everyone up to date. We feel that everyone should pay their fair share in taxes, but without proper assessment, this is not the case.**

**We would like to see MCSS put some pressure on MPAC to get out and do the job they are supposed to do.**

## CONTACTING US

Our Association is run by the following group of volunteers, with the ward they reside in/represent noted following their name.

Jack McKenzie	-	President	- Lake of the Woods South
Gord Dingman	-	Vice President	- Lac Seul
Bob Stewart*	-	Secretary	- Lake of the Woods South
Irene Kember	-	Treasurer	- Lake of the Woods South
Barry Baltessen*	-	Director	- Lake of the Woods North
Ray LeRay*	-	Director	- Oxdrift
Bill Deschamps	-	Director	- Lac Seul
Phyllis Hannon	-	Director	- Oxdrift
Mark Sobchuk*	-	Director	- Lac Seul

\* also serve on KDSB as elected Directors to that body

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