

## Summer Village Amalgamation Introductory Remarks – May 20, 2010

Good morning (afternoon) and thank you for your interest and time in this important issue. My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am on the Council of \_\_\_\_\_. With me is Glenn Pitman who I will introduce in more detail in a few minutes.

The object of today's meeting is to:

- explain WHY we are proposing to amalgamate the Summer Villages of Grandview, Crystal Springs and Norris Beach;
- answer your questions and allay any concerns that you may have with respect to the proposed amalgamation so you can knowledgeably cast your vote at the plebiscite.

There will be a short presentation by Glenn Pitman followed by a Q & A which both of us (and other Councillors) will respond to. In the interests of getting as many questions answered as possible in the time available we are asking that questions be written out and handed in to \_\_\_\_\_ who will collate them in an attempt to prioritize the issues that are of concern to attendees. This process allows the majority to have their point made and heard. Following the discussion on the written questions, if additional questions remain, we will receive questions from the floor.

Prior to turning this over to Glen Pitman let me describe why we are proposing this and outline the highlights of our report:

### **WHY ARE WE DOING THIS? WHY ARE YOU COUNCILLORS RECOMMENDING THIS?**

1. *Because we believe that we can provide you our residents with more and better services at the same or lower cost (and therefore lower taxes) than would be possible without amalgamation. The reality is that we are very small entities with resulting small tax bases. Amalgamation would result in economies of scale and reduced overhead costs.*
2. *Our small tax bases cause financial restraints while ratepayers are in fact demanding more services. Higher levels of government are also requiring more services, such as defined and responsive emergency services. A larger tax base can provide more financial ability to meet these demands.*
3. *We want to be able to have greater influence with regard to regional issues – with greater ability to make local and regional decisions. As the largest Summer Village on the lake we will come closer to a size of significant influence in the region.*
4. *We want less organizational infrastructure so our Administration can be more effective.*
5. *We want more unison, cooperation and consistency between our Villages so we can be more efficient and maintain and increase our property values – one Council for our 3 Villages can achieve that.*

6. *A larger municipality will be less subject to dissolution* which has been threatened from time-to-time since smaller municipalities are perceived as less sustainable. This threat will likely rear its head again. We want to ensure we retain our Summer Village status and our voting privileges. If we are larger – we will be more sustainable with more leverage and yet retain our uniqueness which we value. We want to solidify what we have today.
7. ***WE WANT TO ENSURE THE FUTURE OF OUR COMMUNITIES.***

## **HIGHLIGHTS OF OUR REPORT**

1. As you are aware this is not something that we dreamt up in the last few weeks or months. Rather it is the culmination of discussions that began over two years ago. Councils have noted in Newsletters and on the Websites that amalgamation was being considered and pursued.
2. We are not approaching this proposed amalgamation from a position of weakness or because any one of the three Summer Villages is desperate. None of us are in financial difficulty and/or in need of rescuing. Rather it is a case that we believe that we can be more effective and efficient managers of your tax dollars if we combine into a larger municipality. Note that I said “larger” municipality. A municipality of approximately 600 residences is still a relatively small community that can retain its own uniqueness. The reality is that we are very small entities with resulting small tax bases. Amalgamation would result in economies of scale and reduced overhead costs – the same logic that drives mergers in the commercial world.
3. The proposed amalgamation would maintain the status of a Summer Village. This is very important as it is only with Summer Village status that part-time residents (that is about 75% of us) retain the right to vote and sit on Council. Looked at another way - if we were to lose Summer Village status 75% of us would be disenfranchised.
4. The major benefits that would flow from amalgamation are of a long term nature. Quite simply a larger tax base and reduction in overhead from the elimination of duplication of services will allow the provision of some combination of better services and lower costs. Services in mind include basic essential services such as emergency and security management, and environmental services including wastewater services. They also include non-essential but important services such as those which would increase recreational opportunities. The exact mix of those will depend on the future Council. We can say in complete confidence that an amalgamation will provide opportunities for more or better services at the same or lower costs.
5. In the short term we have identified immediate reductions in costs that would have permitted a 10% reduction in the mill rate for all of us in 2010 “*IF*” we had been one Summer Village.

6. On the policy side (e.g. land use, environmental, noise, by law enforcement, etc.) we would have the opportunity to cherry pick from the existing bylaws of the three Summer Villages to arrive at a *best practices* set of new bylaws. That is an opportunity for significant improvement.
7. Your three Summer Village Councils are all unanimously in support of this proposed amalgamation. Keep in mind that 9 elected Councillors all agree with the amalgamation that is being proposed. The fact that 9 Councillors agree on this is very significant.
8. If successful the amalgamation would be effective later this year or possibly on 31 Dec 2010.
9. This is not something that we have arrived at lightly. We recognized early that this is a complex question and that we needed professional help in order to properly address the initiative. We retained Glenn Pitman who has some 40 years of municipal government experience in responsible roles as CAO and City Manager, and recently as a consultant on strategic planning and municipal organizational structures. Glenn also has strong connections with the Department of Municipal Affairs which was very valuable in this exercise. We are confident the costs and benefits of this proposed amalgamation have been properly analyzed by Glenn and that we will not be blindsided by something significant that we missed. Please note that Glenn was retained to provide information on the *tangible and objective potential outcomes* of the merger.

**IN SUMMARY:  
WHY ARE WE DOING THIS?**

1. Because we believe that we can provide you our residents with more and better services at the same or lower cost (and therefore lower taxes).
2. As stated previously - we are very small entities with relatively *small tax bases* that cause some financial restraints.
3. We want to be able to have *greater influence with regard to regional issues*.
4. We want less organizational infrastructure so our Administration can be more effective.
5. We want more unison, cooperation and consistency between our Villages.
6. A larger municipality will be less subject to dissolution.
7. We want to ensure we retain our Summer Village status and our voting privileges.
8. If we are larger – we will be more sustainable with more leverage and yet retain our uniqueness which we value. We want to solidify what we have today.
9. ***WE WANT TO ENSURE THE FUTURE OF OUR COMMUNITIES.***

Glenn Pitman will now provide some detail on his view of the tangible and objective outcomes of the proposed merger.

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