



A Year in Review and A Year Yet to Come

Mayor John Maloney

December 2016

2016 was a very busy year in the City of Port Colborne. Both industrial and residential development have been expanding helping to grow our assessment and provide additional tax revenue. City Council has been very proactive in maintaining our core infrastructure such as roads, bridges, sidewalks, sewers and water lines.

2016 also had City Council continuing to tackle the softer issues in the city such as health, social services, recreation and arts and culture.

Below are some of our successes in 2016:

With Council deciding to continue the freeze on development charges, the city is on course to see about 30 new housing starts by the end of the year, making 2016 the best year in recent memory. This is double the number of housing starts in 2015. This coincides with the city completing the sale of the remaining CMT school lots, the opening of sales for the Westwood Estates Phase II subdivision and the new 8-unit townhouse complex by Gateway Residential & Community Support Services.

Allied Marine & Industrial completed the renovation and additions to its building on Lake Road. With assistance from the city, the Region's Gateway Economic Zone and Centre Incentive Program and the Province of Ontario, Allied was able to complete this move, retaining jobs in the community and adding to the city's industrial tax base.

The year proved to be strong for tourism in the city with traffic at the city's visitor information centre up by over 15% compared to 2015 and 33% over 2014 numbers. The city has also embarked on a partnership with the two Business Improvement Areas in the city with a program to bring tour buses back to the city. Strong interest in Port Colborne as a destination for day trip coach tours was shown at an industry tradeshow and staff anticipate tour buses returning to the city in summer 2017, bringing new customers to downtown and Main Street.

Construction started on a new water tower on Barrick Road, which will replace the current water tower at King and Sugarloaf Streets. The new water tower is the first part in a multi-stage, multi-year project to extend water and wastewater services to a new industrial park along Hwy 140. Design of the east side employment lands is finalized and will await the completion of the new regional water trunk main under the Welland Canal that is expected to be built in 2020.

Construction began on the new Operations Centre on Killaly Street West. This centre will amalgamate staff from the Operations and Engineering Departments into one building. Construction is expected to be complete by May 2017.

Water main replacement was completed in the Lakeshore Road West/Bayview Lane neighbourhood after lengthy archaeological exploration and excavation.

Replacement of frozen water services from the bitter winter of 2015/2016 continue and new methods are being used to hopefully prevent future freezing.

5,500 water meters were replaced at a cost of about \$2,100,000. These meters can be read remotely, thereby reducing costs, and if a resident has a high water bill, we can download data to review usage patterns.

2,000 streetlights were replaced with new L.E.D. lights. The city received an incentive grant of over \$240,000 toward the project and the anticipated lower maintenance costs and power savings have proved to be substantial.

Two playgrounds were upgraded and replaced ensuring the safety of our children. New year-round, outdoor exercise equipment was installed at the T. A. Lannan Sports Complex. This sports complex continues to be a hub of activity for families, whether outside playing soccer and baseball or inside the Vale Health & Wellness Centre participating in programs offered by the YMCA, the city, skating, hockey, and bocce. Interesting to note, the city was awarded the Athletic Business Facilities of Merit Award for the Vale Health & Wellness Centre's design.

The Ted "Teeder" Kennedy banner came home to the Vale Health & Wellness Centre for the Centennial Anniversary of the Toronto Maple Leafs, a further link to our sports history.

The Sugarloaf Marina saw a record number of boaters this season with our hot summer and beautiful fall. We had approximately 40 new seasonal slip holders with an increase in transient numbers as well. The marina is embarking on a comprehensive dredging plan in partnership with the Region of Niagara under their Waterfront Enhancement Strategy.

The Roselawn Centre for the Arts was busy throughout the year. Showboat Festival Theatre had such a great year, they have decided to extend their 2017 season from four weeks to eight weeks. The Friends of Roselawn continue to work on the capital campaign to help with needed renovations.

Two committees of council were formed this year to advise Council on how to address the social determinants of health in our community and to bring positive change to the East Village. Partnering with social agencies, Niagara Regional Police, Justice Niagara, community volunteers, city staff, and councillors have met and started to develop constructive strategies to deal with these issues.

Completion of the Age-Friendly Needs Assessment in Port Colborne has reassured us that the Senior Citizen's Advisory Council is on the right track with their Strategic Plan for the community and ensuring the interest of seniors will be considered in municipal programs.

A devastating fire at the end of the year that claimed four lives brought the community together and reminded us all of the importance of fire prevention safety. We owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to our firefighters, police and all first responders for their efforts on the City's behalf.

All of these points confirm that 2016 has been a very busy and productive year of activity that City Council has helped to guide.

Looking forward to 2017 and beyond:

The former home of Allied Marine and Industrial will be redeveloped for residential and commercial uses, seeing potential and exciting new investment on West Street, thereby extending the West Street promenade south to Sugarloaf Street.

With the completion of the new Operations Centre on Killaly Street West, the St. Lawrence Seaway Management Corporation will be able to redevelop Wharf 18 for new industrial and shipping purposes.

The housing boom is anticipated to continue in 2017 with two multi-unit residential buildings anticipated to be built and developers exploring opportunities to expand residential subdivisions.

Replacement of all storm sewers will take place in the East Village, thereby reducing the risk of flooding in that area.

Plans are underway to celebrate Canada's 150th birthday. The Museum is currently undertaking an Oral History Project interviewing about 25 residents about growing up in Port Colborne. This project will culminate in February when the residents meet with local high school students to discuss their histories. A book will be created documenting these histories as well.

Heritage Days – the ten days leading up to Canada Day – will be filled with activities around the city. Some of the proposed ideas include a Fashion Show at Port Colborne High School; the unveiling of the cornerstone from Centennial Pool; Heritage Cruise Nights, and Red and White Garden Tour. On July 1st under the guidance of the Optimist Club, there will be a day of family activities, music, and fun at H. H. Knoll Lakeview Park. If you have any ideas you would like to share about how you would like to celebrate Canada's 150th birthday, email them to pccanada150@portcolborne.ca.

Planning continues on the activities for Canal Days which has turned out to be one of the premiere festivals in Ontario. The relocation of our fall festival, "flavours", to the grounds of the Roselawn Centre has created a wonderful ambiance for the future. The Roselawn Centre continues to be a hidden gem for our city as a volunteer committee continues to work on improvements and renovations.

Our sportsmen continue to enjoy the 444 International Walleye Tournament which will be complimented in August with the Berkley B1 Canadian Fishing Championship, a national event with competitors such as Bob Izumi. The Berkley B1 Group proposes to be a major boost to sport fishing tourism and enhance the recognition of the City of Port Colborne as an "Ultimate Fishing Town" destination.

Port Colborne has joined with municipalities in the Region to make a bid for the 2021 Canada Summer Games. If successful on the bid, cycling competitions would be centred in our community with events beginning and ending at H.H. Knoll Lakeview Park.

As Council enters into the latter part of our mandate, we will undertake a strategic planning session to map out the direction of the community for the next several years.

City Council continually strives to make our community even better. Activities, new and old, make our city a wonderful place to reside, work and play.