

*March 7, 2018*

*Members of The Wollaston Lake Home and Cottage Association (WLHCA),*

**Update:**

At present, the WLHCA Executive is continuing to gather information about township zoning bylaws, the proposed amendments to By-Law 10-15, and their implications. We will continue to add information to our website and Facebook pages as it becomes available. Please continue to monitor these sources for updates.

**Background Information and Timeline:\***

2010: Wollaston Township passed By-Law 50-10, the Comprehensive Zoning By-Law.

March 10, 2015: Township Council passed By-Law 10-15 as an amendment to parts of By-Law 50-10. This revision allowed for the expansion of Bear Ridge Campground and Cottages (Bear Ridge) to 100 tent and trailer sites and 4 cottages. The revision also required an existing mooring dock; volleyball, tennis or horseshoe courts; pedestrian or recreational trails; and a swimming pool for tent and trailer parks that have more than 50 sites.

May 10, 2016: Township Council passed a motion that called for the installation of an adequately sized swimming pool at Bear Ridge to accommodate the recreational demands of 100 campsites. The motion also called for the owners of Bear Ridge to show that they were actively working towards the installation of the swimming pool that year if the campground intended to have 100 active sites.

Early Summer 2016: Bear Ridge expanded the size of their dock without the required permits from the Township of Wollaston. In spite of requests to remove the extra length of dock by the municipality, the extra dock was not removed until the end of the season by Bear Ridge.

December 2016: Bear Ridge submitted a proposal to Council to amend By-Law 10-15. Included in support of that application was a Planning Justification Report that was prepared by Ecovue Consulting Services and dated December 21, 2016.

March 14, 2017, the Township of Wollaston obtained an Order from the Superior Court of Ontario, based on the consent of the Bear Ridge, that permitted the dock, existing at the time Zoning By-Law 10-15 was passed, but ordered that Bear Ridge shall not install a dock without the required building permits.

April 2017: Bear Ridge submitted a Recreational Capacity Study, prepared by The Rethink Group, and a Traffic Assessment Report.

September 2017: The installation of the swimming pool at Bear Ridge was completed.

December 2017: Bear Ridge submitted a Final Site Plan to the Township.

January 2018: Bear Ridge submitted a Revised Recreational Capacity Study to the Township.

\*Please note that the information contained in this timeline comes only from sources that are readily available to us at this time.

### **Position of the WLHCA Executive:**

The Executive of WLHCA strongly opposes the proposed amendments to By-Law 10-15.

The proposed amendment to Section 1e. of the By-Law would remove the requirement for Bear Ridge to provide minimum recreational facilities such as a pool; volleyball, horseshoe or tennis courts; and recreational trails. Although Bear Ridge has completed most, if not all, of these infrastructural changes, if the proposed amendment is passed, the Township would lose its ability to ensure that the Recreational Provisions remain part of the operation of Bear Ridge on an ongoing basis. This is crucially important as these infrastructural requirements were imposed, at least in part, to reduce the environmental impact on the waterfront. We believe that alternate recreational activities need to be available to campers to reduce the use of the beach for activities such as swimming, waterplay, and motorized watersports. The Recreational Capacity Study of the limited beach area has not assessed the potential impact of overuse and the potential for environmental damage to a fragile ecosystem at the shore that is a habitat for many species of wildlife.

Our concern extends to the possibility of suggested changes to the main dock that is now 37 meters in length. The Recreational Capacity Study prepared for Bear Ridge refers to a proposed increase in dock size. In 2017, the Township went to court to ensure that the dock did not increase in size. Although it appears that the dock is part of Section 1e. of By-Law 10-15, Jennifer Cohen, Clerk, Wollaston Township has advised us that the dock configuration included in the capacity study will not be considered as part of the zoning amendment. She added that since the shore lands are not part of the RRC-2 zone, the question of the dock will be dealt with by a separate agreement and Council will consider the dock question as a separate matter.

While we have been assured that the issue of the docks will be considered separately by Council, we still believe that this is an appropriate time to make our concerns known to Council. It is very worrisome that the length, configuration, and number of slips of the docks may be allowed to change and possibly increase to 46 watercraft as presented in Bear Ridge's Recreational Capacity Study. If Bear Ridge is allowed to increase the size of the docks, it could significantly increase the boat traffic in the immediate area of Bear Ridge, as well as on the lake at large, and could lead to further harm to Wollaston Lake's ecosystem. A larger dock would add further environmental stress to a lake that in the past two years has just started to feel the impact from two invasive species, Eurasian Milfoil and Zebra Mussels.

Finally, to the best of our knowledge, there has not been a thorough environmental assessment of the impact to Wollaston Lake and its surrounding environment from the net increase of 72 campsites. Recently Fred McConnell, WLHCA's Lake Steward, has been successful in having Wollaston Lake chosen as part of a pilot study by [\*The Blue Lakes Projects\*](#) and The Land Between, Cottage Country's Conservation Organization to use data collected by lake

associations to monitor the well-being of lakes. Wollaston was chosen as a sensitive cold water trout lake with 10 years of water quality recorded data. To assess the potential impact of increased usage of the beach area and boat traffic, research that goes beyond the annual water quality testing, must include measures of impact to shoreline and the lake bottom ecosystem. WLHCA, through its present and past Lake Stewards, are working to recommend resources that can identify the potential environmental damage that may result from overused shorelines and an increase to watercraft traffic.

Amendment 10-15 should not be changed, without a clear idea of the environmental impact to the lake.

Yours Sincerely,

Peggy Stewart

President Wollaston Lake Home and Cottage Association