

November 9, 2021

Township of Muskoka Lakes Council  
1 Bailey Street  
Port Carling ON  
POB 1J0

Dear Mayor Harding and Council Members,

**Re: Official Plan Amendment 56, Resort Village of Minett**

Friends of Muskoka and the Muskoka Lakes Association have reviewed the Official Plan Amendment No. 56 attached to the Agenda for Council's meeting on November 10<sup>th</sup> and would like to thank Staff and Council for making numerous changes which took into account many of our comments made on draft #2, 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.

Part A - Some of the Important Changes Made

1. Clarifying Language: We appreciate the clarification of the language relating to the 1,700 units permitted on the proponent's lands (Sections C1.4.3.3 and C1.4.3.6), and the clarification of the language regarding use of Resort Commercial Accommodation Units owned by a Unit Owner (Section C1.9).
2. Baseline Unit Size: We appreciate that the baseline Unit size of 850 square feet applies to all Resort Commercial Accommodation Units in the Resort Village of Minett, beyond what exists on the RC3 lands, or beyond what exists or has been approved on the RC4 lands, on the date the policy comes into effect (Section C1.6.2.4.i).
3. Bruce Lake: We appreciate that water quality protections have been extended to Bruce Lake in Sections C1.2 and C1.4.2.2a.
4. Cost of Municipal Services: We appreciate that the cost of municipal services will be the responsibility of the major proponents (Section C1.4.6.2).

Part B - Further Proposed Changes

1. Building Height: We do not support buildings in Minett exceeding the existing mature tree canopy, which is permitted under the draft language for all buildings other than a small number of prominent buildings.

A 100 foot tree canopy should not result in 100 foot buildings. We ask that the height restriction should in no case exceed 16 metres AND the existing mature tree canopy in Section C1.4.2.3b):

C1.4.2.3 The architecture and characteristics of new major development or redevelopment shall: b) Be of a low-rise built form that in no case exceeds 16 metres (including mechanical equipment) (note notwithstanding below in sub- section c)) and ~~or~~ the existing mature tree canopy ...

2. Setbacks and Vegetative Buffer: We understood that Planning Committee proposed at its October 14<sup>th</sup> meeting that the flexibility regarding the 20 m shoreline setback and the 15 m waterfront vegetative buffer for recreational and other amenities was to refer to those that are waterfront-related: recreational and other amenities “that are waterfront related (such as docks, boathouses, paths, trails and boardwalks)”. We note that this was not reflected in the most recent draft and ask that it be inserted into Sections C1.5.4.4 and C1.5.4.5.

We also note the proposed wellness centre is being given exemptions from both the 16 metre height restriction (Section C1.4.2.3 c), as well as the setbacks and vegetative buffer. This would result in a very tall building immediately at the water’s edge. For the sake of lessening the dominance of a large building at the waterfront, we ask that any portion of the wellness centre that is within the 20m setback be limited to two storeys:

C1.5.4.4 ... flexibility with respect to requiring 15-metre waterfront vegetative buffers is provided for only recreational and other amenities that are waterfront related (such as docks, boathouses, paths, trails and boardwalks), ~~including a proposed wellness centre.~~  
...

C1.5.4.5 A minimum 20 metre setback from any shoreline shall be required for all development, excluding shoreline structures, open decks, minor accessory structures and recreational and other amenities that are waterfront related (such as docks, boathouses, paths, trails and boardwalks), including any portion of a proposed wellness centre that is two or less storeys in height. ...

3. Staff Housing in Minett: We note that the provision regarding staff housing has been moved and clarified in part. However, we suggest that a small further clarification is necessary to make it clear that staff housing must be located in Minett:

C1.6.1.4 h). C1.6.2.4 h) and C1.6.3.6:

Staff housing for the employees of the various businesses in the Minett Resort Village will be required within the Minett Resort Village as a condition of development within the Minett Resort Village.

4. Commercial Use of Resorts: We understand that Section C1.9 is not meant to be an exclusive and exhaustive list of rules regarding the commercial use and maintenance of resorts. However, we are concerned that Sections C1.6.1.8 and C1.6.2.8, as presently worded, could lead to such an interpretation and suggest the following change: We suggest that the word “generally” be added after the word “identified” and that the words “in accordance with” be replaced by “including” to address this concern.

C1.6.1.8 and C1.6.2.8

Commercial use and maintenance of the commercial components of a resort development are identified generally in Section C1.9 and shall be prescribed in greater detail in the implementing Zoning By-law and/or Site Plan and/or Condominium Agreements, and including in accordance with the provisions in Section C1.9.

5. Definition of Unit Owner: The initial draft of the definition of “Unit Owner” included individual owners and members of their immediate family. In the next draft, the reference to “immediate family” was deleted and replaced with “guests”. We remain concerned that “guests” may not include “immediate family” and recommend that it be added back:

C1.8 Unit Owner

For the purposes of evaluating owner usage of their Units in accordance with Section C1.9, “Unit Owner” shall include the individual owner(s) and/or the individuals who own an interest in such property as described above and shall include their immediate family and guests.

6. Clarifying Language for Steep Slopes: There are two items in the language for steep slopes <40% (Section C1.5.3.6) that should also apply to steep slopes >20% and <40% (Section C1.5.3.5). First, the Environmental Impact Study should be to the satisfaction of the Township. Second, the Township should have the ability to require a servicing report to demonstrate how the site can be adequately serviced.

C1.5.3.5 For steep slopes >20% and <40%, existing vegetation shall be substantially retained on all slope faces. If vegetation cannot be substantially retained and development is proposed on these lands, then an Environmental Impact Study that addresses specific mitigation measures shall be required to the satisfaction of by the Township to address the visual and environmental integrity of such lands, among other matters; and for steep slopes >40%, including the servicing of such lands. A servicing report may also be required by the Township to demonstrate how the site can be adequately serviced.

C1.5.3.6 For steep slopes >40%, existing vegetation shall be substantially retained on all slope faces, and if minor development is proposed, an Environmental Impact Study that addresses specific mitigation measures shall be required to the satisfaction of the Township.

Where required by the Township, engineering evaluations must be provided to demonstrate how the constraint will be addressed. A servicing report may also be required by the Township to demonstrate how the site can be adequately serviced.

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

Sincerely,



Laurie Thomson  
President, Friends of Muskoka



Susan Eplett  
Vice-President, Muskoka Lakes Association

Cc: David Pink, Director of Development Services and Environmental Sustainability  
Nick McDonald, Meridien Planning Consultants