



EMERGENCY SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING

AGENDA

Wednesday, November 25, 2020 – Immediately following the Waste Management Committee Meeting

ZOOM MEETING

You Tube Channel: South Algonquin Council

Open Meeting/Call to order

1. Additions/Amendments to the Agenda
2. Adoption of the Agenda
3. Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest
4. Unfinished Business
5. New Business
 - Fire Permit (Staff Report)

Adjournment

NOTE: Submissions received from the public, either orally or in writing, may become part of the public record.

STAFF REPORT

Meeting Date: 25 November 2020

Agency: Township of South Algonquin

Staff Contact: Fire Chief Don Kruger

Agenda Title: Fire permits

Agenda Action:

Recommendation

Township change to an electronic Fire Permit system. Recommend we use Burnpermits.com system.

Background

The current system for residents wanting to have a fire is that they must phone or email the fire chief prior to having a fire. If the notification is via email, then there is a record but if the notification is done over the phone that is not always possible.

A number of municipalities have switched to online fire permits to reduce paper and ease of tracking.

Analysis

I am suggesting that we issue a proper permit that is good for the calendar year. We can issue them for free for the first two years and then in the third year we would start charging for them, residents pay a nominal fee (\$10-\$20), and the permit would be issued and good for the year. Burning rules as laid out in the burning by-law are included on the permit and it can also be noted on the permit that it is the property owners responsibility to be sure that there is no fire ban or burning restrictions in place.

Having an online system would allow for the township to track where fires are happening, if we were to use an online system, Township residents could log on to the website and do their own reporting. This eliminates the need to call the fire chief, whether it is for a campfire or burning brush. It also puts the onus on the property owner to stay current on the fire danger rating. This application also allows us to send out notifications to residents as well, if there is a fire ban in place for example.

Permits can be issued by office staff if residents cannot access online. Everything still completed online but from the office by staff.

The Burnpermits.com system provides the website and a local phone number for residents to use and access permits and print off a copy of their permit and a copy of the burning by-law(s). The system would track when the residents are burning allowing the Fire Department to review the information and if necessary, prevent someone from having a fire.

The website is maintained by the company, but the Township would have access to locate and review information, add fees, or deny a permit to someone.

Allowing the property owners to use the system for free for a year or two would allow them to become familiar with how it works and let us provide information. Waiting would allow the Township to track usage and determine the fee amount we think would be best.

Alternatives

Status quo.

Strategic Plan

Not specifically addressed, if system implemented as suggested there could be some financial gain.

Fiscal Impact

Set up time and minimal time when permits are issued that could be offset by the fee charged to issue the permits. Could end up being a (small) source of revenue for the township/fire department. The least expensive system that the Fire Chief has researched so far is called Burnpermits.com. They set up a website and residents would use that website to log fires and request permits. This system works on a credit system and based on our needs would cost us \$500 and that fee would cover start up and sustain us for two possibly three years before we would need to purchase additional credits. If we start charging a fee for the permits (after the second or third year), after the service is implemented, we will recoup our costs and would start to turn a profit.

Consultations

Fire Chief spoke with representatives from Burnpermits.com and Firepermit.online, District Chiefs Aurel Thom and John Stubbs.

Attachments

<https://burnpermits.com/>





BurnPermits.com Information Package

Fluent IMS

PO Box 580,

Brockville, Ontario, Canada

1-855-358-3684

sales@fluentims.com

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OVERVIEW



BurnPermits.com was designed to:

- 1) Automate a typically paper-based system in order to reduce the amount of un-billable time spent distributing permits.
- 2) Aid in fire prevention through increased flow of communication between the fire department and the public.

By utilizing our burn permit system, you will not only be automating many of your tedious tasks, but you will also see a substantial increase in compliance by providing an online option.

Ultimately, public education and fire prevention are at the forefront of **BurnPermits.com!**

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The Problem

Burn permit distribution and fire prevention can take up valuable time and effort. Whether it is manually reviewing mountains of paperwork or driving around the municipality to ensure all burn ban signs are in place.

Our integrative and automated system has proven to:

- Instantly free up time and boost productivity by eliminating paperwork and mundane administrative tasks;
- Give you real-time information about who is actively burning in your area;
- Raise overall compliance by providing an easy-to-use application process, making information easier to access;
- Substantially increase the number of permits distributed to the public;
- Reduce the amount of walk-in traffic in municipal buildings.



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Key Features - Snapshot

1

Automated Call-In System

Residents call a local or toll free number from any phone and an automated system indicates the risk level status and allows residents to register their intent to burn. Every call is logged in our system and presented to you in the IMS Admin portal showing you who is burning.

2

Online Burn Registration

Every step of the permit registration process, from providing account details to making payments can be completed online. Residents can also register their intent to burn online rather than using the call-in system.

3

Burn Mapping

Your entire fire department, or specific members, can see at a glance where permitted burns are taking place, saving valuable time and manpower from going to waste on false alarms.

4

Customization

Our system can be modified to suit the needs of your fire department. If you have any additional data you require residents to provide (i.e., Township roll number), we can make it happen.

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Key Features - Snapshot

5

Risk Level

Our system provides a means of informing residents of the current burn risk level and the proper guidelines for each level. In addition to this, the system makes it easy to communicate a burn ban via our mass notification feature.

6

Mass Notifications

BurnPermits.com makes it easy to communicate with your residents. You have the ability to send mass notifications to all account holders via text message, email or automated phone call.

7

Full Control

With our system, you gain the ability to prevent a burn from being registered during a ban. You also have the ability to revoke permits and prevent permits from being registered to specific areas of your township.

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Top-Notch Security

Every part of the online system is protected. Our servers are located in a secure data centre, as well as protected with multiple layers of security so your resident's data is kept safe.

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Flexible Plans to Suit Every Budget

You can decide whether you buy just enough credits for the permits and notifications you need – or whether you stock up and save for future use. The more you buy, the less each credit costs; and they never expire, so they'll always be there when you need them.

Credits Purchased	Base Price	Discount	Discounted Price
5,000	\$500.00	0.0%	\$500.00
10,000	\$1,000.00	2.5%	\$975.00
15,000	\$1,500.00	5.0%	\$1,425.00
20,000	\$2,000.00	7.5%	\$1,850.00
25,000	\$2,500.00	10.0%	\$2,250.00
50,000	\$5,000.00	20.0%	\$4,000.00
75,000	\$7,500.00	30.0%	\$5,250.00
100,000	\$10,000.00	40.0%	\$6,000.00

How Our Credit System Works

Public Website:	FREE
Inbound Call/Burn Registration:	1 Credit
Outbound Alert:	1 Credit
Automated Permit:	10 Credits

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Key Features - In Depth

Automated Call-In System

Using BurnPermits.com, residents are required to call into the automated phone system before they burn. The reasoning is twofold:

1. It ensures that residents are receiving the most up-to-date information regarding the Municipality's risk level. Residents receive a clear message outlining what is expected of them during their burn.
2. Integration with Who's Responding and the Admin Portal. With every registered burn, an indicator will appear on a map, communicating to Fire Personnel that an active burn is taking place at a specific address.



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Key Features - In Depth

Online Burn Registration

Residents may also register their intent to burn online.

The same information communicated to residents via the automated call-in system is provided online when they register their burn. Again, residents are informed of the risk level status and any other important information you deem necessary for the resident to agree to.

Mass Notifications

The Fire Chief or Designate can send out mass alerts to all residents/permit holders to provide vital information, at any time. You can also filter the mass alert by a variety of parameters in order to reach a targeted group of the population.

Residents can receive notifications via:

- Text Message;
- Email; or
- Phone Call.



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Key Features - In Depth

Zoning

BurnPermits.com has the ability to restrict certain permit types based on geographic zone.

If there is a downtown core where no burning is allowed, or only certain types of permits are allowed, the system will communicate this requirement to the resident when they are completing their permit application.

Additionally, in the event that residents violate the terms and conditions of their permit, you can create a restricted zone around someone's address to prevent them from applying for permits in the future. These do not have to be viewable on the public website.



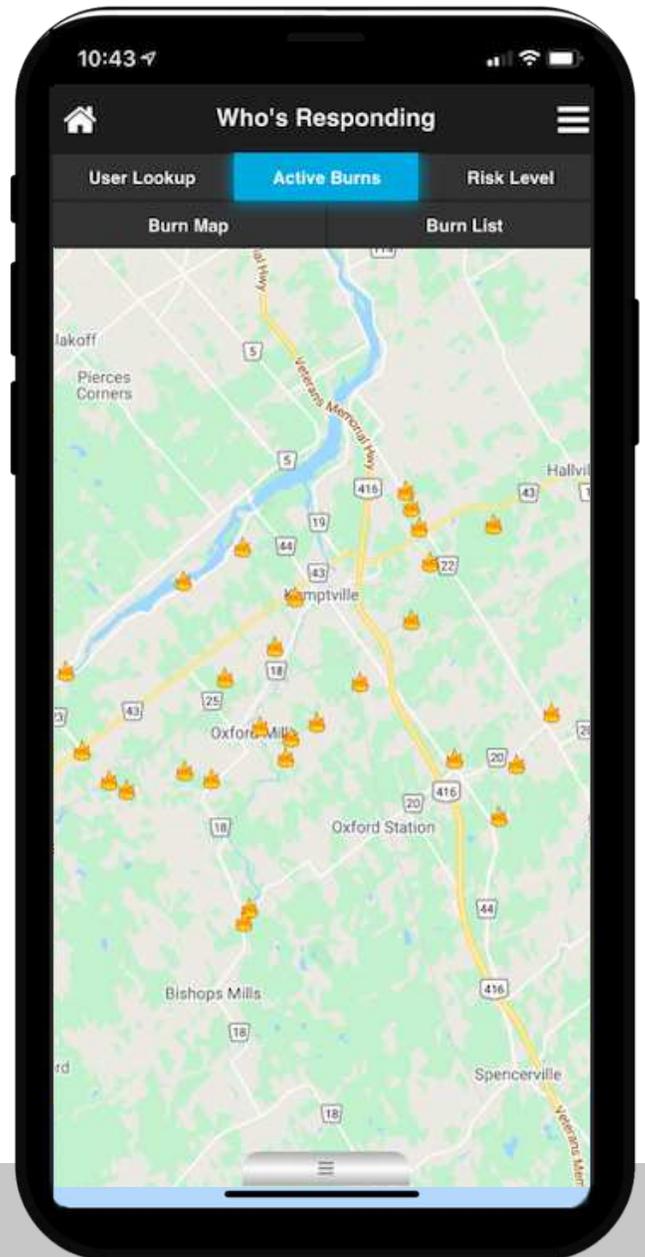
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Who's Responding Integration

Valid Fire Personnel can search among all accounts for valid permits based on resident name, address or geographic area from their **Who's Responding App**.

Also, admins can change the risk level right from their phone without having to log into the admin portal. All information is saved and reflected back to the public through the automated call-in system and the public website.

Moreover, responding personnel can quickly get a visual of active burns in the area with access to the active burns map



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Frequently Asked Questions



**Some of our residents don't have computers!
How do they use this system?**

They can come into the office and register just as they would before. You can enter their information into the system yourself through the IMS Admin Control Panel. They can then call in with their registered phone number whenever they are burning.

Can permits be submitted for approval before being issued?

Yes. Applications can be submitted for approval where residents will not be presented with a permit PDF until approval is received.

How can residents pay for their permits?

We have two options for accepting payment:

- 1) Square and;
- 2) PayPal

Residents can then pay with their credit card.

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Frequently Asked Questions

The funds that are received through Square or PayPal, how are these handled?

We do not touch any of the funds that go through the payment processing system. The funds go directly from the resident to your Square or PayPal account. From your Square or PayPal account, you can transfer your funds to your municipal bank account with ease.



Are there any fees associated with Square or PayPal?

The payment processing provider will charge 2.9% + \$0.30 per transaction for any transaction completed through the online payment window.

Is the system capable of distributing free permits?

Yes. The system can accommodate free permits. The pricing measure can be easily changed if in the future you decide to start charging for permits.

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Frequently Asked Questions

What do we need to do for the automated phone system?

We use a state-of-the-art cloud-based system to make and receive phone calls. We will provide a local or toll-free number. The phone system operates through a digital phone number, that uses the internet (VOIP). We take care of everything remotely, removing the need for additional hardware or phone lines.

What kind of alerts can be sent?

You can send an alert for anything you need to inform your residents of: when there is a change to the risk level, a ban is in effect, changes to pricing, promotions, etc. Residents will receive a text message, phone call or email with your message. You will also be able to control who receives the message by permit type, permit status, geographical location, etc.



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Frequently Asked Questions

Can we use our existing phone number?

At this time, it is not possible to directly use an existing number with our system. We would recommend that you have calls to your existing number forwarded to the number that we assign you, and advise your residents to use the new number.

How customizable are the permits? Can we distribute more than one type?

Permits can be customized from the terms and conditions to the approval method to the varied prices. You can also have as many permit types distributed through the system as you need.

For mass alerting, are credits charged on a per person basis?

Credits are charged on a per notification basis. So, if a resident signs up to receive texts and emails, then it will cost 2 credits to alert them.



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Frequently Asked Questions

Do residents need to renew their permits? How often?

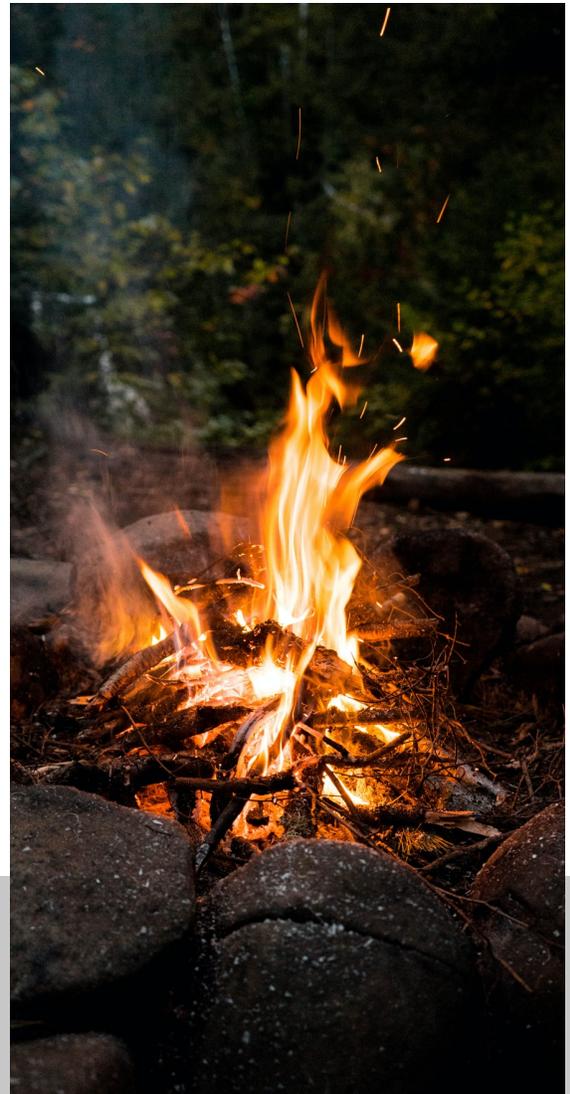
The system is adaptable and can be customized to make the transfer to a new permit distribution method easy. If residents are required to renew their permit every calendar year or if permits expire after 2 weeks, **BurnPermits.com** will be able to support it.

Do residents need to create a new account every time?

No. Residents only need to create an account once. When they go back to renew their permit or get a new one, they simply log back into their account and go through the application process again.

Is there a free trial to determine if BurnPermits.com will suit our needs?

Absolutely! We want to ensure that **BurnPermits.com** is the best solution for you. We can create a demo account with full access to all features for your department.



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Contact Us!



1-855-358-3684

Monday to Friday

8:30am - 5:00pm



sales@fluentims.com



www.burnpermits.com



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