February 3, 2020

Town of Goderich
57 West Street
Goderich, Ontario
N7A 2K5

Dear Mayor John Grace and Members of Goderich Town Council,

We address this letter to Goderich Town Council in the hope that it will be first noted by council and then referred to the Environmental Action Committee.

On behalf of the Core Committee of Green Goderich, congratulations and a sincere thank you for the recent passing of a motion declaring a climate emergency in the Town of Goderich. It is outstanding that the vote was unanimous. Knowing that Goderich is only the second municipality along the shores of Lake Huron to declare a climate emergency, and the first in Huron County, speaks volumes to the commitment that the Town of Goderich and the Environmental Action Committee have given to the environment. The general membership of Green Goderich is also very excited and wanted us to pass on our congratulations on their behalf. We note that Mayor Grace indicated an action plan would hopefully be finalized over the next six to eight weeks.

We, the Core members of Green Goderich, would like to pass on two initiatives which Green Goderich members have expressed interest in. We hope that these will be included in the climate emergency action plan or, alternatively, considered by council.

Firstly, we suggest that the climate emergency action plan include an anti-idling bylaw, with the goal of reducing carbon emissions and improving air quality in the Town of Goderich. Similar bylaws have been successfully implemented in many Ontario municipalities, dating back to 1996. Per Natural Resources Canada, if Canadian drivers limit idling to three minutes a day, over the course of a year, 1.4 million tonnes of CO₂ emissions would be saved.¹ Please visit this link from National Resources Canada for further information and guidelines on how to set up an idling control bylaw: https://www.nrcan.gc.ca/energy/efficiency/communities-infrastructure/transportation/municipal-communities/reports/4405

Secondly, we suggest that the Town of Goderich implement a municipal composting program through their current waste management provider, or otherwise. The implementation of such a program falls within the Environmental Action Committee’s objectives of both waste reduction and greenhouse gas reduction. We would like to make Council aware that on multiple occasions, attendees of Green Goderich public meetings and other events have raised municipal composting as an important issue and have asked when the Town will implement such a program. Beyond its importance to our membership, a municipal composting program will greatly reduce carbon emissions. Food and other organic waste require high levels of aeration not present in regular landfills. This non-efficient process produces large amounts of methane gas, which is one of the most potent greenhouse gases. If the province of Ontario were to halve the amount of organic waste being sent to landfill, this would create a 1.1 megaton reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, or the equivalent of 260,000 vehicles being driven for an entire year.²

Lastly, being inspired by Blue Bayfield and their designation as a Blue Community we investigated this designation for Goderich and found a Bayshore Broadcasting article from February 2017 that states the following:

“Goderich is now a Blue Community. Council approved the designation on Monday night in principle and directed staff to have conversations with Blue Bayfield. [...] [Jennifer] Pate says the designation means to make water a human right, eliminate plastic water bottles in municipal buildings and events, and going against the privatization of water. The Town of Goderich already does not sell bottled water in municipal buildings. Pate says this designation is an opportunity to market Goderich and bring in more visitors.”

Our inquiry is therefore; is Goderich a Blue Community? If we are not, Green Goderich would like to assist Town Council in working towards that title.

The environmental work done and the commitment to future action by Town Council is impressive and far-reaching. Thank you again for taking on these tasks and for your care and concern for our natural ecosystems.

As well, thank you for your consideration regarding an anti-idling bylaw and a composting program. We also wait to see if Goderich has already been designated as a Blue Community.

Warm regards,

Green Goderich Core Team

Dr. Jim Hollingworth
Betty Durst
Brenda Teichert
Alex Robinson
Dean Whalen
Yasmeen Chamas

