

**February 8, 2011**



## **City Council Committee Report**

**To: Mayor & Council**

**Fr: Heather Kasprick, Deputy Clerk**

**Re: Veteran Plate Parking**

### **Recommendation:**

**THAT** Council of the City of Kenora maintains the revision of the Veterans plate parking privilege being exempt from the provisions of municipal parking lot fees on June 6<sup>th</sup> (D-Day), September 17<sup>th</sup> (Anniversary of the Battle of Britain) and November 11<sup>th</sup> (Remembrance Day) as passed by by-law number 44-2010.

### **Background:**

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. It was adopted to reflect the "Year of the Veteran's".

In January 2010, Council requested administration to review the downtown parking complaints along with the problems surrounding various parking issues. At this time, the By-Law Enforcement staff advised that there continued to be problems with Veteran plates occupying parking stalls for more than the allowable time limit, and a general abuse with the use of Veteran plates. A few examples of this would include spouses or children of the Veteran using the plate as well as parking all day in the same location and not moving, without paying because they have a Veteran plate. Prior to changing the by-law the Veteran plates allowed them to park free of charge at a meter, however, they did not 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 would have continued 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.

When I researched other communities, it was 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 6<sup>th</sup> (D-Day), September 17<sup>th</sup> (Anniversary of the Battle of Britain) and November 11<sup>th</sup> (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.

On March 15, 2010 Council passed a by-law amending the exemption from Veterans plates based on the above information. The amendment went from full exemption for Veterans plates at any time, at any metered location, to exemption for the following days: June 6<sup>th</sup> (D-Day), September 17<sup>th</sup> (Anniversary of the Battle of Britain) and November 11<sup>th</sup> (Remembrance Day).

Council has received a letter from the Royal Canadian Legion in Kenora requesting that Council reinstate the free parking privileges for Veteran plate holders at meters, and I was requested to provide the background information to Council on this matter for consideration.

**Budget: N/A**

**Communication Plan/Notice By-law Requirements:**