

North Bay can be an ideal community as we enjoy the strength of a vibrant community set in one of the most beautiful parts of Ontario; just north enough to be perfect. North Bay must see growth in order to maintain the levels of service, the care in our community and the management of our clean air and water. The reality is that costs increase every year and we must generate enough revenue to maintain our lifestyle and ensure that these increases are not borne by the same group of ratepayers over and over again. We also must ensure that these revenues are well managed.

Economic development is the singular key to community growth. We must look at every opportunity that crosses our path and we must involve the community's entrepreneurial leaders to help us identify opportunities to explore. We have brilliant business leaders, we have brilliant retirees with a wealth of experience and we have brilliant youth. We need to tap into those resources.

Although economic development is critical, it requires due diligence on what is best for the community. The risks and rewards must be carefully weighed. Development at any cost is not acceptable and should never be encouraged.

The municipality has a responsibility for effective oversight and due diligence on any new project, but we also have a responsibility to provide information to the public on all aspects. Negativity thrives in a vacuum. It is the municipality's role to educate the public, ask the tough questions of the proponents and ensure that any project will benefit the community both financially and socially.

submitted by Mark King