

Notes of the meeting.

Saturday, 16 August 2014. 10:00 am. TLA headquarters building.

Dan O'Mara, Temagami municipal councilor and member of the municipality's police board, presiding.

Dan O'Mara opened the meeting and thanked those in attendance for participating. There were approximately 40 people present, including: Don Johnson, Chair of the municipal police board; Dan Dawson, Timiskaming detachment Commander OPP; Officer Matt Defresne OPP; Tom Saville, Bear Island OPP; Arnold Paul, Chief, TFN; John Harding, President LaTemPRA; Will Goodman (via telephone), TLA board member serving on the protection of persons and property committee.

O'Mara called on Goodman to summarize the TLA interest and activities. Goodman mentioned promoting the crime stoppers campaign, increased signage on the lake, increased visibility in the Temagami Times, with the overall goal of raising awareness and working together in the community to reduce break-ins. A sample of a crime stoppers sign was shown.

Chief Paul indicated that there are break-in and crime incidents on Bear Island, and that the solutions and approaches that are undertaken to address the issue will benefit Bear Island, as well.

Officer Defresne referred first to the matter of bear problems at the landing. He explained that bears have traditionally been the responsibility of the MNR, but the OPP has been increasingly looked to for solutions. OPP does not have expertise or training in bear issues, other than to use lethal means if the bears represent a danger. Dan O'Mara said that the Town has noted that this is an issue and will be setting out guidelines and looking to make these areas within the Municipality safer for visitors, staff and contractors, it was noted before the work begins they are investigating the municipality's legal responsibility regarding bear matters. John Harding reported as many as 45 bears in and about the dump, and lamented the lack of a spring bear hunt and other MNR programs to address the issue.

Matt Defresne went on to discuss crime and break-ins. Apparently a proposal to put video surveillance cameras at the landing was not funded. The estimated cost is \$20,000, and the bulk of that was for hydro and internet access. Such surveillance may be helpful as criminals use the landing and mine road. There was some interest expressed about trying to find other sources of funding to make this project possible. Dan O'Mara indicated he would follow up on this,

Matt Defresne and Dan Dawson presented statistics on crime in Temagami. They both stressed the importance of reporting crimes. If they go unreported, they can't be tracked. Reporting crimes enables the OPP to observe patterns and focus efforts in higher crime areas. Frustration was expressed by several people who said they had reported crimes, and never received a response, or that response time was too slow. For example, a contractor reported that he observed a break-in for one of his cottage customers, but he needed to ready the cottage for the summer and couldn't wait for the OPP to visit the crime scene. The OPP mentioned that it is best to leave crime scenes untouched, so that potential evidence and clues are not disturbed. The OPP said the correct protocol would be for someone to immediately call the OPP dispatcher to report the crime. The dispatcher in turn would call the appropriate officer to investigate. The officer, however, needs to prioritize calls based on need and degree of emergency.

OPP Commander Dawson said that within the hour, if someone calls in a crime, they will receive a confirming phone call from the appropriate officer to discuss the crime and make arrangements for a crime scene visit. It was felt that if this step was followed and appropriate response times were set during this call and followed then it would go a long way in resolving some of the current issues dealing with managing a break-in call. It was also

pointed out that there are also only so many officers who can respond to Lake Calls and Lake Conditions can also delay things.

Calling the dispatch is also important, as that person will record the crime in their database. If someone merely reports the crime directly to an officer, bypassing the dispatch, there is not a guarantee that the crime will be logged in the database.

It was noted that it is important to have the correct telephone number for dispatch. People calling from out of the province, or out of the country, may not be able to get through. The OPP agreed to provide a number to the TLA that can be used to contact the OPP from the US. In Ontario if not an emergency one should call 1-888-310-1122. It was also noted that in the evening and weekends the Office is not staffed in New Liskeard and only officers on duty use the Temagami base when in the area.

Don Johnson clarified the relationship between the municipality and OPP. He explained that the municipality pays the OPP for the equivalent of two full-time officers in terms of hours of service to the municipality. There is no diversion of municipality OPP effort to highway duty. Again, the importance of reporting crime was emphasized, since it enables the 2 officers to prioritize their efforts.

Commander Dawson mentioned that they have currently 29 breaking-and-entering cases open, but only evidence for one, emphasizing the need to report crimes and enable OPP to investigate and collect evidence. He further emphasized the importance of cottage owners recording serial numbers of items like outboard motors, generators, chain saws, and other equipment. Taking pictures of items, or putting a name or island number on items is also helpful (NOT social security numbers). He recommends driver's license number. Importantly, he re-emphasized the idea of reporting crimes, no matter how small, or how frustrated one might be. He shared his frustration at not being able to catch people due to a lack of evidence or reporting. It was noted that the OPP have a new on-line reporting system for individuals to use to report the minor crimes or incidents. To find out more people were directed to check out the OPP web site.

Officer Defresne described himself as the big picture person who would access all Temagami crime data and ensure patterns are identified.

It was mentioned by some that the root of the crime problem appears to be prescription drug abuse.

Dan O'Mara proposed to form a subcommittee of the municipality's police board that would meet regularly and exchange news, information, data, and ideas. He proposed to include representation from the TLA, LaTempRA, and Bear Island.

Leanna Farr introduced herself as a newly elected member of the Bear Island TFN council, and reported that they would soon be hiring a new, second policy officer.

Commander Dawson explained that the OPP has an excellent and cooperative working relationship with Officer Tom Saville on Bear Island. Bear Island police are hired by the TFN, but they are administered by the OPP, and they enjoy a perfect working relationship, and are only different based on the uniform patch on their shoulders.

Dan O'Mara summarized that what appears to be missing, in terms of how to address the problem:

Communication between all parties;

Keeping track of information and data to identify patterns;

Understanding what specifically is stolen so it can be identified, used as evidence, and returned to owners;

And

Reporting of crimes by cottager owners.

Dan O'Mara invited all to send him suggestions ([danomar@ontera.net](mailto:danomar@ontera.net)).

Dan O'Mara thanked all for attending and participating, and adjourned the meeting shortly after 12:00 pm.

Notes submitted by Chip Kittredge