



**Summer Village of Larkspur**  
**899 Village Mews**  
**Sherwood Park, AB T8A 4L9**

Phone (780) 239-7323

Fax (780)-416-6353

email [bancroftkim@hotmail.com](mailto:bancroftkim@hotmail.com)

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## **Message from the Summer Village of Larkspur Council**

2020 July 21

What a year 2020 is turning out to be! Unfortunately, the annual general meeting cannot take place this year due to the Covid 19 pandemic and social distancing requirements. As would normally happen at the AGM, Council would like to provide you a review and an update of what has taken place during the last year.

### Flooding within the Summer Village:

Many landowners and residents in the Summer Village of Larkspur are experiencing flood damage to their properties due to very high-water levels in Long Island Lake. The water levels are the highest we have seen in several decades. The main cause of the flooding is due to the unusual weather patterns of the last few years coupled with a weir that was built to control the water levels in the lake. The Summer Village occupies a portion of the lake's shoreline, however a greater portion of the shore and area downstream from the weir is controlled by the County of Westlock and the Province (Crown Land). The weir was originally built by the province in 1955 to control the water levels. The weir was rebuilt in cement at the same height in 1973, and unfortunately, there was no adjustable water release mechanism included in the rebuild. Control of the weir was subsequently transferred to Ducks Unlimited Canada and, at this time, they are responsible for it. The weir elevation is at 2288 feet above sea level and as of June 8, 2020, the lake was at 2288.2 feet with water spilling over the weir for the first time in many years.

Council is very aware of the damages being caused by the high-water including flooding of private property, erosion of the beaches, damages to buildings and loss of reserve land. Both the village and county-controlled properties surrounding the lake are impacted. Council has been in discussions with Ducks Unlimited, the Minister of Environment and Parks, the Minister of Municipal Affairs, and the County of Westlock. Originally, we had hoped for an early resolution to the problem, however the solution is more complicated than to simply lower the weir by cutting part of it off. Any modifications to the weir will require consideration of possible downstream flooding of farmland and residential properties.

Initial discussions included a proposal by Ducks Unlimited to cut a large "V" into the weir to lower water levels however that proposal was aborted after examining the probable damages that

would cause downstream. Discussions are continuing with the county and provincial agencies, and we are hopeful some sort of resolution may be forthcoming in the future, however no changes are likely to occur until after the water levels subside.

### Wildfire Mitigation Plan

Last year a presentation on wildfire prevention was made at the AGM by Herman Stegehuis, a wildfire specialist. Herman offered his services to review the existing plan and develop an updated FIRESMART assessment and wildfire mitigation plan for the Summer Village. This year, after the rules for the pandemic were loosened a bit, he spent an entire day examining the Summer Village. The following recommendations resulted from Hermann's assessment:

1. Access to the lake: In the event of a wildfire, firefighting crews may wish to pump water directly from the lake to a sprinkler system set up to protect properties. A comprehensive plan was developed and was reviewed and accepted by Council. A copy will be posted on the village website.
2. During last year's AGM, Herman also explained how residents of the summer village could help protect themselves and their properties prior to, or in the event that a wildfire was approaching the village. After the meeting, a sign-up sheet was passed around asking who would like an assessment of their properties. Many taxpayers took advantage of this offer and signed up, however, because of the extremely rainy season, the assessments needed to be moved to the following year (2020). The assessments would be done by specially trained members of the Westlock County Fire Departments. Those individuals who have already signed up need not reapply and the trained officers will try to fit in as many assessments as possible this year. Once completed and, if you receive a favourable assessment, you may wish to forward those results to your insurance company who may take it into consideration when calculating your insurance renewal rates. For those who have not asked for an assessment, you can still do so by contacting Herman directly at [hermanstegehuis@gmail.com](mailto:hermanstegehuis@gmail.com). This is a great opportunity for you to receive some valuable advice that may someday help prevent or at least mitigate wildfire damages to your property. There is no charge for this service.

### Placement of Docks and Lifts on Reserves

In June 2019, the province (Alberta Environment and Parks) introduced legislation to control the placement of docks on the shores of Alberta lakes, including who could place a dock on the shoreline and guidelines and restrictions about how it was to be placed. In addition to that legislation, in May 2020, they sent information via email encouraging taxpayers to be involved in a consultation process. That email was subsequently redistributed to our taxpayers.

In it they provided an overview of the proposed "Disturbance Standard for Temporary Seasonal Docks for Recreational Purposes". Some changes are:

- Waterfront holders would have the ability to place seasonal docks on the shore.
- Semi-waterfront holders (those properties that are adjacent to their reserves i.e. have reserve property between them and the shore) would have the ability to place a seasonal dock on the shore subject to a municipal bylaw.

This would mean that those individuals who own property up to the water (waterfront holders) would not need to apply to place a seasonal dock on the shore. Those who use a reserve to access

the shore (semi-waterfront holders) would need to apply to the Summer Village for permission to do so. All docks would need to be removed from the shore at the end of the season. Many other restrictions contemplated by the Province include increased setbacks from neighbouring properties and the footprint (width etc.) of the dock and platform. We encourage you to read and become familiar with the draft document before beginning the 2021 season. Once the province has passed the new legislation the Summer Village will need to pass a bylaw and policy to coincide with the provincial legislation. That will likely include policy that taxpayers will need to follow in their application to place a dock on the reserve. It will also include where the docks can be stored during the off season. Since there are many considerations affecting taxpayers, we encourage you to discuss the changes with your neighbours that share the same reserve. Changes to the current policy will include the need to collaborate with others in your reserve regarding who may place the dock and where the docks may be placed. Because there is only so much room in each reserve and there are so many docks and lifts, sharing of docks will be necessary. Before permission to place a dock on reserve property, permission from others in the reserve is necessary as it will be necessary to limit the number of docks and lifts.

#### Public Participation Policy

The Summer Village Council has adopted a policy to explain and clarify how someone who wishes to present to council can do so. The bylaw and policy instructions are posted on the village website. Council welcomes presentations and encourages residents to stay informed about the work of its Council.

#### Security Cameras

Security Cameras are now operational at both the North and South entrances on the Village. Access to footage of any recordings is restricted to the Security Camera Company, Terrasol, and our Summer Village administrators.

#### Intermunicipal Development Plan (IDP) and Municipal Development Plan (MDP)

The draft MDP for the Summer Village has been developed however this is on hold until the IDP with Westlock County is completed. A committee involving the village and the county are working on the plan. In addition, an open house, in some form, will be planned prior to adoption of the plans.

#### Fortis Alberta

The summer village entered into a franchise agreement with Fortis Alberta; provision has been made for a 3% charge to help cover the cost of the security cameras.

#### Other Bylaws and Policies adopted/passed

The following bylaws were passed during the last year:

- Emergency Management Bylaw.
- Council Procedures Bylaw and Policy on “Making a presentation to Council”.
- Bylaw Enforcement Officer Bylaw.
- Chief Administration Officer Bylaw.

Thank you to Tony for keeping our beautiful summer village looking so clean and tidy. Also, a thank you to Koni for looking after our library.

On behalf of the Summer Village Council and Administration, we wish you a safe and enjoyable summer at the lake.

Gerry Keane,  
Mayor, Summer Village of Larkspur

Addendum to the message from Council. July 25, 2020

1. Effective July 23, your council has made some changes. Greg Drechsler is now Mayor, Gerry Keane, the Deputy Mayor and Nick Tywoniuk retains the position of Councillor.
2. Effective August 1, the Summer Village will commence a contract with Kim Bancroft. She will assume the positions of Chief Administration Officer and Development Officer. These positions were previously held by Marion and Garth Bancroft. Welcome Kim.
3. Council would like to take this opportunity to thank Marion and Garth for their many years of service to the community. We would have liked to do a presentation at the at the AGM, in a more public setting, however the pandemic has made this not possible. On behalf of the taxpayers of the Summer Village of Larkspur, thank you Marion and Garth. We truly appreciate your quiet, knowledgeable and thoughtful guidance throughout the years. We wish both of you all the best that the next phase of your life will bring including a long and healthy retirement.