



TOWN OF MINTO

DATE: November 7th, 2016

REPORT TO: Mayor and Council

FROM: Annilene McRobb, Deputy Clerk

SUBJECT: Ontario Wildlife Damage Compensation Program and Fence Viewers

STRATEGIC PLAN

12.7 Demonstrate innovation in all aspects of municipal business acknowledging the importance of training, succession planning, transparency, communication and team-based approaches to municipal operations.

BACKGROUND

Under the Ontario Wildlife Damage Compensation program, municipalities are responsible for appointing Municipal-Valuers to evaluate claims for financial assistance by producers whose livestock, poultry and honey bees have been damaged by wildlife. The Municipal-Valuer documents the claim, completes the required report and files it with the Ministry of Agriculture Food and Rural Affairs. The C.A.O. Clerk's Department facilitates claims, arranges payment to the producer and compensation from the Province in accordance with the terms and conditions. The Town of Minto has had 12 claims since 1999.

As of January 1, 2017, changes to the Ontario Wildlife Damage Compensation Program will take place including standardizing the Valuation Model for Compensation for consistency. The Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) will assign fair market value for livestock or poultry injured or killed. This information will be available on the ministry's website. This standard will ensure greater consistency and transparency.

A new appeal process is proposed to streamline and simplify producers' requests where compensation is denied. A reasonable care plan template has been developed to assist producers with preventative measures.

COMMENTS:

Ontario Wildlife Damage Compensation Program

While the Town does not have a lot of call for this service (less than one a year), it supports initiatives that clarify and simplify the program so long as producers with legitimate claims continue to be dealt with fairly.

The Town has three individuals appointed as Livestock Valuers and Fence Viewers, Barry Heinmiller, Gerald Koeslag and Allan Simpson. All three gentlemen have been appointed for at least 15 years. Koeslag and Simpson have opted to continue on in this capacity for at least another year, while Heinmiller will be retiring from this position at the end of 2016.

Training will be provided to Koeslag and Simpson on the changes made to the Ontario Wildlife Damage Compensation Program later this year. While the Town can continue with two Livestock Valuers, Barry Heinmiller's retirement impacts appointments under the Line Fences Act.

The Line Fences Act

The Line Fences Act requires three fence-viewers to be present at a viewing. It is, however, advisable for a Council to appoint more than three fence-viewers so the Clerk has discretion

assigning fence-viewers to each case. A fence-viewer who is a relative or friend of one of the owners should not be involved in arbitrating that dispute which will require the two other viewers deal with that case. In a municipality like Minto with both rural and urban areas, it is also advisable that the roster of fence-viewers reflect this fact to permit the clerk to assign the appropriate fence-viewers to each viewing.

Council members can be appointed as members but this old legislation is designed to be non-political. Municipal staff members may also be appointed except for situations where the municipality is an adjoining owner. Municipalities that rarely receive an application for a viewing might consider appointing the fence-viewers of a neighbouring municipality to also serve their municipality, should it be required.

During my ten years here, there have only been two requests for fence viewers. I believe having Mr. Simpson and Mr. Koeslag stay on and appointing two staff members is sufficient.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS.

There are no financial considerations for the appointment.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council receives the Ontario Wildlife Damage Compensation Program and Fence Viewers report from the Deputy Clerk and considers appointing two staff members as Fence Viewers in 2017.

Annilene McRobb
Deputy Clerk