
LUD TIMES

(Lorette)

Fall, 2002

For the Record

The LUD Times is a newsletter created by the current elected officials of the Lorette LUD as individuals. As a group, it was our decision to provide the voters of Lorette with **our** views on upcoming issues concerning the village and some insight as to how your tax dollars are spent. The views expressed in this and past issues are our views as we see them and we hope they have been helpful in keeping you up to date.

Unfortunately we do not live in a perfect world so we know that all members of our community will not share our views. With this in mind you the taxpayer should know that this newsletter is paid for personally by the LUD Committee members as individuals, at **no cost** to the taxpayer.

Public Works and Operations Foreman

Until this summer it has been the practice of the Village Committee to contract out village works such as the sewer and water custodian, grass cutting, watering flowers and general maintenance.

Even though this had been the practice for many years, the committee suspected that this might not be the most effective use of our tax dollars. The problem with contracting simply put is that the contractors only look after what is in their contract. For instance, if someone is hired to look after the sewer and water and they happen to drive by a bundle of newspapers that has opened up and are blowing all over the street, they just drive by because it's not their job. If we need to have some additional mowing done in an area that's not in the grass tender, that's extra! If you hire someone to put up Christmas lights and they notice a broken manhole, it's not their job. By now I'm sure you get the point.

We want to be clear that this had nothing to do with the contractors and everything to do with obtaining the best value for our dollar. After some serious number crunching and lengthy debate it was our conclusion that we could save money and get a more comprehensive service by hiring full time as opposed

to the part-time contactors. Of course there was equipment to purchase. We purchased a 4-wheel drive Kubota diesel tractor with a front-end loader, 5-foot mower, rotary sweeper, 50-gallon sprayer, 4-foot tiller, 4-foot snow blower, heated cab and several other attachments. In total the equipment costs were in the neighborhood of \$35,000. We looked at wages, equipment costs and maintenance, over a 5-year period. It was determined that the equipment would not only pay for itself, but in addition we hope to save coincidentally, about \$35,000.

The best part is that these savings are nothing compared to the savings that can't be accounted for. In the past everything was on a BREAK-DOWN MAINTENANCE SCHEDULE, that is to say that when it broke-down it got maintenance. This is terribly inefficient and usually things are a lot more costly to repair. Instead of a bunch of part-time contractors we now have a full time dedicated employee who's job it is to not only look after the routine jobs but also schedule maintenance and detect areas of concern before we have a major breakdown. When we look at this part of the equation it quickly becomes clear where the big savings will come from.

The term foreman usually denotes that the employee is in a supervisory position. That's also true of this position, as we typically hire two to three seasonal employees. But, make no mistake about it this job is clearly hands-on. Our choice for this job is a man with 25+ years experience in the road construction business. He has experience in managing large crews and estimating major road projects. He can operate and maintain most types of equipment and takes pride in a job well done.

So, who is this SUPER HERO you ask? None other than a local resident, our own Ray Fiola. Ray has been on the job since July 1st and judging by the phone calls and compliments from the public, he and his crew are doing a super job.

Streets

While most of our streets weathered the winter well, Station Road was the exception. Highway #1 was

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closed a couple of times this spring due to traffic accidents and Station Road was used to divert traffic to Hwy 207 and then back to Highway #1. This increased heavy traffic combined with frost problems and heavy construction traffic from the new housing developments spelled the end to the sealcoat on this street. This road had to be plowed up and returned to gravel. The good news is that the new park on Station Road will likely help this street qualify for provincial funding for a major upgrade. We have made application and will wait to see if our application is accepted in the spring.

Sidewalks & Footpaths

This year we completed the footpath between Laurin and Belanger as well as installing the base right through Community Spirit Park. Hopes are to pave the path in the park next year. In addition we are in the midst of constructing a pedestrian bridge over the Station Road drain. The bridge will link the Laurin/Belanger area to Therrien Street and ultimately the schools via existing public reserve lands. This is also a vital link in the community's ever-growing footpath system.

The LUD Committee was recently presented with a Community Places grant for \$10,000, from our MLA, Honourable Ron Lemieux. Councilor John Bruce has managed to secure the donation of a 45 foot long precast concrete slab for the base and Ray Freynet from Ile Des Chene has agreed to truck it out for free. In addition Centennial Gravel and Excavating has also agreed to contribute to this worthwhile project.

Thank you one and all for your generous donation.

Main Street Boulevard

Wow!! With the help of the Beautification committee and C&S Garden Center the boulevards are really turning out to be something special.

This year Barkman border blocks were installed replacing the existing landscape edging between the stone and planting areas. A matching stone walkway at the pedestrian crossing in front of the Catholic Church was also installed and some other minor repairs were carried out. Our only disappointment this year was with the hanging baskets. The papier-mâché baskets have deteriorated to the point that they are falling through the holders or cracking and not holding water. This is not unexpected as we were only anticipating three seasons of service from these baskets. Next season we will be going to a better quality coconut or hemp liner to enhance our existing baskets. In addition we will be adding 16 new

baskets. This liner style more widely used as it is more durable and retains more moisture, they are of course also more expensive but will give longer service.

Thankyou again to the Beautification Committee and C&S Garden Center for your help and suggestions.

If you're interested in joining a committee dedicated to beautifying and improving life in our community? Contact: Mona Turcott 878-3771, (Chair of the Beautification Committee), Chris at C&S Garden Center 878-3454 or Ron Tardiff 878-9585.

Parks and Recreation

Did you know that Lorette has a new park? Planning a church picnic, family get-together, or an afternoon of beach volleyball? Then you should check out Community Spirit Park on Station Road. Started last year this 3+ acre site now has over 200 trees and shrubs planted, a professional quality beach volleyball court, swings sandbox and more. There's plenty of parking and it's yours to enjoy. The park is in its early stages with paths, benches, BBQ pits and picnic tables planned for this year.

Everyone's Invited!!

The LUD Committee is planning an official opening of Community Spirit Park on Station Road, Sunday October 6th at 2PM. We hope it will be a great family day. There will be free hotdogs and drinks, beach volleyball and a brief dedication. Come check out the park, meet your neighbors and give us your suggestions for future improvements.

Lorette Market Place has offered to sponsor this event. Thank you for your generosity and "community spirit." Donations well be accepted by the Beautification Committee towards future village beautification projects.

Village Taxes

It's official, the current LUD Committee has managed to operate with **no** increase in the mil rate for our full four-year term. The mil rate is the factor by which your property assessment is multiplied to calculate property taxes. A reduction in the mil rate should translate into a tax saving to the property owner. During our four-year term there have been 3 reductions in the mil rate, with one year of no change (up or down). For more information on tax changes check the green insert that will come with your tax bill.

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Canadian Taxpayers Federation Survey

Did you know that Lorette was sited as the least expensive community to own a home in the Winnipeg Capital Region? In January 2002, The Canadian Taxpayers Federation released the results of a study that looked at combined residential property taxes and utility charges for communities surrounding and including Winnipeg. When comparing the taxes and utility costs attributable to a home assessed at \$100,000, Lorette was found to be the most affordable place to live.

Village Web Site loretteonline.ca

This has been a long time coming but loretteonline.ca is soon to be the official web site for the village of Lorette. When complete it will offer community information in both official languages. There will be minutes from the LUD Committee meetings, online copies of the LUD Times, write-ups and links to the schools, aerial photos and maps of the village and RM, space for development opportunities, events calendar, links to area churches and much more.

The new village web site will offer a way for us to promote our community to the world, stay in touch with the community and receive your comments and suggestions. We expect it will be up and running soon.

Lorette Community Complex

Last spring a group of volunteers showed everyone just how committed they are to the construction of a new community complex. They organized a hockey marathon and set a new world record for the longest hockey game. Without question the 36-hour hockey marathon was a huge success and the LUD was proud to be part of it through a \$10,000.00 contribution towards the construction of a new facility. This contribution was made on behalf of all residents of Lorette and was matched by the RM of Tache. In total they were able to raise an amazing \$78,000.00, towards a new complex.

Just for the record we believe the community of Lorette extends way past the village boundaries and it was great to see the whole community come together.

A **BIG** thank you to all those dedicated individuals who contributed so much time and effort to making Lorette a better place to live, by so generously volunteering their time. With a special thanks to those hometown hockey heroes

Lorette Officially Bilingual

This summer the LUD Committee was given the green light by council, for the LUD of Lorette to officially become recognized as a bilingual community.

You might ask, weren't we already?

They teach both languages in our schools, they speak both languages in our stores restaurants and shops, and you can get service at the RM Office in both official languages, doesn't that make Lorette a bilingual community? By joining the Association of Manitoba Bilingual Municipalities the LUD Committee has made official, what we all took for granted.

Again, you might ask, why make it official when things were fine the way they were? The answer is simple. By joining the association more doors are open to the community. We now have access to free translation services for official documents, our community will be included in a network of bilingual tourism packages, there will be funding available to set up an economic development committee and assistance in seeking venture capital as well as business packaging. This can all be done at no cost to the community so why not take advantage of it.

Finally it should be noted that this is a union and not a marriage, if we find this isn't of benefit to the community and want to pull out, there will be no messy divorce.

The Whole Picture

With the introduction of Lorette's first full time works and operations foreman we felt it was time to get a complete assessment of the village sewer and water systems. Over the years there have been numerous studies of this system, or that system, but never a comprehensive look at the whole picture. After having Ray take the necessary training courses for water treatment facilities, the instructor was invited back to our community to assess our systems.

Drinking Water

Some suggestions were made and acted on. It was also noted that we already test our drinking water way in excess of provincial standards. Some residents have had problems with the usual yellow water, but we believe we have this problem solved. All three-community wells have been brought online and **will remain online year round**. In the past the wells near the high school were only run during peak demand periods and shut down for the rest of the year. When they were started it would dislodge sediment in the

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system causing water quality problems for some residents.

One thing we must all keep in mind is that our drinking water is still just well water. Unlike the City of Winnipeg our water is hard and softeners are a must. A study of our water by Cochrane Engineering indicated that our quality was good and that the only real improvements would be achieved through a ½ million-dollar filtration/treatment facility. This of course is just not practical.

The following information was published in a LUD Times article in July of 1999 and seems relevant to run again.

“It seems we can also do some things to help ourselves in this matter. Discussions with Filter Soft, a Winnipeg manufacturer and supplier of water softeners indicate, that while these systems are designed to last 15 to 20 years, softeners require maintenance. This maintenance can mean valve repair or removal and commercial cleaning of the resin filter depending on the concentration of iron in the water. The homeowner can also do some regular maintenance to enhance the efficiency of the system, such as adding a product like Iron Free to the brine tank and occasionally a ½ cup of bleach. They caution that you should **never** mix the chemicals together and always manually regenerate the system before using the water.”

Sewer System

This summer every inch of the main sewer system was flushed using Roto-Rooter’s high-pressure power flushing equipment and then inspected by video camera. Where necessary lines were degreased and tree roots cut. This work was necessary to help the committee and our foreman prioritize and schedule repairs. In addition this information will be used to set-up a maintenance schedule in order to avoid costly breakdowns in the future.

Main Lift Station

Most of us are aware that last year the transformer at the main lift station failed causing sewer backup problems for some residents. Once repairs were affected, Cochrane Engineering was called to give a complete assessment of the entire lift station and make recommendations to safeguard against future failures.

The findings were:

- Our lift system is 30 plus years old and operates on a 480-volt American system. Manitoba Hydro supplies 600-volt power, which must be converted.

We should convert the lift’s circuitry to 600-volt so that parts are more readily available for quick repairs.

- Access to the lower part of the lift station where the pumps are located is through a narrow 3 foot manhole. This narrow access makes it difficult to replace or service equipment and pumps generally must be taken apart lowered down and then reassembled. This makes repairs slow and expensive.
- Another concern is that the lower part of the lift is not vented properly. Because deadly gas is often the byproduct of sewage it can be dangerous to access this area.

In the end it was decided that a new, modern lift station containing all of the engineer’s recommendations would likely be the best solution.

The unreliability of the power supply was a major concern to the committee and so a backup generator was added to the plans. In-fact the purchase and installation of a generator is our top priority. ***We have decided not to wait for the upgrade to occur and are actively working to have a permanent fully automated back-up power supply installed ASAP.***

In addition the committee has met with representatives from Manitoba Hydro to ***strongly*** express community concerns about the constant outages. These concerns were heard loud and clear with assurances that efforts would be made to find and correct the problems.

Ultimately there is no better solution than looking after ourselves. While we have empathy for those who have had problems, all residents should know that it is **their responsibility** to take the necessary precautions to protect their home against sewer backup and that the Village is **NOT RESPONSIBLE**. Inline back-up valves and properly functioning sump pumps are a must. With this in mind the committee has recommended that a back-up valve/sump pump installation assistance program be instituted for 2003. The proposal would be to provide funding of up to \$250 per household for the installation of back-up valves and sump pumps. It is our estimate that this amount will cover the cost of materials. There are some conditions that will apply, permits and inspections will be a must and the program will be limited to a maximum 100 applications per year. A similar type of program was conducted in Landmark where it worked quite well.

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