

The dumbest way to die is without life insurance.

Mio's Furniture Fashions
SINCE 1986

Service before and after the sale... Where else?
Furnishings • Mattresses • Window Coverings • Lighting
261 Trunk Rd. • 759-8183 • 1-800-693-7555

CLICK HERE
for Quality and Service

NEWS LOCAL

Councillor still exploring permit savings options

By Elaine Della-Mattia, Sault Star
Thursday, January 8, 2015 3:40:51 EST PM



Ward 3 city councillor Matthew Shoemaker is continuing to explore options that won't see building permit fees increase 1% as city staff propose.

The newbie councillor raised concerns about the proposed 1% increase to building permit fee charges at a December council meeting.

Shoemaker had said he found the documentation provided to councillors incomplete and wanted questions answered before the matter was voted on.

"I received some clarifications but that has only led to more questions in the process of getting those answers," Shoemaker told The Sault Star Thursday.

The city's engineering and planning department have proposed to increase its building permit fees by 1%, a move that's usually done annually and designed to help keep the fee structure in line with the actual service.

The city conducts about 6,000 inspections per year, which can range from 15 minutes to 1.5 hours, depending on the type of inspection and the size of the building being reviewed.

Shoemaker said while a 1% increase doesn't seem high in the whole scheme of things, it may be to builders considering larger developments in Sault Ste. Marie.

"I want to be able to determine whether there can be a 1% savings somewhere in the numbers. There were a number of unclear line items on the spreadsheet we were provided and I received some clarification but I believe a 1% savings can be found.

Jerry Dolcetti, commissioner of engineering and planning, said the city's building permit fees are amongst the lowest in Northern Ontario.

While other communities charge \$10 per \$1,000 of building value, Sault Ste. Marie's numbers equate to \$6.60 per \$1,000 of building value.

"If we don't increase our fees, then we don't increase our revenue and we end up depleting our reserves," Dolcetti said.

He said revenue from the building fees dropped substantially in 2014 from the year prior, mainly because larger building projects had been completed and permits issued.

"There's not a whole lot of stuff coming in the books for the next little while," Dolcetti said.

Shoemaker is inquiring whether that savings can be found in the department through the vehicles it purchased in 2013.

The six vehicles were acquired by the building department after leases were completed by the city police department and the Dodge Chargers were purchased inexpensively and modified, Dolcetti said.

"We were losing our inspectors to other communities after we educate and certify them because they're the only professionals without company vehicles and the mileage we were paying didn't compensate them for the 4,000 to 5,000 km they put on them yearly and the wear and tear on the vehicle," he said. "This put them on an equal playing field with other inspectors."

Dolcetti argues that the lengthy and ongoing certification process for building inspectors and equipping them with company vehicles is common practice in the industry.

He counters that the move has saved the city between \$3,000 and \$5,000 and the vehicles can be used for another five years.

Shoemaker said that he's not convinced the company vehicles were a wise decision.

"I'm not sure if this would save money or not but I'm not convinced the (company) vehicles are a net benefit," he said.

Shoemaker said he still has time to continue his investigation before he determines whether he will pen a motion for Monday's city council meeting.

"I'm not sure yet what course of action I will take. I imagine the building department wants it back on the agenda because they wanted the increase to start Jan. 1 but I want to make sure we make the right decision, not just a decision because it's timely," he said.

Antigua All Inclusive
vacations.aircanada.com/Antigua
Flight + Hotel = Perfect Holiday. Aeroplan Miles,
Free Seat Selection

Reader's comments »

If you already have an account on this newspaper, you can login to the newspaper to add your comments.

By adding a comment on the site, you accept our terms and conditions and our netiquette rules.

Comments for this thread are now closed.



0 Comments

Sault Star

 Login ▾

Sort by Newest ▾

Share  Favorite 

Be the first to comment.

 Subscribe

 Add Disqus to your site

 Privacy