

Township of Muskoka Lakes
1 Bailey Street
P.O. Box 129
Port Carling, ON P0B 1J0

August 11, 2021

Dear Chair Bridgeman and Members of Planning Committee,

**Re: ZBA-08/21, By-law 2021-034, Algonquin International Corporation, Part of Lot 11,
Concession 5, Part 1, Plan 35R-8234, (Monck), Roll #9-2-002-01**

The Muskoka Lakes Association (MLA) has reviewed the application for the above Zoning By-law Amendment for 1512 Muskoka Road 118 West, including: the proposal for the Canadian Raceboat Hall of Fame; Planning Staff's reports of May 13th and August 12th; related studies and impact assessments prepared for the applicant; and correspondence received by the Township.

The MLA advocates for strong environmental standards and forward-thinking land use and development planning that respects and protects the unique character of Muskoka's communities. We also value the historical importance of boating to the heritage of our area and its economy.

The MLA believes that a museum on Canada's race boat history would highlight an interesting aspect of this heritage. When this application came before committee on May 13th, Staff commented: "Given the unique nature and scale of the proposed development, staff have recommended that a decision on the application be deferred so that any public and agency comments can be received and addressed as necessary."

Many comments received from the public, including MLA members, support the museum and special events centre and the tourism and economic activity it is expected to draw. However, many other comments – in particular, neighbours in the rural and waterfront area – oppose this proposal, particularly a special events centre in this location. Public comments are well summarized in Staff's August 12th report, and we understand that additional public comments will be made at the August 12th Committee meeting.

Some supporters have drawn a comparison between this venue and Gravenhurst's successful Muskoka Discovery Centre (MDC). However, we note that the MDC is distinguishable from this application because the MDC is zoned commercial special purpose and is located within an urban designation alongside restaurants, retail stores, entertainment, and tourist establishments.

The MLA supports staff's observations in their May 13th and August 12th reports in three key areas:

1. The importance of ensuring compatibility with the Official Plan with regard to Rural Areas, scenic corridor and character;
2. The proposed increase in lot coverage from 5% to 8.1% by adding an accessory building of 604 square meters with augmented parking, giving rise to specialized requirements for sewage treatment and stormwater management; we note that this is particularly important in light of the 2020 blue-green algae in Boyd Bay which resulted in the bay being listed by OPA 50 as an 'at risk' water body in Schedule E2 of the District's Official Plan in May 2021, requiring special protection; and
3. The importance of ensuring adequate buffering and screening to protect the rural and waterfront residential experience of neighbours and the Rural Area's scenic character.

The volume and quality of runoff must be carefully managed from this site and redevelopment provides an opportunity to provide treatment of stormwater where there is little to no treatment today. This has been recognized in the Stormwater Management and Construction Mitigation Plan by Pinestone Engineering Ltd. (2021). The plan as presented does not specifically address nutrients, a key consideration for blue green algae. Further, it selects measures – oil grit separators that require routine maintenance, something we question the commitment from the owner to maintain. Storm water controls like that only work effectively when continuously maintained and could soon be providing no treatment. Low impact development measures have been proven effective to reduce the volume of runoff and reduce contaminants such as sediment and nutrients reaching the receiving water body. We encourage the township to require these measures on the site for their low maintenance, aesthetic value and cooling potential of the asphalt and runoff.

Finally, the plan acknowledges salt from winter operations and asserts that salt runoff would be less than municipal roads. This is not always the case with private maintenance contractors and owners concerned with slips and falls.

The owner should find Smart About Salt trained providers and is encouraged to ensure judicious application as salt concentrations are also on the rise in the lakes.

The Township is encouraged to apply the most stringent storm water management measures to the site given the downstream sensitivity of Boyd Bay.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment, and for your ongoing commitment and dedication to protecting Muskoka's natural environment and character.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Deborah Martin-Downs". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Deborah Martin-Downs B.E.S., M.Sc., Ph.D.
President

Cc: David Pink, Director of Development Services and Environmental Sustainability