



Although we have battled another difficult year of COVID-19, the holiday season provides a time to take a pause and reflect on some of the positive happenings that our Town has gone through.

We are thrilled that the Town Dock Secondary Study has taken shape over the last quarter of 2021. This study is the first step in revitalizing our waterfront. Over the course of 2021, consultants held numerous consultations with the public, council, and members of the Town Dock Steering Committee to explore potential new uses, a key aspect in the Towns 2019-2023 Strategic Plan. After each public consultation, the design was altered based on your opinions and perceived needs. I encourage you to stay tuned in early February for information on the next public consultation.

2021 provided us with the opportunity to focus on making our services accessible, online. In early 2021, the Town was pleased to announce that Cloudpermit, the online site for building permit submission and planning was complete. Shortly after, our Recreation Department announced their new online programs tool, RecDesk, which has made registering for programs and events possible from the comfort of your own home. Staff are currently working towards integrating tax and water bill payments online. Residents can expect to pay these bills online in the coming year.

In early 2021, the Town announced its purchase of 51 Dunlop, home of the Penetanguishene Secondary School building. Throughout the year, staff worked closely with residents and the PSS Steering Committee to properly prepare the school for the upcoming demolition. I am proud of the memorable event our staff were able to organize, which provided residents and visitors two separate opportunities to take a walk through the building and share their stories. If you have not already done so, I encourage you to watch the memorable 'closing of PSS' video, on the Towns YouTube Channel.

Our Public Works department had a great year! The department completed a lengthy list of achievements including the completion of the first phase of the complete restructuring of Chatham Street. The second phase is set to commence in the Spring of 2022.

As a municipality, we continue our endeavours to save our taxpayers money with regards to the increase in CNCC policing costs, which has attributed to the large overall tax increase in the coming year. We are grateful to our Finance department who have done a great job over the year practicing prudent and forward looking financial management as outlined in the Town's Strategic Plan. This effort has resulted in our 2022 Budget being approved with an estimated overall tax increase of 1.9%.

Each of these accomplishments this year could not have been fulfilled without the great efforts of our department heads, staff, and direction from our CAO. I am very proud of the team we have at the Town of Penetanguishene and speak for all members of Council when I thank them for their continued efforts and perseverance each year.

As a community, we rely so much on the ideas of each one of you. It is essential that we continue to work together, cheer each other on and support all efforts to keep Penetanguishene a wonderful place to live and visit. On behalf of Members of Council and staff, I extend my warmest wishes to everyone in our community. May the magic of the Christmas season fill your homes with joy and peace and may the spirit of this wonderful season be with you and your loved ones throughout the holidays.

Doug Leroux is the Mayor of Penetanguishene. Contact him at dleroux@penetanguishene.ca. If you'd like to keep up to date on the Council decisions made at our meetings, visit our website www.penetanguishene.ca where you can sign up to receive our Council Highlights email.