

Electronic devices must be off at council meetings

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By Rob Gowan

Limited exceptions in bylaw

South Bruce Peninsula will require members of the public to turn off electronic devices during council meetings.

Councillors on Tuesday passed a procedural bylaw which contains provisions prohibiting recording and using electronic devices, including digital cameras and cellphones, during proceedings.

"There has been an issue in the past with recording devices in the council chambers and some people have brought concerns of their photos being taken in the gallery," said Mayor John Close. "What we are going to be doing in the future is we will be asking that no recording devices of any kind be on during council meetings."

Council twice deferred third reading of the bylaw to make changes pertaining to the use of electronic devices in the council chambers.

The bylaw allows for exceptions, such as taking photographs at special events and for members of the media.

Council instituted a ban on people recording open sessions of council in March 2011. Weeks later it rescinded the ban. Since then the town has made audio recordings of council meetings, which are posted on its website for two weeks.

DOGS ON BEACH

Coun. Janice Jackson wants to see more fines handed out to people for bringing their dogs onto Sauble Beach.

"There were way more dogs on the beach this summer," Jackson said Thursday. "It is not an issue of dogs on the beach, it is an issue of what the dogs leave behind and the fact the owners don't clean up after their dogs - not all owners, but enough that we have a big concern on the beach."

Jackson was reacting to a report from bylaw enforcement and animal control officer Carol Hopkins that showed only 23 tickets were issued for people having dogs on the beach this summer. In 2012 79 tickets were issued for the infraction.

"I think we had an issue earlier in the year where we were debating . . . allowing dogs on the beach during off hours," said Jackson. When a number of residents expressed concerns about the proposal, it was scrapped.

Jackson said that may have caused some confusion but feels bylaw officers should have issued more fines instead of just warnings.

"It is OK to warn people but I have heard of the same owner being warned like four times," she said. "There are so many people on the beach with dogs that of course our bylaw officers don't remember who they have warned"

BUDGET SCHEDULE

South Bruce Peninsula will take its 2014 budget to the community with a public session at the Sauble Beach Community Centre on Nov. 28 from 7 to 9 p.m.

The budget is to be tabled Nov. 19 at 10 a. m. in the council chambers in Wiarton. That will be followed by the public session on Nov. 28. Council will then review and deliberate the budget at a meeting Dec. 3.

Final consideration and approval is scheduled to take place on Dec. 17.