

February 26, 2010



City Council Committee Report

To: Mayor & Council

Fr: Heather Kasprick, Deputy Clerk

Re: Veteran Plate Parking

Recommendation:

THAT Council of the City of Kenora amend by-law number 66-2006, Section 3.1 to reflect "Special Regulation" a vehicle displaying an Ontario Veteran's license plate in accordance with the definition contained in this by-law shall be exempt from the provisions of municipal parking lot fees on June 6th (D-Day), September 17th (Anniversary of the Battle of Britain) and November 11th (Remembrance Day) as set out in Schedule A of by-law number 66-2006; and further

THAT Council amend the Comprehensive Traffic By-Law number 127-2001, as amended, to regulate veteran plate parking; and further

THAT By-Law number 29-2006 is hereby repealed for this purpose.

Background:

Originally on March 13, 2006 Council of the City of Kenora adopted By-Law Number 30-2006 which adopted regulations concerning Veteran Plate Parking. This by-law, Section 3.1 added a special regulation which allowed a vehicle displaying an Ontario Veteran's license plate in accordance with the definition contained in this by-law shall be exempt from the provisions of municipal parking lot fees as set out in Schedule A of by-law number 18-2002.

The By-Law Enforcement staff have advised me that these plates continue to be problematic with Veteran plates occupying parking stalls for more than the time limit, and a general abuse with the use of Veteran plates. There are a few Veteran plates that are part of our downtown daily parking, parking all day in the same location and not moving, without paying because they have a Veteran plate. Although currently these plates do allow them to park free of charge at a meter, they must still comply with the by-law that regulates the maximum length of time at any one meter at any given time.

For your information, the issuance of Ontario veteran licence plates is not limited to the wartime veterans but, in fact, includes any person who has served, and who may still be serving, in the Canadian Armed Forces, both Regular Forces and Reserve Forces, for three years or more, or who has served in NATO operations or as a member of a United Nations Peacekeeping Force, either as a member of the Canadian Forces, or as a member of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police or as a member of any other Canadian police force or as a member of an allied force. It is estimated that there are tens of thousands of active or retired Armed Forces personnel in the Province who are eligible, or who will become eligible in the near future, to obtain an Ontario veteran licence plate. Consequently the potential revenue losses associated with a permanent, year round, parking fee exemption respecting Ontario veteran plate holders will continue to rise.

It should also be noted that the Province, when creating the graphic veteran licence plate, did not intend that municipalities would implement special parking privileges for veteran licence plate holders. Accordingly, the broadest possible definition of the word "veteran" was employed in developing the eligibility criteria attendant to the subject licence plate. Should the Province modify their veteran licence plate program such that the issuance of veteran licence plates is limited to wartime veterans or should the Province introduce a distinctive licence plate available only to wartime veterans, it would be feasible to revisit the matter and consider appropriate enhancements to the proposed parking fee exemption in favour of said wartime veterans.

Researching other communities, it has been determined that many municipalities exempt Ontario veteran licence plate holders from the payment of municipal parking fees either for one or several days in the year, rather than the whole year. Many exempt on June 6th (D-Day), September 17th (Anniversary of the Battle of Britain) and November 11th (Remembrance Day) as an acknowledgement of their service to our Country and to facilitate their participation in local Remembrance Day ceremonies. This gesture, as a token of the City's regard, could be implemented without the year round disruption of customer parking that a full-time exemption has created. The Town of Fort Frances, The City of Dryden and the City of Thunder Bay do not honour veteran plates for any exemption to any parking rates for any period of the year. Some municipalities initially implemented the full exemption and moved to a one, two or three day exemption instead.

Budget: N/A

Communication Plan/Notice By-law Requirements:

Public awareness through local media