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Staff Report on Public Comments

May 22, 2018

Zoning By-Law Amendment and Site Plan Control Amendment Application Bear Ridge Campground and Cottages

As of the date of the presentation of the by-law to Wollaston Council, 178 letters or pieces of correspondence have been received by the Clerk in relation to this application.

15 community members spoke at the public meeting held March 9, 2018.

92 of the 178 letters were nearly identical, except for the name of the person submitting the comments.

The majority of the comments were not related to the specific changes proposed in the zoning by-law amendment or site plan agreement amendment applications.

Council has been provided with a copy of all correspondence received. Following is a summary of the issues raised within these representations that are applicable to the details of the applications and/or the changes proposed by the applications.

Comment:

- Keeping these provisions in the zoning by-law ensures their ongoing provision and maintenance. As the recreational facilities are already in place, this imposes no new burden to the Campground Owners.

Response:

All of the existing recreational facilities have been included in the site plan control agreement and mapping. The site plan agreement ensures the ongoing provision and maintenance of these existing facilities. Major changes would require an amendment to the agreement, approved by Wollaston Council.

Comment:

- The swimming pool reduces the risk of pedestrians crossing the road to the beach area

Response:

The swimming pool is an existing amenity in the site plan agreement. Additional measures are being taken by both the Township and the Campground owners to address the safety of campers crossing The Ridge Road, as per the recommendations of the Pedestrian Safety Assessment.

Comments:

- Removal of recreational alternatives to the lake could result in additional usage of the lake.
- The importance of maintaining the additional recreational facilities to prevent additional stressors on the lake
- The pool will reduce the stress on the lake environment that may result from intensive use of the waterfront area.
- Environmental study or lake capacity study be undertaken to examine how the changes might affect the Lake and the environment of the waterfront area

Response

The original recommendations provided by the Hastings County Planning Department (report of February 17, 2015) did recommend a swimming pool to compensate for the size of the waterfront area. The recommendation was concerned with the overcrowding of the beach area. The environmental impact of the use of a waterfront area by swimming is not addressed in the OP or the zoning by-law.

Further study would have to be completed to attempt to establish the impact from bather's use of the lake, if any.

Comment

- The expansion to the campground was only permitted under the condition that a swimming pool be installed. This was a basic requirement to address the concerns put forth at the time of the original application.
- The limited water frontage at the campground should still be a factor of consideration
- No reason to remove the provisions that were put in place to accommodate the expansion of the park
- The expansion was allowed under the condition of the installation of a swimming pool. The expansion has now been completed, why would the conditions be removed? This application should only be considered before the expansion from 50 to 100 sites.
- The requirements were to address the limited waterfrontage. The waterfrontage has not changed.

Response

All required recreational facilities have been installed. All required recreational facilities have been included in the site plan agreement and associated mapping. Staff maintain that the site plan agreement is a more appropriate planning document in which to include these types of requirements and controls.

Comment

- The Township provides public recreational opportunities and facilities.

Response

The provisions for recreational facilities within the Campground were put in place in consideration of the OP policies for tent and trailer parks. The 2015 report provided by the Hastings County Planning Department emphasizes that “A tent and trailer park exists by virtue of its recreational amenities, notably the extent of its access to a recreationally suitable shoreline, but other recreational facilities are often provided. Given that the number of campsites is exceeding the Official Plan maximum of 50, the Applicant is asked to demonstrate the recreational capacity of the beach (i.e. how many square feet per person? How many docks and boat slips will be provided?). If its capacity is limited resulting in potential overcrowding, the Applicant should provide additional recreational amenities, such as open space sport venues (volleyball/ basketball, swimming pool, etc.) internal to the site.”

Comment

- Lake capacity study should be completed before changes are considered.

Response

See attached research submitted by Cristal Laanstra.

Comment

- Concerns about increased garbage and compliance with recycling regulations

Response

The tenants of the park do create waste, as all residents of the Township do. Municipal records show that in 2017 the Bear Ridge created about 10 bags of garbage per site.

The Manager of the Wollaston Waste Site confirms that the Bear Ridge Campground has been very compliant in their sorting of recyclables before transportation to the waste site, and to date there have been no concerns.

Comment

- Removal of the traffic calming measures from the site plan as they should be a municipal responsibility

Response

The final site plan includes only the provisions that are located on the private property or that are the financial responsibility of the Owners. The digital speed signs, edge of pavement markings and the responsibility for the installation of the pedestrian crossing pavement markings have been removed from the agreement.

A large number of letters had general comments on allowing or disallowing the expansion of the campground, which was approved in 2015 and is not a consideration of this amendment.

A large number of letters and comments concerned the expansion of the dock facility on the shore of Wollaston Lake and the potential to the increase in boats and boat traffic on the lake.

The dock is not constructed on land owned by the Campground. Therefore, permission will have to be obtained for any changes to the existing dock facility. A building permit will not be issued for this construction until such permissions are obtained.

This is addressed with the provision in the holding symbol of the zoning by-law requiring a land use agreement with the Township regarding the site's waterfront access area. Council may consider referring back on the comments received during this planning process to aid in future decisions when this land use agreement is discussed.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jennifer Cohen', with a stylized, cursive script.

Jennifer Cohen
Clerk

A lakeshore capacity assessment (aka Lake Capacity Study) is a planning tool that can be used to control the amount of one key pollutant – phosphorus – entering lakes on the Precambrian Shield by controlling shoreline development. High levels of phosphorus in lake water will promote eutrophication – excessive plant and algae growth, resulting in a loss of water clarity and loss of habitat for species of cold-water fish such as lake trout, among other things. While multiple activities can contribute to additional phosphorus to an inland lake, **the primary human source of phosphorus are septic systems**. Lakeshore capacity assessment can be used to predict the level of development that can be sustained along the shoreline of an inland lake on the Precambrian Shield without exhibiting any adverse effects related to high phosphorus levels (from the Lakeshore Capacity Assessment Handbook – Ontario). When a Lake has been determined to not receive additional phosphorus input without adverse effects, the Lake is deemed to be ‘at-capacity’.

A detailed study on lakes managed for Lake Trout (cold-water lakes) was completed by the Ministry of the Environment in 2011; this study outlined that lake trout survival, growth, and reproduction can be impaired when dissolved oxygen concentrations are below 7mg/L. The study is entitled, “Water Quality and Management of Lake Trout Lakes – County of Hastings: 2000 and 2006”. The report references research done on Wollaston Lake and a digital version can be viewed at: <https://archive.org/details/waterqualityandm00snsn21866> . As such, the Ministry of Natural Resource and Forestry (MNRF) recommends that a lake be classified as ‘at capacity’ when the dissolved oxygen is less than or equal to 7 mg/L. An ‘at capacity’ designation means that there should be no new land use planning approvals within 300 metres of the shoreline **that would result in additional phosphorus loading**.

Section 3.2.9 of the Hastings County Official Plan deals with development applications that are considered within 300 metres of a cold-water lake. The Official Plan states no new development shall be permitted within 300 metres of “at-capacity lakes”, one being Wollaston Lake. The policy goes on to state, “on lakes determined to be ‘at capacity’, unique or special circumstances, such as the physical features of the property, may allow some limited development to be considered (pp. 28).” This can be done through detailed studies and consultation with the Ministry of the Environmental and Climate Change (MOECC). A physical feature unique and special circumstance that has been considered by Hastings County is where there is a portion of the subject lands greater than 300 metres from the lake that could be developed; no impacts to the lake, in terms of lakeshore capacity – no additional phosphorus loading, would be expected. To acknowledge this, the adopted Hastings County Official Plan, 2017, includes an update to this policy that addresses developments where septic systems can be located greater than 300 metres from an ‘at-capacity’ lake (Policy 4.2.5.7 and 4.2.5.8 of the adopted Hastings County Official Plan, 2017, pp. 80/81). To date, there has been no objections to this policy from the MOECC.

Speaking specifically to the Bear Ridge Campground and Cottages expansion, approved in 2015, the landowners identified an area of the subject lands that would be greater than 300 metres from Wollaston Lake that could support a septic system of the size required for the resort, subject to MOECC approvals. Through discussions in the planning department with MOECC, it was determined that the expansion could occur with no additional phosphorus loading to Wollaston Lake. As such, a Lake Capacity study was not updated (as the Lake was already determined to be ‘at-capacity’ at this point in time).

I hope that this information proves useful. If you require any thing further, please let me know.

Cristal Laanstra, M.Sc. (Planning), MCIP, RPP
Planner
Department of Planning & Development