

A look back and a look ahead: LaSalle in 2017 and '18

“You feel like you’re home when you come here.” That is what LaSalle Mayor Ken Antaya experiences every time he comes home to LaSalle. Born and raised in the town, Antaya feels the community has a “calming” effect on anyone who visits. According to Antaya, that is thanks to the “common vision” of LaSalle’s staff and Council to “make it what we want it to be.”

In 2017, the employees of the Town of LaSalle, along with the LaSalle Council set a number of goals to accomplish for the year.

One of the biggest goals was to maintain and improve the town’s infrastructure. According to Antaya, LaSalle is a unique community in that focus lies not only on what can be seen above ground, but also on what is hidden below, including sewer systems, lighting and roadwork.

“I find that’s probably the biggest shortfall of some communities,” said Antaya. “They don’t pay attention to what’s underground. It’s all about planning, planning, planning. And when you’re done planning, you plan for more.”

LaSalle also put a focus on strategic planning and promoting the town as a wonderful place to live. However, Antaya feels the biggest achievement for 2017 was one that was set in motion years ago; the new transit system, which covers about 70 per cent of LaSalle’s urban area, using two buses to cover one expansive route.

“It makes our community more mobile,” said Antaya. “It gives them an option and it makes our town a little more attractive.”

Despite its successes, 2017 was not without its challenges. One of the greatest tests the town faced was over the issue of community policing versus policing by the Ontario Provincial Police. But Antaya wants to reassure the community that LaSalle is dedicated to providing community policing for its residents.

“It’s part of the autonomy of our community,” he said. “We don’t want to rely on other services, we want to be able to control what’s going on within our borders.”

So, what’s ahead for LaSalle in 2018? Budget deliberations concluded on December 13 in which LaSalle Council approved a 2018 Municipal Tax Rate increase of one per cent in principle. There will also be some staff shakeups due to current LaSalle staff planning to retire or leave the town in the new year. Those positions will be filled with current town employees. And, perhaps the biggest part of 2018 is the upcoming LaSalle Council election.

“We have methodically moved through 2017 and we anticipate the same thing will happen in 2018,” said Antaya. “But I also suspect it’s going to slow down a bit mid-year when the election starts taking hold. We’re going to worry about what we can and just move on.”

Overall, Antaya is “very proud” of the accomplishments of the staff and council of the Town of LaSalle and is looking forward to seeing what 2018 brings.

For more information about the town and the upcoming election, visit www.lasalle.ca.