



Beth Blackwell



ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT - 2023



When I decided I wanted to serve as a member of Council, I made a commitment to be as accountable and transparent as possible. This Annual Report is intended to highlight collective efforts of hardworking Municipal staff and my Council colleagues, with the goal of benefiting the community.

This document features my perspective on the progress achieved over the past year. Much has been accomplished in spite of many challenges, such as dynamic and rapid-fire changes to provincial legislation, a steep learning curve and the need to make complex decisions with limited time for contemplation.

While it is demanding, I found my first year as a member of Council to be invigorating. Discussions with staff, Council colleagues, subject experts and the community brought forward innovative ideas to make our Municipality more sustainable, inclusive and vibrant. It has reinforced the importance of collaboration, reaching out for insight, approaching diverse perspectives with curiosity and taking action.

I'm grateful for the opportunity to work alongside passionate residents and the willingness of municipal leaders and staff to share their wealth of knowledge and lived experiences with me.

I recognize what a privilege it is to serve our community and I deeply appreciate those who have shared constructive criticism and provided opportunities to learn and grow. I look forward to building on this first year and continuing to fulfill my duties to the best of my knowledge and ability as we build a stronger and more vibrant Municipality, together.

Beth Blackwell

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ON SOCIAL MEDIA



[Beth Blackwell - Ward 1 Councillor
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YEAR 1 ON COUNCIL - BY THE NUMBERS

COUNCIL & COMMITTEES

48 Regular and Special Council Meetings Attended

3 Committee Appointments

- Striking Committee
- Community Safety & Well-Being Committee
- Natural Vegetation & Trees Ad-Hoc Committee

18 Committee Meetings Attended

8 Motions Drafted, Introduced and Approved by Council

- Advocate to the Province / MTO to address safety concerns along Highway 21 in front of KTTPS
- Amend Council salary policy to ensure increases are consistent with, rather than higher than, those provided to staff
- Donate 500 Bag Tags to the Kincardine Food Bank to assist residents in need
- Request Province establish a consistent, regulatory framework for Short-Term Rentals (STR's) to reduce impact on housing market and neighbourhoods

TRAININGS, WORKSHOPS & LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

23+ Trainings and Workshops Attended

Training, educational and advocacy opportunities included:

- Land Use Planning 101
- The Changing Face of Emergency Management
- Municipal Anti-Hate Symposium
- Addressing Local Housing Issues
- Anti-Racism Initiatives and Policies in Local Government
- Responsibilities Under Statutory Standard of Care - Safe Drinking Water Act
- Traffic Calming: A Proactive Approach
- Strategies in Short Term Accommodations
- Recruiting and Engaging with Youth
- Bruce County Housing Forum

COMMUNITY OUTREACH & ENGAGEMENT

880+ Calls, Emails and Messages from Constituents

12+ Outreach Activities

Presenting to Grade 10 Civics classes, meeting with local groups and hosting community and public consultation sessions

28 Community Events Attended

Highlights of the year include volunteering, presenting or participating at events including :

- Blinky's Bash & Downtown Dig Kick-Off
- Kincardine Pride Parade
- Tree Plantings with KNP
- Rock with Your Docs
- Rural Medicine Retreat Grey Bruce
- Community Achievement Awards



2023 IN REVIEW - THE HIGHLIGHTS

The Municipality of Kincardine provides a wide range of essential services that residents rely on - from road maintenance to clean water, emergency services to recreation programs, garbage collection to playgrounds. While it would be impossible to capture all of day-to-day work and organizational achievements in one document, I have gathered together some of the accomplishment that I feel deserve to be highlighted and shared with the community.

GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT

- The transition to an online permit application process using [Cloud Permit](#) was completed, speeding up and streamlining the building and development process
- All [municipally owned lands](#) were reviewed to identify potentially surplus assets that could support affordable housing or future development

The new Development Dashboard, launched earlier this year, is an amazing tool that highlights proposed and approved development applications. I created an [introduction video](#) to showcase how it can be used to view active applications and get an overall snapshot of planned and future growth.

SAFETY & WELLNESS

- Approval of the comprehensive [Municipality of Kincardine Emergency Response Plan](#)
- 3 new Physicians were recruited in 2023
- Expansion of the Family Health Team same-day clinic through funding for a second Nurse Practitioner

Community members continue to share their concerns about traffic safety, particularly speed. Over the past year, staff have utilized radar signs and trailers to educate drivers about their speed.

At the AMO Conference, I spoke directly with MPP Thompson to push for improved safety measures on Highway 21, particularly in front of KTTPS. Council has approved funding to complete a traffic study in that location in order to advocate to the MTO for a potential turning lane in that location. Staff are also working on an application for a Community Safety Zone.

Within the first three months, Council was asked to approve the critically necessary \$7+ million dollar Queen St. infrastructure project. The Downtown Dig will likely be the largest project undertaken during this term of Council and it's been incredible to watch it unfold over the past few months.

I want to extend my appreciation to the staff for their tireless preparation and commitment to keeping the community informed via newsletters, signage and media updates. Working closely with the BIA, they have managed to minimize impacts of material delays, a vandalism incident and weather to keep things on track and on budget.

Thanks to a \$129,000 grant from the province, the finishing touches will be completed in 2024. I looked forward to seeing how the new street furniture, lights, wireless speakers, planters, trees, banners and garbage cans complement our new streetscape and bring it to life.

NEW INFRASTRUCTURE

- New pedestrian crosswalk installed at the intersection of Bruce Ave and Princes St.
- New playground installed in Grozelle Park
- Upgrades to Connaught Park including irrigation system, dugouts built and donated by UBC Local 2222 and planned new backstop for the main diamond

While the Downtown Dig caused some adjustments and location changes, I had an incredible time attending several of the Municipality of Kincardine's 'Signature Events' including Market in the Park, Canada Day, Gathering of the Bands, Marine Heritage Day and Piping in the Park. Kudos to all the staff and volunteers who make these events so meaningful and fun, year after year!

2023 IN REVIEW - THE HIGHLIGHTS

INCLUSION & BELONGING

- Adoption of updated Facility Accessibility Design Standards (FADS) to ensure future municipal projects and facilities are universally accessible
- Inaugural Afro-Caribbean Youth Culture Award ceremony at the Davidson Centre recognized 25 deserving youth from Grey and Bruce counties
- Pride flag and 'Seven Generations' Indigenous crosswalks were installed on Harbour St.
- Recognition of additional Days of Significance to reflect the community's growing diversity, cultures, celebrations and traditions.

In partnership with the Walker House, the Municipality hosted three exhibits from the Legacy of Hope Foundation. I appreciated the opportunity to view these exhibits, which highlighted the history of residential schools, the need for active reconciliation and showcased Indigenous resilience.

ENHANCED PROCESSES

- Introduction of departmental Quarterly Reports help to keep Council and the public informed of major initiatives, ongoing work and upcoming projects
- The implementation of an electronic ticketing system to allow for online payment of fees and fines
- Approval of an Advertising Revenue Generation Policy and launch of the Advertising and Partnership program

A Volunteer Management Policy was introduced to create opportunities for the public to contribute to Municipal operations and activities. Residents, organizations and businesses can review available roles and apply online via the Municipality's [Volunteer Opportunities webpage](#).

With so many new faces on Council, there was a strong desire to evaluate the current governance structure. After significant input from Council and staff, a detailed review was completed and multiple recommendations have already been implemented, including:

- Updated Procedure By-law that streamlines and simplifies Council meetings
- Policy-focused Committee structure that is more aligned with Council's key strategic priorities
- New Public Appointments Policy for committees and boards with clear selection criteria to improve transparency
- Transition of many former committees to more flexible and informal Working Groups

OTHER NOTABLE ITEMS

- Digitization and mapping of more than 16,000 graves across three active cemeteries will support the roll-out of an interactive public platform where people can search for loved ones, monuments and available plots
- Pilot project providing free menstrual products in municipal washrooms will be expanded in 2024

Funding from the Municipality and the Municipal Innovation Council (MIC) enabled 210 households to purchase a subsidized Food Cycler appliance as part of the Food Waste Diversion pilot program. Based on the 12 week pilot results and survey data, participating households are projected to reduce their garbage output by up to 25 bags per year.

Ongoing [waste diversion programs](#) offered by the Municipality include recycling options for film plastic, Styrofoam, light bulbs, electronics, batteries farm plastics and more. Green Cone digesters are also available for purchase at the landfill.

Municipal staff have released an organizational wide update featuring a comprehensive summary of achievements and work completed in 2023. Read the full [Integrated Strategy Progress Report](#).

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2024

PARKS & RECREATION

- The final draft of Parks and Recreation Master Plan is expected to be presented to Council early in the new year
- Trail volunteers are back in action and new volunteer opportunities are being developed to support our parks and community spaces
- Consultation is beginning for the Boardwalk redevelopment at Station Beach

AFFORDABLE HOUSING & INVESTMENT READINESS

- A draft updated Comprehensive Zoning By-Law is being developed that is intended to be 'housing friendly', with a focus on supporting progressive housing options, including Accessory Residential Units (ARU's), gentle intensification, reducing minimum square footage and enabling more flexible lot sizes.
- An expanded Community Improvement Plan (CIP) will include potential incentives and support for affordable housing and infill development

Over the next year, I will be promoting Bruce County's [Affordable Housing Toolkits](#) - particularly the opportunities for [Accessory Residential Units \(ARU's\)](#). Changes to provincial planning rules have expanded opportunities for homeowners in urban areas to create basement apartments, tiny homes, garage conversions and other secondary or accessory suites on their properties without the need for a re-zoning application.

ROAD RECONSTRUCTIONS

- Complete reconstruction of the east section of Bruce Avenue is planned for spring/summer of 2024; significant improvements are needed to address the substandard road base and ensure safety and longevity for existing residents and the future development
- Mount Forest Ave is also being fully reconstructed in spring 2024 and will improve the intersection at the hospital entrance and Queen St. while facilitating new development

An ongoing priority and focus for me when reviewing staff reports on new or reconstructed transportation infrastructure will be looking at ways to improve pedestrian access, implement Cycling Master Plan initiatives, increase accessibility and enhance overall traffic safety as part of a Complete Streets philosophy.

PUBLIC SAFETY

- Council is supporting the development of a Traffic Calming policy and program intended to address community concerns related to speeding and traffic volumes
- MTO has indicated they will complete Council's requested review of the existing 80 km/h speed limit between Bruce Ave and the Northline Extension by fall 2024, with a particular focus on the area in front of KTTPS
- Council is hopeful MTO will move ahead with the planned installation of traffic lights along Highway 21 at Russell St. and Kincardine Ave
- The Ad-Hoc Pier Safety Committee is expected to report back to Council on recommended actions in Feb 2024



GET INVOLVED WITH YOUR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

CONNECT WITH COUNCIL

The Municipality of Kincardine is represented by nine individuals - Mayor, Deputy Mayor and seven Councillors.

You can find the full list of Council members, our email addresses and phone numbers on the [Mayor and Council webpage](#). Unsure which Ward you live in? Enter your address into the [Ward Map](#) to find out!

Councillor Kennedy and I held our first joint “Ward 1 Open House” at the beginning of November. We plan to host future Open Houses on a quarterly basis in 2024.

NEWS AND NOTICES

Choose which media releases, news and notices to receive by [subscribing](#) to topics and updates of your choice. Individuals can also subscribe to the monthly e-newsletter called [Municipal Connects](#) as well as the [Economic Development](#) newsletter.

The Municipality of Kincardine engages in a wide range of public consultation activities, including conducting surveys and hosting open houses throughout the year.

Follow the [Municipality of Kincardine](#) website, social media channels or watch for notices in newsletters and local newspapers to learn how to participate in upcoming engagement opportunities.

WATCH MEETINGS

Council meetings are typically held twice a month on Wednesday evenings at 5pm. The [Council and Committee calendar](#) lists upcoming meetings as well as agendas.

The public is able to watch meetings (with the exception of closed sessions) in person at the Municipal Administration Centre. Meetings are also broadcast live on the [Municipality of Kincardine Youtube Channel](#), Rogers TV Channel 6 and Bruce Telecom TV.

REPORT A CONCERN

Have a concern or see something that requires attention? Use the online [Report a Concern form](#) to ensure the right staff are notified and that issues can be prioritized appropriately.

DELEGATE TO COUNCIL

The public is invited to address Council or a Committee on a particular issue or topic. There are a limited number of delegation slots available and presentations are typically limited to 5 minutes.

[Delegation Request Forms](#) must be submitted to the Clerk no later than 12:00pm the Wednesday before the meeting.

SUBMIT A PETITION

Public petitions can be submitted to Council, requesting that the Municipality take action on a specific issue.

Petitions must adhere to the [Petitions Policy](#) and be submitted to the Clerk. A fillable [Petition Form](#) is available for download.

Petitions from online sites such as Change.org are not accepted as valid petitions by the Municipality of Kincardine.