

# DoKURA NEWS

Fall 2019

## DoKURA AGM

Welcome to the Fall 2019 newsletter for DoKURA (The District of Kenora Unincorporated Areas Ratepayers Association).

The association's annual general meeting was held Aug. 29, 2019 at the Longbow Lake firehall.

Reports presented at the meeting will be posted to DoKURA's website - [www.dokura.com](http://www.dokura.com) - as it is updated this fall. Major items discussed and approved at the meeting included three resolutions following which letters of support were issued. The Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry is being petitioned to spend \$200,000 to repair and upgrade the Turtle Portage boat transfer on the Aulneau Peninsula rather than decommission the facility. The Kenora District Services Board is being asked to review having a land ambulance base in Vermilion Bay. The municipality of Machin, in which Vermilion Bay is the main community, is the only one of nine municipalities in the District without a land ambulance base. DoKURA endorsed the Kenora District Services Board's efforts to obtain federal government funds to address the issues of homelessness and addictions in the District.

A motion was approved updating the association's bylaws. The bylaws were first approved in 2006 and updated in 2015 to provide for notifying members via email or other electronic means. The 2019 amendments addressed grammar and syntax issues, as well as allowing for a larger board of directors; changing the quorum requirements for meetings; and requiring an annual meeting be held annually no later than Sept. 30 rather than in July.

Following annual elections, the DoKURA board of Directors and Officers for 2020 are:

Jack McKenzie - President

Gord Dingman - Vice President

Irene Kember - Treasurer

Bob Stewart - Secretary

### Directors

Ed Murray - KDSB - Oxdrift

Laurie Hoffman - Director at Large - Oxdrift

Gord Dingman - Director at Large - Oxdrift

Barry Baltessen - KDSB - Lake of the Woods North

Jack McKenzie - Director at Large - LotW South

Bob Stewart - KDSB - Lake of the Woods South

Irene Kember - Director at Large - LotW South

Mark Sobchuk - KDSB - Lac Suel

Bill Deschamps - Director at Large - Lac Suel

## HYDRO HIKE AHEAD

This summer Hydro One began including informational inserts in its quarterly bills to Seasonal Class customers

notifying them of major changes ahead in their service rates.

The change is part of an overall move begun in 2016 to require uniform, fixed monthly service charges by the province's 70-plus local distribution companies. As part of the change the Ontario Energy Board is requiring Hydro One to end its Seasonal class, and merge those customers into one of its three current density zones for year-round residents, each of which will have a separate fixed charge determined by the costs of maintaining distribution lines and equipment in those density zones.

Media reports referenced \$1,000-a-year increases for cottagers, however that level of increase will impact only about 10 percent of the 154,000 Hydro One customers being transitioned and there will be an 8-14 year phase-in period. Hydro One customers facing the largest increases in monthly costs would be cottagers using their properties only a few months of the year as they will have to pay the higher monthly service charge even if no electricity is used. Year-round customers and high volume seasonal customers - those who use electric heat and keep their cottages heated in the winter months for example - will likely see lower charges on their Hydro One bills as a result of the increased revenue from the former Seasonal class customers. Local Distribution Company charges make up from 25 per cent to over 50 percent of current total bills depending on volumes of electricity used. Information on the planned change is available at the Hydro One website:

<https://www.hydroone.com/about/regulatory/oeb-applications/seasonal-rates>

And at the Energy Board website:

<https://www.oeb.ca/participate/applications/current-major-applications/eb-2016-0315>

The Energy Board will be holding public hearings on the change this fall and will then decide how and when to implement the change.

Those wishing to submit their views and opinions can do so by writing the Energy Board at:

Ontario Energy Board  
2300 Yonge Street, 27<sup>th</sup> Floor  
PO Box 2319

Toronto, ON  
M4P 1E4

Or by email to:

[BoardSec@oeb.ca](mailto:BoardSec@oeb.ca)

You should reference case number EB-2016-0315 in the subject line of your submission.

DoKURA itself will not be submitting a letter as it represents both customers who will benefit with lower bills and those facing higher bills as a result of the changes. However the association encourages individuals and cottager groups to do so and have their views considered as the changes are made.

## THUMBS DOWN ON 911

In a move that surprised some, property owners in the Keeman Local Service Board area voted against moving forward with the installation of 911 service.

The LSB, which is one of the largest in the province with over 2,000 properties and covering 700 square kilometers extending from the City of Kenora boundary west to the Manitoba border and south from the CPR mainline to the offshore islands on Lake of the Woods, has been working for several years to bring 911 service to the area to augment its fire protection service.

At the LSB's annual meeting in August, the idea was rejected by 56 per cent of 637 people casting ballots. Those opposed to having 911 landline service cited the cost – an estimated \$150 per property for mapping and sign installation – and the fear it might lead to annexation by neighbouring Kenora.

Following the meeting, the LSB board of directors, which was returned to office, said it would continue to advocate for the service based on public safety merits and will bring the question up again at a future annual meeting.

## ROAD FUNDING

Following the introduction of the Federal Gas Tax rebate program in 2005, DoKURA lobbied successfully to have Local Roads Boards included in the program, it also lobbied, unsuccessfully, to have the funding extended to road associations, which also maintain public use local road systems.

Over the years DoKURA has compiled a list of over 40 road associations in this district that do not meet the criteria for the province's Local Roads Board program which receive a share of the Gas Tax rebate allocated to Ontario in addition to provincial funding, or for the province's own 50/50 roads program which assists a limited number of road associations.

The issue was discussed at the annual meeting and Jack McKenzie will be trying to arrange a meeting with local MPP Greg Rickford, who is also the Minister of Northern Development and Mines, to advocate for the creation of a separate funding stream, using a portion of the federal Gas Tax Rebate funding, specifically aimed at assisting road associations with their costs.

## DIRECTORS AT WORK

Board of directors members continue to work with various groups/organizations in the area providing input on the concerns of the unincorporated areas.

DoKURA continues to look for people – year-round or seasonal residents - from the unincorporated areas interested in serving on, or working with the board. The DoKURA board makeup allows for Directors At Large in addition to the four Kenora District Services Board members elected for each of its four wards or areas, Directors At Large are elected at Annual General Meetings and serve two-year terms.

If you are interested in serving or working with the DoKURA board please contact us at [dokuraorg@hotmail.com](mailto:dokuraorg@hotmail.com)

## MEMBERSHIP

DoKURA has no membership fee. Membership is open to all who reside or own property in the Unincorporated Areas of the Kenora District. It receives no regular government funding and its directors serve as volunteers. Efforts are made to keep general operating costs under \$1,000 a year.

But there is a need to cover costs for sending representatives to meetings with various levels of government to promote and/or defend issues of local concern.

That's where you can help, as an individual or community group, through a voluntary donation to the association. Donations can be sent to: DoKURA, Box 1245, Keewatin Post Office, Kenora, Ontario P0X 1C0

<http://www.dokura.com> / [dokuraorg@hotmail.com](mailto:dokuraorg@hotmail.com)