

Selwyn council hears wild rice concerns

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BY TERRY GILLIS

In spite of an unusually thin agenda, all the seats in Selwyn's council chambers were occupied Tuesday night.

Council was also somewhat thinned out as Councillor Herron was not in attendance and Mayor Smith left after about twenty minutes to attend another obligation.

The issue that approximately thirty people attended the meeting for was not on the agenda, but was included after the document was sent out: wild rice.

Angela Chittick, Manager of Community & Corporate Services/Clerk told Council and attendees that beginning Friday afternoon and continuing throughout the weekend, Selwyn staff received a number of letters from shoreline property owners on and around Pigeon Lake concerned about wild rice harvesting.

To accommodate the property owners, staff added the wild rice harvesting correspondences under 'New Business' and drafted a resolution for Council's consideration. The resolution stated that a letter be sent to the federal government working with the First Nations Working Committee working on a management plan for wild rice harvesting requesting, on behalf of the people, to advance their concerns about the mechanical harvesting of wild rice and that it is disturbing their enjoyment of their property. Additionally, the resolution stated that MP Maryam Monsef be requested to advance this on behalf of residents and a copy be sent to neighbouring townships.

Councillor Ballantyne said that the issue of wild rice growth and commercial harvesting is not new to her. She has been dealing with it for about ten years.

Ballantyne said that, "as it stands right now, First Nations people seem to hold all the power and the shoreline property owners have a serious issue affecting property values and quality of life."

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