

# Wasaga Beach NEWS

January 2025



Ellen Timms  
Councillor



Richard White  
Councillor



Tanya Snell  
Deputy Mayor



Brian Smith  
Mayor



Faye Ego  
Councillor



Joe Belanger  
Councillor



Sasha-Rose Dileo  
Councillor

## Message from the Mayor

Happy New Year Wasaga Beach! 2024 is a year to remember, together we accomplished so much. Here are a few highlights:

- ✓ Celebrated the on-time, on-budget grand opening of the new **Wasaga Stars Arena** and Wasaga Beach Public Library
- ✓ Delivered **Wasaga Beach's first "Breaking the Ice" winter music festival**, featuring rock legends Burton Cummings and Blue Rodeo, which attracted almost **6000** guests to town including 3000 visitors from other communities
- ✓ Programmed a successful summer of events that helped mark the Town's 50th anniversary with outstanding live music, entertainment, and **the biggest increase in tourism we have seen in over a decade!**
- ✓ Lobbied for and welcomed a **\$57.7 million** investment by the Ontario government to build Wasaga Beach's first high school and community hub, in partnership with the Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board!
- ✓ Welcomed news that the Simcoe County District School Board has **finally** made a second high school for Wasaga Beach it's #2 capital priority
- ✓ Scored the first Junior A hockey team in the history of the Town, the Wasaga River Dragons!
- ✓ Attracted a new family doctor to town and over **\$880,000** in provincial funding for additional services to be delivered at the Town's 160 Beck Street medical centre and after-hours clinic
- ✓ Lobbied for and welcomed over **\$1 million** in financial support from the province to offset rising provincial OPP costs. This ensured that our Council could introduce a lower 3.96% tax increase in 2025, instead of the 5.6% increase that would have been necessary had the province not covered these cost increases.

*Continued on page 2*

Our new Vision Statement is supported by five **Strategic Pillars for Change** and eighty-four **Implementation Actions**.

**JANUARY 2025 UPDATE: OVER 90% OF THESE ACTIONS ARE COMPLETE OR CURRENTLY UNDER WAY.**

### COMPLETE

Pursue complete neighbourhoods

### INCLUSIVE

Build a community where residents are happy, healthy & safe

### OPPORTUNITIES

Diversify the economy & create jobs

### WELL-RUN

Strive for excellence in customer service & corporate culture

### GREEN

Demonstrate leadership in responding to climate change

Brian Smith, Mayor  
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Faced with a 23% jump in our OPP bill for 2025, this Council acted urgently. We passed a motion urging our neighbouring municipalities and communities across the province to join us in requesting the province to fully cover and carefully review these rising policing costs. Our efforts at the provincial level were successful, and we will continue advocating for a long-term, sustainable policing solution that works for the families and hardworking residents of Wasaga Beach.

That's not all. In 2024, your Mayor and Council:

✓ Signed a letter of intent with the award winning Sunray Group of Hotels to bring a premium hotel to Wasaga Beach

✓ Awarded an RFP to Stonebridge Building Group to develop a portion of Town-owned property near the beachfront. We've made significant progress in reinventing our main beachfront and commercial area.

The RFP awarded to Stonebridge Building Group covers a 5.18-acre portion of Town-owned property located at Beach Area 1, nestled between 1st Street and 3rd Street. The vision for the project includes creating vibrant open spaces, a public park, and a focus on live-work townhomes with commercial space. In total, the project will feature over 150 residential units and 31 commercial units, providing a mix of housing and business opportunities. Overall, this project promises to be a game-changer for our community. We're excited to see shovels in the ground in Spring 2025.

✓ Celebrated the reopening of William Arnill Park and the Town's BMX bike track, after investing over \$400,000 to build new parks or improve existing facilities

✓ Almost completed construction on River Road West!

The list goes on! To kick off the New Year in style, we are thrilled to welcome Canadian country star Tim Hicks to the Wasaga Stars Arena on February 7th, following in the footsteps of Canadian legends Burton Cummings and Blue Rodeo. And on February 8th, we will welcome six-time JUNO Award winner Sam Roberts Band to town. These exciting concerts are just one of the many ways we're bringing the community together and supporting the Town's vision of becoming a thriving year-round destination. Don't miss out on these unforgettable nights of music and celebration! Get your tickets now at [wbse.ca](http://wbse.ca)

I have already asked staff to schedule Council's next series of open-mic style public meetings at the RecPlex and the library this spring and summer. In addition to regular council meetings, these gatherings are a great opportunity for you to ask questions and learn more about Town programs, projects and recent announcements. We're excited to hear from you and keep the conversation going. Be sure to keep an eye on our website and social media for more details and announcements – I look forward to seeing you there!

To wrap up, we're kicking off 2025 on an incredibly positive note. Thanks to the hard work of our dedicated Town employees, over 90% of the priorities and action items identified by Council at the beginning of 2023 are completed or well underway. With such great momentum, I'm confident that 2025 will bring even more exciting achievements and news for our Town. **The best is yet to come!**

- Mayor Brian Smith

## UPCOMING

### Festivals & Events Lineup

FEBRUARY

7

Tim Hicks Concert With  
Guests River Town Saints

FEBRUARY

8

Sam Roberts Band With  
Special Guest Grant Boyer

STARTS  
FEBRUARY

14

Snowman Mania  
20th Anniversary

FEBRUARY

14

19+ Comedy Show With  
Wes Barker & James Harrison

[wasagabeach.com/events](http://wasagabeach.com/events)



### Follow us on social

 Town of Wasaga Beach  
Explore Wasaga Beach  
WB Youth Centre  
Wasaga Beach  
Fire Department  
Wasaga Beach  
Public Library  
Wasaga Beach  
Recreation & Facilities

 @explorewasagabeach  
@wasaga\_beach\_rec\_facilities  
@wbyouthcentre

 @wb\_media  
@wasagabeachfire

 Town of Wasaga Beach



The longest freshwater beach in the world.

### Latest headlines:

#### County and Town Partner with Faith Missionary Church to Open New Warming Centre in Wasaga Beach

The new warming centre will open when temperatures are expected to dip below -10°C and provide better winter warming and social supports for unhoused individuals in South Georgian Bay.

#### Sam Roberts Band Ready to Light Up Wasaga Beach on February 8

The six-time JUNO award-winning artist will perform at the Wasaga Stars Arena, following Canadian country star Tim Hicks on February 7.

#### Council Approves 2025 Budget to Continue Moving Wasaga Beach Forward

Wasaga Beach has worked very hard to approve a budget that will ensure we can continue to deliver the quality municipal services that our residents deserve and have come to expect.

#### Canadian Country Star Tim Hicks Set to Rock Wasaga Beach on February 7, 2025

Chart-topping artist will perform at the Wasaga Stars Arena, following in the footsteps of Canadian rock icons Burton Cummings and Blue Rodeo; Tickets on sale now at [wbse.ca](http://wbse.ca)

#### Statement by Mayor Brian Smith on the Province Providing Over \$1 Million to Offset Town's OPP Costs

The Town of Wasaga Beach welcomes news that the Ford government will be offsetting OPP cost increases for small and rural municipalities, including the Town of Wasaga Beach. Faced with a 23 per cent increase in its bill from the OPP in 2025, Council took swift action.

#### Vision Unveiled for New Mixed-Use Development on Portion of Town-Owned Land Near Wasaga's Beachfront

High quality, mixed-used development features a diverse range of residential and commercial spaces that will complement work being completed by Sunray Group of Hotels and support year-round economic activity at Beach Area 1.

#### Wasaga Beach Signs Letter of Intent with Award-Winning Sunray Hotel Group

Council is thrilled to take this next step forward with Sunray Group – having an award-winning hotelier at the table as we reimagine and redevelop our beachfront is an incredible win for our community.



## PUBLIC MEETINGS

#happeningsoon #savethedate

### JANUARY 28

#### Fireworks Usage Public Meeting

🕒 6:00-8:00 PM

📅 January 28, 2025

📍 Re/Max Room, Wasaga Stars Arena  
544 River Road West, Wasaga Beach

### APRIL 24

#### Town Hall Public Meeting

🕒 7:00-9:00 PM

📅 April 24, 2025

📍 Hall 1A, Rec-Plex  
1724 Mosley Street, Wasaga Beach

## Building a better community Official Plan Review

The Official Plan is a blueprint for the kind of community we want to design and build for our children and grandchildren. It describes the community's long-term vision and sets out goals and policies for directing land use, future growth and development. The Town's new Official Plan follows innovative planning practices designed to create a sustainable and accessible community for generations to come.

Review and provide input on the new Official Plan at [wasagabeach.com/engage](http://wasagabeach.com/engage).

## Making it easier to access Town programs and services

### MyWasaga Days - April 24th & 26th

In addition to the new [wasagabeach.com/MyWasaga](http://wasagabeach.com/MyWasaga) customer service portal, we are excited to announce that MyWasaga days will be returning! This is a public event where representatives from various Town departments will be offering a range of instant services to our community. On April 24th & 26th, you can obtain deck permits, sign up for resident parking passes, apply for Town jobs, and more!

Visit the **MyWasaga** portal to:

- view detailed account information
- make payments to both property taxes and water accounts instantly
- manage preauthorized payment plans
- sign up for ebilling

Learn more: [wasagabeach.com/MyWasaga](http://wasagabeach.com/MyWasaga)

## 211® can help

Need help and don't know where to turn? 211 is a helpline that connects people to the social services, programs and community supports they need.

Dial 2-1-1 or visit [www.211ontario.ca](http://www.211ontario.ca)



## MARCH BREAK PROGRAMMING

### Oakview Woods March Break Day Camp

Register for individual days or the full week! Our day camp is packed with fun activities both indoors and outdoors, including swimming at the YMCA, special guests, crafts, sports, and games. This program is designed to inspire, engage, and activate kids.

### March Beach Fun Zone

March Beach Fun Zone offers a variety of exciting activities for a fun-filled day with the whole family. Check out our socials for more information coming soon!

### Extra Public Skate Times

Make the most of March Break with extra public skate times – fun on the ice for the whole family!

### March Break at the Youth Centre

The Wasaga Beach Youth Centre is extending its hours from Monday to Saturday to give you a whole week of excitement! Each day will have a different theme packed with games, snacks, and awesome giveaways. It's the perfect way to make the most of your break!

### Zoo to You & Butterfly Kisses at Wasaga Beach Public Library

On March 13th, enjoy an interactive animal experience featuring reptiles, mammals, and exotics! Then, on March 14, learn about Monarch Butterflies with Heather Willet of Butterfly Kisses, covering rearing, migration, and butterfly gardening.

Teamwork makes the dream work.

[WASAGABEACH.COM/CAREERS](https://WASAGABEACH.COM/CAREERS)

#### CURRENT OPPORTUNITIES:

- **Director, Library Services/Chief Executive Officer**
- **Senior Accounting Analyst/Executive Assistant**

#### SUMMER JOBS:

- **Beachfront Ambassador**
- **Human Resources Intern**
- **Library Program Assistant**
- **Municipal By-Law Enforcement Officer**
- **Treasury Assistant**

Visit our careers website, and be sure to follow the Town of Wasaga Beach on **Facebook** and **LinkedIn**.

## IMPROVING CUSTOMER SERVICE

The Town is currently reviewing our customer service model to make sure we're providing the best possible experience for everyone—residents, community members, visitors and our own staff. Our goal is to create a better system that improves service efficiency, reduces costs, and makes things easier for you. We want to hear from you—let us know what's working, where we can improve, and any ideas you have to make customer service better. Share your thoughts through our Customer Satisfaction Survey today: [engagewasaga.ca](https://engagewasaga.ca)

## COUNCIL ADVOCACY

Council continues to advocate at all levels of government on the issues that matter most to Wasaga Beach residents, including a high school, building attainable housing, redeveloping the beachfront, strengthening tourism and the local economy, reimagining Wasaga Beach Provincial Park, and more. Recent meetings with Ontario cabinet ministers and officials happened during a Town-organized lobby day at Queen's Park on November 7, 2024 and at the Rural Ontario Municipal Association Conference (ROMA) on January 20, 2025. Next up, Council and staff are preparing to attend:

### Association of Municipalities of Ontario Conference (AMO): Aug 17-20, 2025

## QUEEN'S PARK DAY

In November 2024, Mayor Brian Smith, Deputy Mayor Tanya Snell and senior staff traveled to Queen's Park to ask the Province to help the Town unlock the full economic and tourism potential of the world's longest fresh water beach and Nancy Island. Our vision is to transform Wasaga Beach into a vibrant, year-round destination. Discussions were positive, and Council is excited to share more with our community in the near future. In 2024, Mayor Brian Smith and Council also:

- ✓ Passed a motion for the Province and Town to come together to review the guiding principles under which the world's longest freshwater beach was originally expropriated and turned into a provincial park: To provide outdoor recreation opportunities for the people of Ontario, together with year-round tourism and economic opportunities for the Town of Wasaga Beach.
- ✓ Advocated successfully at the annual Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) conference in Ottawa, where Council and staff held productive meetings with Premier Doug Ford and key ministries. This was followed by a successful Queen's Park Lobby Day in Toronto, where Council and senior staff were welcomed by key advisers in the Premier's Office and high ranking officials from the Ministries of Tourism, Environment and Infrastructure.
- ✓ We know there is a better way to protect and promote the unique aspects of the world's longest freshwater beach and Nancy Island historic site. Unfortunately, both assets have been underfunded for decades. This is a critical step in strengthening our economy and achieving our goals of becoming a complete community, and a world-class, year-round Ontario destination.

The longest freshwater beach in the world.

