

Hello 2012, we can't wait.

It's hard to acknowledge that 2011 is over. Actually it's hard to acknowledge that a year has gone by already. Its 13 months in fact, starting from December 1, 2010. It's not that it feels like it dragged on. The time has gone by quickly. I was thinking about the many things that have been accomplished by Township council in the first "year". I won't bore you with a list from the first year - but it was a lot. Rather I prefer to focus on where we hope to take things over the second year.

However, just to indulge for a moment, 2011 was an absolutely fantastic experience for me as mayor. Working with staff, meeting my fellow mayors, regional council, the hydro board, the GRCA and interacting with residents have made 2011 an absolute delight. In terms of community activism, I had no idea how much of an integral role a mayor plays in setting the community agenda. The opportunity to lead positive change in the community has been an eye opening experience and to be frank quite exhilarating. Now I'm not saying it has always been smooth. The challenges have been, well, challenging. There have been debates and disagreements at council, heated discussions with staff at times, differences of opinions with residents, but out of that has come a year to be extremely proud of. What is it they say about friction and diamonds? My first year involved a lot of hands on managing. Some would say micro-managing and I tend to agree. It's easy to fall into the trap of wanting to do everything right away and get too wrapped up in the details.

What about 2012? Well, for starters a lot less micro managing and starting to focus on longer term planning. I know a few people that will be relieved to hear that. I would like to focus on implementing the changes we have started and build on that momentum. Continue the work with our citizen committees, community groups and our community partners, like the North Dumfries Community Health Centre. One early highlight will be the first township council meeting outside the township offices to be held at the Clyde Scott Women's Institute Hall in Ward 4 in February. Another interesting area involves the work of our bylaw enforcement officer, Michele Dunsford. She is developing a community based approach to dealing with community concerns, particularly around safety. The development of community based solutions provides the best opportunity for positive change.

The new Official Plan process will be big part of what we do in 2012. This is your best opportunity to provide input into the type of Township you want for the future. The process will not be completed in 2012, but we will be well underway. Caution though - like all things, there are many divergent ideas and the process is about respectful and informed debate that will result in a vision not likely shared by all, but hopefully accepted by all.

2012 will be notable for some big events. The International Plowing Match in September will definitely be a highlight. We want to ensure that North Dumfries Township maintains a high profile. That our community groups take advantage of the potential revenue opportunities through volunteering and that we actively promote our community as a wonderful place to live, work and play.

Sometime around June will be the opening of our outdoor facilities at the North Dumfries Community Complex. The community raised the funds for this project. The community showed a strong desire for this project to be completed. Council, along with our community partners, the CCG and the soccer fields committee, is proud to see this project to completion in 2012. The soccer fields, splash pad, Eby trail and playground equipment will be the crowning jewel for that facility.

We will also have to start focusing on the development of our capital plan. This includes identifying projects and the funding sources over the long term. Some near term projects include the Brant Waterloo Road, in partnership with the County of Brant, and the remaining portion of Reidsville Road. A mid to long term project includes significant road work throughout Ayr. We will also continue our work on the Roseville Community Centre. We will also be developing options for renovation or building of a new Township office.

And just to ensure that 2011 ended on a high note, I had the pleasure of sampling John Lochner's homemade rumtopf on New Year's Eve. So bring on 2012. 2011 was a great ride, I survived the rumtopf, and I can hardly wait to get working on 2012.

Rob Deutschmann
Mayor, North Dumfries Township