



Welcome to April 2016 NewsBites –

Flood/Ice Damage - The MLA hopes that our numerous e-blast updates regarding the recent flooding throughout Muskoka have been helpful. According to the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry's (MNR) latest notice, water levels are still a concern; although levels may be dropping currently. A close watch on local conditions and weather forecasts from Environment Canada is recommended. Environment Canada bulletins can be found [here](#). The Surface Water Monitoring Centre public webpage can be found [here](#). MNR's Flood Forecasting and Warning Program website can be found [here](#).

For photos of the flooding throughout Muskoka, see [here](#) and [here](#).

Given this urgent matter, the MLA has formed an emergency task force, which we are calling the MLA Water Level Management Task Force. Action must be taken today to address the flood, and a plan must be developed to avoid this in the future. That is what we will be driving towards on your behalf. Please reference the April 11th, 2016 MLA eblast for more information on the task force.

On April 11th, CTV News Barrie showed footage of the flooding in and around the Muskoka Lakes. Township of Muskoka Lakes Fire Chief, Richard Hayes states that "Our hope is that within the next week, we should start to see some relief of this higher water." See [here](#) and [here](#).

The MLA strongly recommends that you visit your property to check for any flood/ice damage and to ensure your valuables are properly secured. If you are unable to do so, please make arrangements to have someone else check your property.

See further information under Township of Muskoka Lakes re permits for repairs to docks and bathhouses due to water/ice damage.

Hydro One dedicates \$20 million to Muskoka/Parry Sound – According to a recent news story, Hydro One has announced \$20 million for improving Parry Sound and Muskoka district's power reliability. The investment will go towards clearing, annual maintenance and upgrades to more than 1,000-km of lines on Hydro One's electricity distribution system. It's estimated more than 40,000 Hydro One customers in the area will benefit from this funding. The full story can be found [here](#). ***With residents experiencing increasing power outages due to unexpected storms, this announcement is a welcome one.***

MLA's Annual General Meeting Guest Speaker – Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC) is the largest assessment jurisdiction in North America, responsible for accurately assessing and classifying more than five million properties in Ontario. Every four years MPAC reviews and updates property assessments in Ontario. On July 11th, MPAC will be sending out updated property assessment notices for Muskoka/Parry Sound. The MLA is pleased to announce that a representative from MPAC will be our guest speaker for our Annual General Meeting this summer. The speaker will guide the audience through the process of property evaluations and be on-hand after the presentation to answer any questions. ***The MLA hopes you will reserve Friday, July 22nd to attend our AGM.***

DISTRICT OF MUSKOKA

Muskoka Watershed Council's presentation re Climate Change –At District Council's March 21st meeting, Dr. Peter Sale, Past Chair of the Muskoka Watershed Council (MWC), presented a report on planning for climate change in Muskoka. His presentation highlighted local research that illustrates how Muskoka's climate has changed and predicted changes that could occur by 2050. These weather changes include more summer heat-waves and more freeze/thaw cycles in the winters, as well as more months of precipitation but much drier fall season. Our lakes and rivers will be more susceptible to algae blooms, our forests will be threatened by droughts and more fires and various species (like our Maple trees) will migrate north. MWC's report contains 15 recommendations that outline how we can plan ahead and adapt to the new circumstances. Dr. Sale recommended that the District of Muskoka form a Climate Adaptation Steering Committee to monitor occurring changes and to educate the public on how to minimize the effects of climate change. MWC's full presentation can be found [here](#). ***The MLA recommends that all our members take a look at this important document and identify ways each of us can help reduce our carbon footprint in Muskoka. In the words of David Suzuki – “We have to look at the world in a different way. We somehow feel we no longer live as part of nature because 85% of Canadians live in big cities. And in a big city you think, “Well, my most important thing is my job, I need a job to earn money to buy my food and live in a house and all that.” And so the economy becomes our highest priority and we forget that if you don't breathe air for three minutes, you're dead.”(Toronto Star, March 24th edition)***

TOWN OF BRACEBRIDGE

Bracebridge Mayor looks to Parry Sound/Muskoka MP Tony Clement for help with Bracebridge Muskoka River's Siltation Problem – Local news article stated that Mayor Graydon Smith met with Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry parliamentary assistant Eleanor McMahon during a recent Rural Ontario Municipal Association/Ontario Good Roads Association combined conference in late February. The Mayor was disappointed by the response following a discussion regarding ministry involvement in the dredging of the river to alleviate an issue with a build-up of siltation in areas of the river. He said “Nobody really wants to take control of this, so I think our overall takeaway is they weren't keen to put money into it or really carry the ball from here.” The Mayor said the Town will now likely turn to Parry Sound/Muskoka MP Tony Clement for help. The full story can be found [here](#). ***The MLA is disappointed that the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry will not be contributing to the required dredging but recognized that they have experienced some severe cut-backs recently. This is a serious navigation issue which requires help from the federal government.***

TOWN OF GRAVENHURST

Public Meeting to discuss the Town's new Official Plan – An Official Plan (OP) is a municipality's key planning document, intended to guide and control future land use development, and establishes policies for the use and management of land. A public meeting is scheduled for Saturday April 30th from 10 a.m. to noon at the Gravenhurst Opera House. The meeting will allow the public the opportunity to provide input on potential revisions to the OP. If you are unable to attend the public meeting, the Town welcomes your comments, ideas and input via letters sent to Katie Kirton (KatieKirton@gravenhurst.ca) or Rick Hunter (rhunter@planscape.ca). ***The MLA will be meeting with several Gravenhurst lake associations prior to April 30th to review the Discussion Papers and to share ideas regarding the new OP. The MLA will be attending the public meeting on April 30th at which time we will be presenting our thoughts and ideas. The MLA encourages all Gravenhurst residents to attend and make your ideas and suggestions for your town known.***

Town receives \$60,500 in funding to improve the Opera House - The Town of Gravenhurst will receive \$60,500 in infrastructure funding for the Gravenhurst Opera House from the FedNor, Canada 150 Infrastructure Program. The funding represents half of the total cost of the \$120,000 expected to complete the project of re-pointing the brick façade. The full story can be found [here](#). ***The MLA is pleased the Town has received needed funding to help preserve the historic and iconic Opera House.***

Request to name the Gazebo at Muskoka Wharf - The Town of Gravenhurst has received a request to name the gazebo and surrounding area at the Muskoka Wharf the '**A.P. Cockburn Square**'. Mr. Cockburn was reported known as the 'Father of Muskoka'. According to information provided to council, Cockburn was instrumental in the development of the region and the town, including recognizing the region's tourism potential, launching Gravenhurst's first newspaper *The Canadian Lumberman*, founding the Muskoka Navigation Co., owning the *Wenonah*, which commenced service on the Muskoka Lakes in 1866, serving as MPP as a reform party candidate in 1867 for the riding then-known as Victoria — which included Muskoka - and was also serving as Parry Sound/Muskoka's first representative to the Dominion government in 1872; a position he held for the next 14-plus years. The Town is asking any residents who have an opinion on renaming the area to the 'AP Cockburn Square' can do so in writing prior to Friday, April 15th at 4:30. Opinions can be sent to Kayla Thibeault, Clerk at 3-5 Pineridge Gate, Gravenhurst P1P 1Z3, or email kayla.thibeault@gravenhurst.ca. The local news story can be found [here](#).

Debate continues over Glen Echo Boat Launch – Glen Echo Landing is a public boat launch on Lake Muskoka whose usage has increased substantially in the last few years. Since last summer, council has heard several complaints from neighbouring property owners regarding the abusive use of this landing by islanders and contractors alike. Concerns included excessive noise, traffic congestion and unsafe work practices. Staff had proposed a new By-law detailing hours of operation, establishing no-parking zones and increasing fines for offences at this site. Council voted to defer this issue for further study. This issue will be on the Tuesday, April 26th Planning Council agenda; meeting will begin at 5 p.m. ***The MLA will be present at this meeting and encourages all interested parties to attend as well.***

SEGUIN TOWNSHIP

Invitation to attend a Ward 4 Candidates Meeting in Toronto – Lake Joseph North Association is extending an invitation to Seguin Township ratepayers to attend a candidates meeting this Sunday, April 17th in preparation for the By-election in Seguin Township. The event will be held at the Granite Club in Toronto from 3 to 5 p.m. Sadly the previous Ward 4 councillor, Mr. Doug Sainsbury, passed away on March 2nd. This meeting is to meet the candidates vying for that vacant Ward 4 councillor position. Lake Joseph North invites you to meet the candidates, understand their platforms and ask questions. The vote is by internet or phone from April 19th to 25th. Eligible electors should receive their voter instruction the week of April 11th. If you are interested in attending, please register [here](#).

Seguin Councillor Jack Hepworth's April 4th newsletter can be found here: <http://www.jackhepworth.ca/>. Councillor Hepworth's newsletter outlines the following:

Rosseau Nursing Station's 2016 Newsletter - Nurse Practitioner and Station Manager, Katie Hogue, has answered many important questions that community members have about the nursing station. She has also explained the reasons for administrative changes and the growth in service numbers that has taken place at the nursing station. *Excerpt – "In previous years the nursing station has operated with walk-in hours during the summer months. However, due to the increased demand, and growing volume of patients, we have changed our weekday summer hours to a by appointment basis. This will allow adequate time, better care, as well as ensure primary care patients are seen for ongoing care, rather than having to wait hours."*

Presentation to Council on April 4th from Dan Duggan, MNRF – regarding updates on:

(1) ***The provincial approvals now required for 'at shore/in-water development' /i.e. boathouses and docks.*** As a result of a 2015 decision by the Ontario Superior Court of Justice, authorization is required to construct or place a dock or single-storey boathouse that occupies (i.e., that is on or above) more than 15 square metres of shore lands. This includes the placement of seasonal structures on shore lands as well as expansions or replacements of existing structures that are greater than 15 square metres. The area of shore lands occupied by a dock or single-storey boathouse can be calculated based on the perimeter of the structure. This is a change from how MNRF authorized the

majority of structures in the past and at this time, there is no fee associated with applying for and receiving an authorization for this activity or occupation of Crown Land. Applicants should contact their local MNRF District Office to initiate the application process.

(2) Best practices for development and terms of reference for studies in Class 1, 2 and Unclassified Fish Habitat. This information will provide Council and Staff with background to help with Zoning By-law Amendments for construction in EP zones where clarification is required between Type 1 and Type 2 Fish Habitats.

Additional information provided by Councillor Hepworth - includes the implementation of Sunday gun hunting in the Township, a photo summary link of recent weather impacts on local highways (Highway 141, Muskoka Road 3, Highways 69 and 522), the proposal to relocate the Rosseau Branch Library to the Nursing Station along with a complete summary of items discussed at the April 4th council meeting. ***The MLA appreciates the hard work Councillor Hepworth puts into his reports. These reports are thorough and provide up-to-date proposals and council decisions on important area issues; and often include photos.***

TOWNSHIP OF MUSKOKA LAKES (TML)

New Dock/Boathouse Permit Requirements from MNRF – TML has posted the new updated MNRF dock and boathouse permit requirements on their website. Please see [here](#) for that information. TML and MNRF are making arrangements to allow repairs of docks and boathouses damaged by water/ice on an expediency basis.

The MLA strongly recommends that all members who will be repairing their docks and boathouses, due to the recent flood and ice damage through the Muskoka Lakes area, contact the Building Department first to determine the expediency procedures.

Update on OMB Appeals on the new Zoning By-law for all properties in the Township of Muskoka Lakes – TML continues to work with those that have registered appeals to the new Zoning By-law. There were 18 appeals in total to be heard over two time periods starting April 18th and 19th, and then continuing July 4th. Three have been withdrawn to date. TML has settled or agreed to enter into minutes of settlement with six others. ***The MLA continues to work with those who have registered appeals as well as our own appeal.***

Redstone Tent & Trailer Park Proposal – Redstone Development is proposing to develop a new 75-site tent and trailer park on the former Gull Lake Tent and Trailer Park on Lake Rosseau. Gull Lake Tent and Trailer Park has been closed since approximately 2007. The Township's new Zoning By-law states that no new tent and trailer parks can be established on the big 3 lakes (Rosseau, Joseph and Muskoka). The new property owners (Redstone Development) have appealed the zoning by-law which excludes permission to build their proposed tent and trailer park. The OMB hearing is scheduled for April 19th. The neighbouring property owners have asked the MLA for support in opposing this zoning amendment by helping to inform our members of this issue. If you, or a neighbour of yours, would like more information please contact: Dean Johnson, representing the local area association, at 705-325-6200 or by email deans@rjins.com. ***The MLA is in agreement with TML that no new tent and trailer parks should be allowed on the 3 large Muskoka lakes (i.e. Rosseau, Joseph and Muskoka). The MLA is a participant to this hearing and will be providing professional planning comments on April 19th.***

Cove Marina Dock Expansion, Foot's Bay – A public meeting is scheduled for Friday, April 15th at 9 a.m. at the Township Office to hear comments from the public regarding a proposed zoning by-law amendment for Cove Marina in Foot's Bay. On June 15th, 2015, Cove Marina requested a zoning by-law amendment to extend two existing docks; one to 236 feet and one to 275 feet. Council deferred decision on this application. Cove Marina has since revised their application and is now proposing to extend all existing docks to a maximum length of 298.6 feet. TML's zoning by-law restricts a commercial urban area marina dock length to 66 feet. In other non-urban areas, commercial marina docks can be 80 feet in length. In 2001, Cove Marina received OMB approval for a dock length of 160 feet; which means that its legal dock length is 160 feet (i.e. the same length as the adjacent TML government dock). The current dock expansion

proposal is designed to accommodate Oviinbyrd Golf Club patrons, island cottagers and patrons of the yoga studio, real estate business and convenience store found at Cove Marina. TML has received letters both in support of, and opposition to, this application. Concerns include increased boat traffic, noise and wakes in an already congested bay. Of prime concern is that approval of this application would set a precedent for other commercial properties in Muskoka. ***The MLA is currently reviewing the application and will be providing input at the public meeting on Friday, April 15th.***

New 70 kilometre Speed Limit on Peninsula Road – On March 23rd, District Engineering and Public Works Committee heard reviewed six speed limit reduction requests. Committee members supported the staff recommendation to amend the speed limit on Peninsula Road to 70 kilometres per hour from the previous variations between 60 and 80 kilometres per hour. Roads which the reduction requests were denied, such as South Portage Road, may have digital speed-tracking signs installed to warn motorists of their speeds and act as traffic calming measures. See local news story [here](#). ***The MLA is pleased that TML District Councillor Phil Harding’s suggestion of amending the speed limit on Peninsula Road has been approved by Committee. Decision is expected to be ratified at the next District Council meeting on Monday, April 18th. Public safety on narrow winding roads in Muskoka is of utmost importance, especially during the busy summer months when traffic increases significantly on these roads.***

TML’s new ATV/OR/UTV By-law – Although committee of the whole voted unanimously in January to allow ATVs, ORs and UTVs use of TML roads for a one-year trial, council requested to see the draft by-law prior to it being ratified. In March TML Deputy Fire Chief Harry Baranik presented the draft by-law to committee of the whole and confirmed that all vehicles must be licensed and will be enforced under the Highway Traffic Act. Committee discussed the hours that ATVs could use TML roads, whether ATVs could be allowed on all TML and District roads and whether or not they should be allowed in the downtown core of the urban areas of Bala and Port Carling. It was suggested that Inspector Medved address committee’s concerns prior to the by-law being ratified at a future council meeting. ***The MLA will continue to follow the discussions regarding this proposed new by-law.***

TML joins Social Media – On March 29th, TML announced that it had opened a Facebook page and Twitter account. As indicated in their press release, the Township’s website will remain the municipality’s prime on-line source for information. Facebook and Twitter will be used to complement the website’s information and broaden the reach of corporate messages. See the official press release to gain the links to TML’s Facebook page and Twitter account [here](#). ***The MLA welcomes the ability for both year-round and seasonal residents to comment on issues of importance in TML.***

UPCOMING EVENTS OF INTEREST

Don’t Forget to order your MLA Seedlings before May 6th, 2016!

The MLA’s 2016 Seedling Day is scheduled for Saturday, May 21st from 9 a.m. to Noon at the Port Carling Community Centre. MLA staff will be on-hand to deliver your seedlings and answer any questions. For a description of available trees/plants along with an order form, please see [here](#).

Reminder- that the Water Quality monitoring volunteer meeting and training is also on Saturday, May 21st at the Port Carling Community Centre beginning at 9 a.m.