

April 4, 2019

To: Municipality of Temagami Mayor and Council

Update #3 Cell and Broadband - as at April 2/19

Research and notes jointly gathered and reported by Dave MacDonald and Margaret Youngs

Summary of information gathered at NeoNet, Timmins March 2019

- In attendance at meeting
 - council members Dan O'Mara, Margaret Youngs
 - ad hoc community volunteer Dave MacDonald
 - NEOnet Director of Operations Paul Ouimette
 - NEOnet Project Coordinator Laura Imhoff
- NEOnet is an agency, funded through FedNor, that offers consultant services to communities wanting to upgrade to the CRTC stated universal standard of 50 Mbps download and 10 Mbps upload speeds. They offer assistance with applications. It is also a teaching facility.
- Their territory is Martin River to Cochrane. They work co-operatively with their counterpart, Blue Sky that covers the territory North Bay to Martin River.
- Power Point presentation provided clear information on who they are, what is 5G and info on Expression of Interest by communities - **Attachments 1,2 and 3**
- Main take-a-ways
 - The CRTC announced a \$750M fund for rural broadband with the objective of ensuring 90% of Canadians can access speeds of 50 Mbps and unlimited data allowance, as well as employ the latest mobile wireless technology available by 2022 (CRTC 2016-496).
 - our current infrastructure for internet through Ontera (owned by Bell) is outdated and will not be upgraded. It will therefore not be able to support the community to reach the level of service as mandated in the CRTC.
 - NEOnet is offering alternative providers to communities that can supply this service so that they can participate in this level of standard national service by 2022.
 - they identified consultants for us to work with - **Attachment 4**
 - an interesting point is that one consultant they have identified Amedeo Bernardi Consulting has been recommended to us as this gentleman has experience with upper management of Ontera. He is a communications consultant and is an expert on Ontera's infrastructure across the north which would be essential to us moving forward to an improved infrastructure.
 - Infrastructure improvement to meet the new CRTC standard is high priority for all communities and there is an abundance of high level support for communities to tap into. The time is now!

- Bernadette Jordan - Minister of Rural Economic Development as of Jan 14/19. Her new ministry has been set up ***to bring broadband internet service and jobs to rural communities***. This is a government priority.
- This was also brought up at ROMA (Rural Ontario Municipal Association) annual conference in Toronto in January. The top priority for the 444 Ontario municipalities is to have broadband service as soon as possible.

Next information gathering conferences

April 8 - Teeny Tiny Summit - Matheson

May 30- June 2 - FCM Annual Conference and Trade Show - Quebec City

Status update

- **Spectrum**
 - In conversation with Paul Ouimette as a followup to our visit to Timmins, we had discussion on suppliers for the infrastructure.
 - The one company that he raised a caution with was Spectrum, the company that the town's current computer services person works for. Caution was raised with respect to challenges in other communities that are using Spectrum.
 - In conversation at the town office with municipal staff, there was great enthusiasm at the offer of "FREE" internet to be provided by Spectrum at no cost to the town.
 - That, in my experience is the fools game. There is no such thing as free. Somebody will pay and I highly suspect that should the town sign away the infrastructure, the rate payers will be left holding the bag within a short time.
 - There are warnings out there now, not the least of which is NEOnet and others on what Spectrum offers.
 - At the very least, go to the Matheson conference and get input on this company.
 - There are many resources being made available through the 5G initiatives. These initiatives are providing education support, best practices, funding to ensure maximum coverage for the whole region, support for disadvantaged as well as combining the internet and cellular options.
 - With all this well informed support out there to assist us in making a well informed decision, it would be very short sighted to automatically go with the person the town is currently using to do computer repair work to solve the internet and cellular issues of the municipality because of the offer of "FREE" .
 - The Matheson summit is an ideal place for participants to find out first hand the track record of the different suppliers that are available.

Below comments are personal comments from Dave MacDonald

- **My vision, until the past few weeks has been**
 - Final report to council within 3 weeks of the FCM conference in Quebec City (May 30-June 2). This would have included
 - list of community partners,
 - any vetted consultants and
 - project partners (hardware etc)
 - costs and
 - application
 - As many options as possible would have been included so you could then have struck a committee of your choosing to work with providers or move forward as a council.
 - I have worked toward providing you a well researched document on high speed internet and cellular service that I expected would be helpful so that council could make informed decisions based on well researched information relevant to our community.

- **I now have a growing uneasiness** with the continued value added that I can contribute to council
 - In my original submission to council offering to work collaboratively with council on improved service, I stated that

"..... each new council will take on this issue, correspond with various phone providers and agencies and will experience total frustration on finding that no one group will take responsibility for the overall provision of services. The issue eventually gets dropped or put on the back burner with other more immediate and "pressing issues taking the time of council"
 - In all my interaction with outside resources including other municipalities I experienced only open communication and willingness to share any information that would assist us in making an informed decision for our community.
 - On returning to Temagami, I often experienced a stark contrast to this willingness to share either through refusal of information or just "put on ignore". I can provide a list of examples over the past many weeks if it would be productive. If being on a committee didn't give me the authorization to ask and receive information, which should have been sufficient on its own. The Municipal Freedom of Information Act provides for this right for all citizens. Even on contacting Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, we were referred back to our own municipal office to get the information.
 - Margaret Youngs and I have worked very well together in the gathering of and sifting through copious amounts of information.
 - Despite our best efforts, we were not successful in obtaining available and necessary information required to prepare for the expression of interest for Northern Ontario Residential Broadband Program (deadline now past - March 31/19).

- There will be other opportunities to apply but this experience has left me aware that the frustration level I am experiencing in working within our municipal environment is taking the pleasure out of this for me.
 - My experience now is that we are standing in our own way with process and procedure that is not conducive to expediting decisions. As an "ad hoc" volunteer and member of the community I learned that I am in no position of authority, in Temagami, to ask for information or expect that I would receive it.
 - Further, and most frustrating to me, is from my "business world" view, this does not have to be the long process it is turning into. I am hearing that process has to be followed but the process that we seem to be moving into will not work, in my view, for timely delivery of this project.
- **It is good news** to hear that the councillors that work on Bear Island have let you know that Bear Island was looking to a partnering arrangements for service through a satellite link. They are using Explornet as their provider and are already getting the 50+ service in their trailers which is the new minimum standard that we are seeking to achieve.
 - Perhaps an alternative that you may already be exploring is instead of town supplying these services, have a business discussion with Bear Island on using their infrastructure for the district. The upside to Bear Island as I am sure they are aware, could be monetized to their benefit and provide the necessary infrastructure to the region as a whole.
 - There is so much external support and expertise "out there" right now that it is an exciting opportunity to be able to take advantage of that.
 - With the interest of so many of council members in the Matheson Summit it is great to see that council is taking part in the education that is so important for us to understand to make good decisions for our community.

At this point, I believe my value added to this project is now complete. Margaret is now well apprised of the approach I was taking towards this project. I found her to be an extremely valuable resource person to work with on this project. I will continue to offer any support I can by way of comment or explanation when asked. I have kept a binder of all research and related information that I have gathered to date. I will turn this over to you for your reference if you would like it.

Respectfully submitted

original signed by

Dave MacDonald