

KPMG Operational and Financial Municipal Review

Our municipal council has asked KPMG to perform an operational and financial review. The French River Citizens' Association (FRCA) / l'Association des citoyens de la Rivière des Français (ACFR) has been a strong advocate of such a review. We await KPMG's findings and recommendations with much anticipation in light of the substantial tax increases that we have seen this year and over the past years. When we compare our municipal tax increases to the rate of inflation for Canada, it is no wonder that residents of our municipality are concerned if not to say frustrated. From 2006 to 2015, Canada's inflation rate rose 17% while our municipal taxes rose 88%. When we take time to analyse these rates of tax increases, we quickly surmise that a problem exists and that tax increases cannot continue at this pace.

KPMG's report should provide our Municipal Council with a roadmap on possible ways and means of approaching services offered, efficiencies in operations, staff levels, size of reserves, equipment purchases and more. In March, we wrote an article saying that Council may have a spending problem. It is our hope that KPMG's review will provide workable recommendations that will guide our Council in getting spending under control and in the future bring forward tax increases that are much closer to the rate of inflation. There is no doubt that even a negative tax increase would be welcome news.

As we await the final results of this review, the FRCA/ACRF is also hoping that Council will approach the release of the KPMG review in an open and transparent manner. We firmly believe, that since our tax dollars have paid for the review, residents will receive all the details of the report. Furthermore, we encourage Council to hold a public meeting when KPMG officials release their findings. This public forum will provide residents an opportunity to receive information, understand the intricacies of providing municipal services while allowing residents to ask for clarification on certain issues.

In conclusion, there is no doubt that the final decisions rest with Council. Some decisions will be political in nature, others purely financial but regardless of the outcomes, Council should perform these duties in an open and transparent manner. The residents of French River deserve nothing less.

Yours in good governance,

the FRCA / ACRF Executive Board