

# Parking, airport big decisions

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By Rob Gowan

The people have had their say, now council has to decide how to handle taxpayers money.

Paid parking at Sauble Beach, the future of Wiarton- Keppel International Airport and the municipality's infrastructure needs were among the issues discussed at a public budget meeting at the Sauble Beach Community Centre Thursday evening.

"It will be up to council to now decide what we are doing or where we are going," Coun. Jay Kirkland said Friday. "We have to make some decisions darn soon because we are trying to set our budget here."

The town has been working on a budget with no tax increase. It is to be discussed further at a council meeting on Tuesday, with plans to pass the final budget at a meeting on Dec. 17.

But before passing the budget, council has to decide where it is going on a number of items, including the town's expansion requests list, which includes items that have been brought up throughout the course of the year. They include paving the airport runway, a rollback of paid parking fees and a request for funds from the Bruce Peninsula Health Services Foundation.

Kirkland, who is also on the board that manages the airport, said council will have to decide what money it is willing to spend on the facility.

"You only have so many dollars to go around, so you have to make sure you are spending them in the best areas," said Kirkland, who added council has yet to decide how it wants to proceed with the airport as it waits to hear what the cost will be to do repairs there.

The airport, jointly owned by South Bruce Peninsula and Georgian Bluffs, could lose its certification from Transport Canada if the repairs aren't made.

Coun. Janice Jackson said it was interesting to hear the many concerns from residents about the town's aging infrastructure. She said that needs to continue to be a priority of council.

"If you take away the paid parking issue, the roads was probably the biggest because we had representatives from Hope Bay that wanted improved road conditions, and Elsinore," said Jackson. "The roads are a big, big concern."

Jackson said she expects decisions about all the major projects to be made Tuesday, but she thinks council doesn't want to waver from the proposal to hold the tax rate.

"If there is anything on that list that we want to move forward with it is going to cause a tax increase and I think this council is pretty resolved in bringing forward a 0% tax increase," said Jackson.

Bev Buckton, of the Sauble Beach Chamber of Commerce's paid parking committee, said the chamber had a large number of members present at the meeting. The chamber has asked council to roll back the daily rate to park at Sauble from \$15 to \$5 because the chamber believes the cost is heavily affecting the number of tourists at the beach. The chamber has released figures that show the number of vehicles paying to park at the beach continues to drop.

"This is an important issue in terms of the economic future of the community and we believe it certainly deserves to be seriously considered and hopefully addressed in some form or another," said Buckton. "There continues to be a huge fallout and people are staying away, that is all there is to it."

Buckton said Thursday's meeting was very informative and said he understands the tough decisions councillors have to make.

"it was another opportunity to address the issue and we were pleased to have the opportunity to meet with council as a whole," said Buckton.