

### **GOOD NEWS – Our concerns are being heard!**

MLA (and many others) delegated at two meetings this month. The first, at Township of Muskoka Lakes (TML) on November 16<sup>th</sup>, cautioned against TML entering into a Condominium agreement with Villas of Muskoka contrary to TML's Official Plan. Thursday, November 23<sup>rd</sup>, at the District we reiterated our concerns about proposed new policies for Resort Development, and concerning implementation of OPA45 – the proposed new Lake System Health policy. Details below.

### **Results!**

1. TML voted to defer a decision re entering into an agreement with Villas pending review of a legal opinion tabled by MLA that stated that entering into a condominium agreement as proposed (waterfront commercial resort with owner occupation of units) would be "unlawful".
2. District Chair John Klinck and staff acknowledged the draft OP still needs work and as cited in the Globe & Mail today: District needs to "go back to the drawing board".

### **Details:**

In a nutshell, we are fighting to ensure Resorts do not become high density residential developments on our shorelines. Three developments are in process in TML; being developed under applications for Commercial Resorts (which under current rules require 100% commercial use, 100% of the time – see our Lawyer's letter on the MLA Website [Resorts - MLA Lawyer's Letter](#)).

If the current District Official Plan (OP) proposals proceed, there are over 80 more resort properties in Muskoka which could be redeveloped into high density residential waterfront operations. *District proposals would allow resorts to have up to 50% of their units as residential; the balance to be resort commercial units. Commercial should be Commercial!*

### **1. Township of Muskoka Lakes (TML) Council Meeting – Thursday November 16<sup>th</sup>**

- Key item was the Villas of Lake Muskoka (formerly Tamwood Lodge) a waterfront condo development on Highway #118 seeking approval of its condo agreement.
- About 135 concerned Muskokans attended and 12 of those made presentations to Council. The MLA was well represented.
- **Anne McCauley**, MLA Board member, Chair of the MLA Political and Land Use Committee, and subject matter expert, presented a letter from our legal counsel (link provided above) which **advised the Township that approval of the Condo Agreement would be "unlawful"**. Anne also pointed to the Villas' website which prominently called their project an exclusive "cottage community" *to the surprise of many Council members*.
- Council decided to defer any decision about entering into a condominium agreement with Villas pending a review of the MLA's legal position by their own legal counsel.
- It is currently unknown when this matter will come before Committee again.

### **2. District of Muskoka Public Meeting – Thursday November 23<sup>rd</sup>**

- The District hosted a Public meeting on the Draft Official Plan as revised October 5<sup>th</sup>

- Taxpayer turnout was unprecedented at 330 requiring two additional spill-over rooms to accommodate all concerned. The event was also web cast to many other Muskokans. Again MLA had strong Board and Member presence at the meeting.
- About 45 concerned citizens and groups made presentations – limited to 5 minutes each.
- Anne McCauley presented on our behalf expressing our concern on the proposed Resort redefinition and the need for stronger water quality protections going forward. Councillors listened! Deservedly, her comments were met with extended applause.
- Most presentations were strong and consistent with protection of our water quality and tree canopy, density management, septic leakage, over-crowding and boat safety being dominant themes.
- Only 3 of the 45 presenters were in favour of the proposed new Resort policies, 1 developer and 2 consultants representing developers.
- The District now appears willing to revisit the Resort and water quality protection issues prior to release of their next Draft OP scheduled for release Spring 2018. MLA has asked to be involved. **Two newspaper reports are insightful:** [11-24-2017 Globe Article](#) and [Muskoka Region - "Backlash"](#) MLA is pleased the District will revisit the draft policies.
- While technically not part of the agenda, the proposed new development in Minett (for approximately 1,400 to 2,000 units) was referenced by many presenters as an ongoing problem. The MLA is active on that file and will update Members in the new year.

### MLA Fund Raising Update

As a reminder, the MLA is currently raising funds to assist primarily with the research and legal bills associated with our SAVE MUSKOKA campaign. We would like to thank all those who have contributed to date. We have already raised over \$83,000 towards our goal.

As our campaign is still young, we are optimistic, but there is a long way to go to reach our "War Chest" goal of \$500,000. Any contribution is welcome – and needed!

There are two ways to donate:

**By Cheque** - please forward a cheque payable to the "MLA" marked "SAVE MUSKOKA" to the MLA, Box 298, 65 Joseph St. Port Carling, ON, P0B 1J0

**By Credit Card** – please call the MLA at 705 765-5723 during business hours.

Thank you for your ongoing support. We will keep you informed on these and all other emerging issues within the Muskoka region.

Yours Sincerely,



Muskoka Lakes Association  
Robert Ensor  
President