

# Council defers water use bylaw until they 'get it right'

By Rebecca Ring

Guelph-Eramosa Public Works Manager Ken Gagnon proposed an extensively revised by-law regulating outside water use for residents on township water systems. Council agreed to defer its acceptance until they could further study it.

Last summers dry weather highlighted inherent problems with the existing by-law, which instigated the revisions. One problem is that the by-law refers to the entire municipality and does not take into account the individual capacity of the two systems: Rockwood and Cross Creek. Gagnon proposed allowing the public works manager to determine water use restrictions for any one or more of the systems.

The by-law stipulates the township must place a specified number of signs in the municipality informing residents of water use restrictions. Gagnon said this is not effective and proposed that notification be sent out via mass mail, advertisements in local newspapers, radio or TV stations, in addition to postings on the township's website and voicemail. Councillor Doug Breen said signs should still be placed, but not necessarily required.

Proposed exemptions to a Level 2 program include topping up swimming pools, hot tubs, fountains and ponds. Sprinklers and splash pads would be allowed in Levels 0 and 1 with restrictions. Hand watering of gardens, trees and shrubs would be added under Level 3.

To balance demand with supply, Gagnon said it made no sense to have stringent requirements under Level 2, while allowing excessive use of water under the current permit process and unrestricted washing of vehicles. He proposed that in Level 2, lawn watering be allowed once per week, while allowing gardens, trees, and shrubs to be watered on alternate days and times. Vehicle washing would be prohibited at this level in Level 3, where watering is completely banned, an exemption would be added to allow hand watering of plants, trees, gardens and shrubs.

There would be no permit applications for watering treated lawns under the new by-law, but an application process would be set out for watering new lawns.

Gagnon said that compliance of the by-law was challenged last summer so changes are needed to facilitate enforcement. To allow inspections, penalties would be added for obstructing an in-

spector, in accordance with the Municipal Act. Fines would also be set out registered with the Attorney General's Office to allow tickets to be issued when necessary.

"We need to clarify that this by-law does not apply to private wells," said Mayor Chris White. He asked how it would be enforced, if on a complaint basis or inspections. This was not yet determined. Breen confirmed that the new lawn exemption would include seeding as well as sod laying. He then said that people should not install lawns in the summer anyway, but rather in

September.

Councillor John Scott asked how much water was typically used in lawn watering. Gagnon answered that watering with a standard garden hose for two hours uses about 600 gallons. Scott replied that the public education aspect of the by-law should include this information and suggested tying in the rain-barrel project, which the Environmental Stewardship Committee will

implement. Barrels designed to catch rain and use it for lawn and garden watering will be available to residents at a reduced rate.

"This is a contentious issue," said White, "We need more time to iron out the wrinkles, get it right, and get it done." Council agreed to defer a decision until next meeting on January 7, 08. Councillors Moyer and Knapp were absent.

## EWAG NEWS

### Many Thanks for all the Support

EWAG wishes to thank the community for their generosity this holiday season. Once again we are overwhelmed by the giving and caring of the residents of Rockwood and surrounding areas. There are many, many families who have already benefited from the gifts of toys, food and cash donations and we are very pleased to know that our shelves will be full for the New Year.

From the Staff and Volunteers of EWAG - Thank you and we wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy, Healthy New Year!

#### Seniors' Services

Our seniors' services will be closed for the holidays from Dec. 21 until Jan. 7. Pilates sessions will begin again on Jan. 8, Tai Chi on Jan. 16 and the next hearing clinic will be on the 15th. For times, costs and registration information, please call Mary Ellen at 519-833-0087. The latest edition of our winter older adult's newsletter is available at our EWAG offices. Please come by and pick up to check out our upcoming events and items of interest for the 50+ age group.

#### Holiday Hours

Please note that we are closed for the holidays from Dec. 21 until Jan. 7, 2008.

Our Erin office will be open the following days from 9 a.m. until noon for donation drop-offs and emergencies. December 24, 27, 28, 31 and January 2, 3 & 4. Please call 519-833-9696 for more information.

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# NOTICE

The Township of Guelph/Eramosa Office will be **CLOSED** from Monday, December 24, 2007 to Tuesday, January 1, 2008. The Municipal Office shall **REOPEN** on Wednesday, January 2, 2008

Janice Sheppard  
Clerk/CAO

Township of Guelph/Eramosa



**A HELPING PAW:** These dogs are in training to become Lions Foundation Dog Guides, who will help people with challenges. They were visiting at the Rockwood and District Lioness Club's Annual Christmas Bazaar. From left are Noah Steinberg with Sari, Adam and Alex Ostrander with Fonzi and Ferguson. - Rebecca Ring Photo

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