

October 22, 2021

Dear Chair Bridgeman and Planning Committee Members,

Re: Official Plan Amendment 56, Resort Village of Minett

Friends of Muskoka and the Muskoka Lakes Association have reviewed draft #2 of Official Plan Amendment No. 56 (“OPA”) and would like to thank Staff and Council for making numerous changes included in the draft which took into account many of our previous comments, including those noted in Part A below. We offer further comments, noted in Part B below, on behalf of our supporters and members who represent a significant portion of the waterfront residents in the Township of Muskoka Lakes. We also attach a redline version of the draft OPA showing our suggested wording changes to reflect our comments.

Part A - Some of the Important Changes Made

1. Mandatory Language: We are pleased to see the inclusion of mandatory language in Section C1.2 under Development Plan, such that any changes to the foundational elements listed require an amendment to the Official Plan.
2. Environment First: We appreciate the environment first language now included in Sections C1.3.1.1 and C1.4.2.2 i) and j).
3. Areas of Use Limitation: We are pleased to see the expanded areas of use limitation language in Section C1.5.1.
4. Resort Policies: We applaud including the resort policies set out in Section C1.9 in the Official Plan, as opposed to being in a schedule as a non-binding guideline.
5. Implementation: We appreciate the strengthened and expanded implementation language in Section C1.7, including the addition of holding provision language.
6. Non-Red Leaves Lands: We thank the Committee for making changes to the boundary of the Resort Village of Minett, as this reduces some of the uncertainty concerning the scale of future development in the municipally serviced area.

Part B - Further Proposed Changes

1. Number of Units: We are pleased with the proponent’s promised reduction of 299 units from 1,999 to 1,700 in the main proponent’s lands. However, this does not seem to be reflected in the draft OPA. In addition, we reiterate that our community is particularly concerned about development on the waterfront and **we respectfully ask Committee and the proponent to consider splitting the reduction between the waterfront and non-waterfront areas (ie. 149 in RC1 and RC2 and 150 in R1 and R2)**. See Sections C1.4.3.3 and C1.4.3.6.

2. Building Height: We do not support 5 storey buildings in Minett. The height restriction elsewhere in the Township is 14 metres, not 16 metres. The height restriction should be “the lesser of” 14 metres or the existing mature tree canopy. If there is a stand of 100 foot trees, that should not mean 100 foot buildings. See Sections C1.4.2.3b) and C1.6.3.3b).
3. Docking: While we are pleased to see that the number of boat slips not be increased above a hard cap number, we suggest that number be clearly determined (previously 215), as opposed to referring to ‘the number of legally existing or approved boat slips’. Staff was previously directed to determine the actual number of legally existing and approved boat slips for the three resort commercial properties in the VC and RC1 through RC4 designations. See Section C1.4.5.1.
4. On-Site Staffing: We had understood that on-site staffing was required to be located in Minett. Section C1.4.8.1 provides that “efforts shall be made” to require on-site staffing in Minett. This introduces non-mandatory language, which is of concern. We request that the words “efforts shall be made” be deleted. Similarly, we believe there is ambiguity in the language in Section C1.4.8.1a), which can easily be clarified. Please see our proposed wording in our redline of the draft OPA.
5. Unit Equivalency: We suggest that the equivalent Unit count concept, which provides for a baseline Unit size of 850 sq. ft., should apply to all lands designated as Resort Commercial in Minett. For example, we suggest it would not be appropriate for the 265 Units in the RC3 designation to be comprised of 4,000 square-foot units or even 10,000 square-foot units. Units already built or under construction would be legally non-conforming. See Section C1.4.3.7.
6. District Letter: A number of comments raised in the District’s letter dated May 19, 2021 have been addressed in the current draft. However, some which we suggest are important, have not. Please see our redline of the draft OPA and, in particular:
 - a. Section C1.5.3.1 re Areas of Use Limitation and a requested cross reference to Section I of the District’s Official Plan;
 - b. Section C1.6 re Land Use Designations and a requested cross reference to Section F6 of the District’s Official Plan; and
 - c. Section C1.6.4.1 re Institutional where we suggest a reference to waste management be added to the list of municipal facilities.
7. Municipal Services: The draft currently provides that the full cost of installing municipal services will be the responsibility of landowners who will benefit from the installation of such services. We suggest that the full cost of installing such services should be the responsibility of the main proponent. See Section C1.4.6.2.
8. Who is a Unit Owner?: The definition of “Unit Owner” previously included individual owners and members of their immediate family. This has been changed to individual owners and their guests. We suggest that this be changed to individual owners, members of their immediate family and guests. Guests may not be immediate family members and immediate family members may not be guests.

9. Exceptions from Setbacks: There is an exception to the waterfront vegetative buffer and the shoreline setback for recreational and other amenities. We suggest that recreational and other amenities should be further defined to mean those related to the waterfront, such as docks, boathouses, paths, trails and boardwalks. For example, these exceptions should not apply to a wellness center, tennis court or swimming pool, unless they are deemed legally non-conforming structures. With respect to retail and commercial space, we suggest that there also be an exception, provided there is an appropriate amount of vegetative buffer or landscaping. See Sections C1.5.4.4 and C1.5.4.5.

We appreciate this opportunity to provide our comments, which we hope you will consider.

Sincerely,



Laurie Thomson
President, Friends of Muskoka



Deborah Martin-Downs
President, Muskoka Lakes Association