

...On Valentine's Day, Mindemoya couple ended their lives together

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many issues arose to put their plans in jeopardy.

Mr. Nevills' intermittent bouts of dementia and the resulting hallucinations might have called his competence into question. Not only do you have to prove you want to engage in MAID when you set the plans in motion, but you also have to confirm your wish as the day draws near.

Added to that, Mr. Nevills was in a locked down nursing home due to an outbreak of COVID-19.

"Things had been so good there until then," said Mr. Nevills. "Then COVID happened."

They tried phone calls, but Mr. Nevills had always been suspicious of talking on the phone, so that fell through. "We even tried Zoom," recalled Mr. Nevills. "I set that up, but it didn't work out either." It was all beginning to look like another pandemic-lost cause.

Suddenly the solution became relatively simple—bring Mr. Nevills home to where the doctor could visit and interview him in person. Although the regular doctor could not attend, a second option came to the fore.

"Dr. Jeffery was so good,"



Donna Nevills was an avid quilter before arthritis became too much of a challenge. Nonetheless, the industrious woman created hand-stitched favours to be distributed at the couple's funeral.

photo by Michael Erskine

said Mr. Nevills. "So kind, so patient. Even talking on the phone to mom. She got off the phone and said how nice he was."

The doctor came bearing a clipboard and a paper with a series of checkboxes. He asked Mr. Nevills the questions, but the answers did not come immediately, and the tension became palpable for the family.

"He just asked his questions and calmly went on to each of them down the list when dad didn't answer right away," said Mr.

Nevills.

It seems Dr. Jeffery had carefully examined his patient's file and knew what to expect.

"He was at the end of the checkboxes when dad suddenly looked at him and said, 'I'm ready to go now,'" recalled Mr. Nevills. The last box was checked.

The end was anything but a sombre event. It took place on Valentine's Day, during the 3 pm "coffee break." The conversation around the room was lively and filled with stories and

remembrance. The coffee was great and the cake, cookies and cheese laid out.

"Mom stood up, clapped her hands and said 'time to go'," Ms. Nevills recalled.

The couple then went into the bedroom together and laid down on the bed, holding hands as they so often did during their lifetime together. They were given a sedative designed to put them to sleep.

"The nurse thought they were both asleep and she went to the side of the bed," said Ms. Nevills. "Mom opened her eye and looked at the nurse (a family friend) and said, 'talk to my sister for me.' Then she closed her eye and went to sleep."

The couple's son and daughter-in-law were reluctant to go into the room after death had taken place. "I'm glad I did," said Mr. Nevills.

"I didn't want to go either," said Ms. Nevills. "But I am glad I did."

The sight that greeted the couple when they entered the room was of two people whose faces were at peace.

"They looked like they were sleeping," said Ms. Nevills. "There was no more pain. They both looked calm and at rest."

While most people in the

community have been supportive and respectful toward the couple's children following the MAID, some still have difficulty with the couple's decision. MAID, essentially suicide, brings with it religious and cultural baggage that some individuals simply cannot relinquish—but the biggest challenge for those left behind was the couple's wish to keep their plans

in time to be able to say goodbye, and that they see as being a blessing not afforded to many.

In the end, James and Donna Nevills, after having lived 73 years of wonderful life together, chose to leave a life that had become filled with great pain and even greater stress—and like just about everything else in their long and fruitful lives, they did so on their own terms.

"Together in life—forever together."

The Nevills are survived by their five children, Norris (Rossanne), Brad (Susan), Tim (Marion, predeceased), Joanne (Bill Armstrong) and Brent (Tami). Ms. Nevill's siblings include Margaret Arnold (Harold, predeceased), Glen (predeceased) (Beth), Doris (predeceased) (Jim Strain predeceased) and Phyllis Poth (predeceased). Mr. Nevill's siblings include Irene (Bill Montgomery predeceased), Charlie (Faye), Harry (predeceased) (Jean), Helen (predeceased) (Rod McLean predeceased), Robert (predeceased) (Lois predeceased), Florence (predeceased) (Keith Callaghan predeceased) and Ronnie (predeceased).



Jim Nevills was a proud Legion member who rarely missed an event.

close until after the day.

"A lot of people were upset they did not know about it sooner," said Mr. Nevills, who admits a burden of having known early of his parents' plans and having to honour their wishes. But close family and friends were apprised

Central council approves hiring company to help implement short-term rental bylaw

by Tom Sasvari

MINDEMOYA—By a slim majority vote, Central Manitoulin municipal council has approved hiring a Canadian-based company, Harmari, to assist the municipality with implementing a short-term rental accommodation bylaw at a cost of \$11,000.

"We have been getting many calls from property home owners about their neighbours who have turned their residences into short term rental accommodations (STRs), and that these renters, in many cases, are not obeying the rules, having fires on the beach, partying, dogs running loose on their property and people trespassing onto neighbouring property and other concerns," said Richard Stephens, mayor of Central Manitoulin, after a recent council meeting.

"What is happening is that non-residents are buying up these properties with homes and turning them into rental units, while their neighbours are questioning why they are able to use these units for commercial use in residential zones," explained Mayor Stephens. "Council has agreed that we need a bylaw to put controls on this practice, so that people won't stop buying and renting these places out."

Mayor Stephens pointed out that neither council members nor municipal staff have any experience dealing with this sort of thing. "So, we had directed staff to talk to people in southern Ontario who have dealt with these issues and found a solution to the issue we are dealing with. We don't want to reinvent the wheel, so we talked to other people that have gone through all of this in places like Huntsville and Wasaga beach."

In an overview of the current situation in Central Manitoulin and based on estimates at this time, Harmari research shows that there are 89 accommodations and intermittent listings in Central Manitoulin, with 78 entire home STR listings and 11 shared-home STR listings. The estimated gross revenue per year is \$2,469,827.46. The estimated lodging taxes due per year, which is lost by the municipality (based on 10 percent), is \$246,982.75.

Council passed two motions, one being to accept the short-term rental report as submitted by Harmari, and a second motion to engage Harmari to assist the municipality with its short-term accommodation bylaw implementation as per quotes provided, subject to reference checks.

However, a vote had to be taken with both motions were raised by councillors.

"Does accepting the (Harmari) report mean that we will be in a contract with the company?" asked Councillor Al Tribinevicius.

"In the next motion, we will be considering engaging them," said Mayor Richard Stephens.

Councillor Steve Shaffer explained that the report was prepared by Harmari and is not a report the municipality paid for. "So, what they provided in terms of statistics and information is not 100 percent correct. There are a few inaccuracies in the report."

"I want to make sure we do this right," stated Councillor Derek Stephens. "The motion as it stands doesn't make any sense. We don't currently have a short-term accommodation bylaw in place for this company to assist with its implementation. I just wonder if we're putting the cart before the horse. I would rather have a bylaw in place then

look at engaging the company for their assistance. But we have no bylaw to help them assist us with implementation."

While, "the wording of the motion may be ambiguous, it helps us draft the bylaw with the company providing their assistance, expertise and through webinars held with office staff," said Councillor Shaffer. "The wording could be changed, but waiting for the bylaw to be done and then engaging the company doesn't make any sense and there are other things that they can be doing while we are working on a bylaw. All of this goes hand in hand. We can work with them as we develop the bylaw."

"That is all great, but in their quote (Harmari) doesn't talk about dealing with things like Hipcamp rentals, which we have in the municipality," said Councillor Stephens. "And there are people that rent out bunkies. If we are drafting a bylaw, I would want it to be all inclusive."

"I agree there is an issue with the Hipcamps," said Councillor Shaffer. "I can see a separate bylaw for it, because it's different than shore term accommodation."

"If we are going to wait for a bylaw to be established on short term rental accommodation, it will be a year or a year-and-a-half or more and we will still be arguing all of this," said Councillor Scott. "I think it will be worth it to get this company on side and have them do the research they need to. So, when get a bylaw in place they will be able to assist us. If we wait now we could be looking at a long time in the future on establishing a bylaw."

Mayor Stephens said he felt the municipality has done its due diligence and should move things along, and if they don't "we will lose at least one more tourist accommodation season."

Councillor Al Tribinevicius did not agree with many of the numbers that were posted in the Harmari report and

said Central Manitoulin was being compared to the Grey Highlands area, which has a much larger population, and that the municipality does not have any condominiums which were also included in the report.

The issue of short-term rental accommodation being used extensively in the municipality, "is the number one complaint I've received as a councillor. Yes, some of their (Harmari) dollar figures and other information is off, but they would clarify all of that with the research that they would do, focusing on the municipality. I don't know why we wouldn't proceed," said Councillor Shaffer.

"I agree with both Dale and Steve," said Councillor Rose Diebolt. "For the past 2-4 months, we have been struggling with looking at a bylaw on this issue. We definitely have to do something."

"I'm not saying I'm not confident with the company assisting us, but until our bylaw enforcement officer gets some background on how to write a bylaw on this issue and includes the Hipcamp bookings being written into the bylaw. I don't see anything wrong with waiting another month to for the webinar to be held and then hiring this company to help with a bylaw we don't have," said Councillor Stephens.

Council approved the motions by a vote of 3-2, with Councillors Steve Shaffer, Rose Diebolt and Dale Scott in favour and Councillors Derek Stephens and Al Tribinevicius voting in opposition.

"We will try and include Hipcamps in the bylaw as well," Mayor Stephens told The Expositor after the meeting. He added, "Manitoulin Island is being discovered, and we have people coming for a holiday on Manitoulin and renting out these homes. But we have to protect our community and the people that live here as well."

Planning board approves subdivision change to two-phase plan

by Tom Sasvari

ASSIGINACK—The Manitoulin Planning Board (MPB) has given its approval to the proponent of what had been a proposed 49 lot subdivision between Sunsite Estates and Bay Estates, changing a single phase plan of subdivision to a two-phase plan.

"We have 11 lots that are ready and can be sold, and we will be ready to go with the rest of the lots this summer," Island real estate broker Jordan Chandler. Mr. Chandler is the developer of the project and represents 5026911 Ontario Limited (previously Leah Pezzutto). After meeting with the MPB, Mr. Chandler stated, "this was just an update on the progress we have been making. Basically, we have met all of the conditions for the first 11 lots and are picking away on the second phase. Most of the first 11 lots have been sold."

"The rest of the 38 waterfront lots will then all go up for sale in the second phase of the project," said Mr. Chandler.

The application made by Mr. Chandler on behalf of his client was for the plan of subdivision and a change to conditions of draft approval given February 2021 from a one phase to a two phase plan of subdivision. This is in relation to Lot 22 and Part Lots 23 and 24 and lot 25, Concession VII and Lots 22 through 26, Concession VIII, township

of Sheguiandah in the municipality of Assiginack

The application is for a waterfront subdivision of 49 seasonal residential lots that stretch from Sunsite Estates nearly to the border with the Northeast Town and its Bay Estates subdivision.

Although Sunsite Estates has a water treatment plant, the municipality of Assiginack has not expressed desire to extend the service area of that plant to the new subdivision. Each lot will rely on private septic system and either well or Manitowaning Bay water.

Theresa Carlisle, secretary and treasurer for the MPB told The Expositor, "the planning board had provided its draft approval to this application, and the applicant would need to meet all conditions within three years (from February 2021)," said Ms. Carlisle. "Now the agent has indicated the applicant wants to change the conditions, to go to a two phase subdivision development. Everything is still in draft and there is a ways to go before final approval is given."

For example, Ms. Carlisle said the municipality of Assiginack still has to agree to the closure of the 25th concession road allowance and to provide comments about the road, the water treatment plant and the subdivision agreement.