

February 10, 2021

Dear Mayor Harding and Councillors,

Re: Draft Official Plan Amendment XX (Resort Village of Minett)

The Muskoka Lakes Association (MLA) and Friends of Muskoka (FOM) have been actively engaged in reviewing and commenting on the official plan amendment for Minett, including through our representation on the Minett Joint Policy Review Steering Committee (“Steering Committee”) and numerous written and verbal submissions.

We are attaching a chart that we hope will help you visualize how the development review has progressed through its various stages. Our chart compares a number of attributes of the current conditions with:

- the development envisioned by the 2008 OPA#31, which is incorporated into the Township’s Official Plan as Section C1;
- the development envisioned by the Minett Steering Committee: formed by the District and the Township with representatives of all stakeholders (residents, the MLA, FOM, builders and resort owners); after almost 2 years of meetings attended by District and Township Planning Staff, it made the recommendations set out in its detailed report, supported by two expert studies funded by the District and Township;
- the Minett Working Group: formed by Council in January 2020 with members representing Council, the principal Minett landowners, the Steering Committee and Planning Staff; it held discussions which led to a draft official plan amendment in August 2020 (August Draft OPA); Planning Staff’s August 31, 2020 report to Council cautioned that the Working Group did not achieve consensus on all policies in the August Draft OPA; and
- the Ad Hoc Group: members of the Working Group reconvened unofficially and held discussions at two meetings in January 2021, which led to the revised draft official plan amendment to be presented at your February 10th meeting (Revised Draft OPA).

As our chart shows, there is little resemblance to the recommendations from the Steering Committee and this Revised Draft OPA and indeed many of the policies in the August Draft OPA. The chart sets out just a sampling of the policy divergences in this OPA.

You are being asked to approve for public consultation an OPA which we are concerned Council has not had sufficient time to review and understand **and** which does not respect or embody the development vision crafted by the committee **you** formed to guide the future of this hamlet. We question whether your review of the Revised Draft OPA is being rushed and whether it is premature to send it to the public, especially since it would be reasonable for the public to expect that by distributing this OPA, you are comfortable with it.

We have concerns with many of the policies in the Revised Draft OPA. Many of them depart significantly from the careful and thorough work of the Steering Committee and the expert studies that informed its recommendations.

We would ask you to look closely at density, residential uses on the waterfront, building heights and docking, among other policies. 2000 units; 11 story buildings; 750,000 GFA in the waterfront zone and almost double the boat slips. Does this sound right for Minett? A place where boating safety is already teetering on the edge of dangerous and in an economic environment predicted to need only 270 new resort rooms across the District over the next 25 years?

Council needs to determine what it wants for Minett -- what's right for Minett.

We look forward to the opportunity to provide detailed explanations of our concerns during the stakeholder consultation phase of this review.

We are mindful that this review will also inform the Township's resort policy review, which we remain hopeful will be completed prior to the next election.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide our comments, and for your continued hard work and commitment to the Minett policy review.

Respectfully submitted,



Deborah Martin-Downs
President, Muskoka Lakes Association



Laurie Thomson
President, Friends of Muskoka

cc. David Pink, Director of Development Services and Environmental Sustainability