

January 11, 2024

Community and Planning Services Committee
District Municipality of Muskoka
70 Pine Street
Bracebridge, ON
P1L 1N3
BY EMAIL

Attention: Community and Planning Services Committee

Dear Chair Alcock and Committee Members;

**Re: Public Meeting Thursday January 18, 2024
regarding proposed Muskoka Official Plan Amendment 58
(Public Participation and Consultation)**

The Muskoka Lakes Association (MLA) and Friends of Muskoka (FOM) would like to express support for the District's work to improve consistency and clarity in the public notification and consultation process in light of the three community newspapers of Muskoka ceasing publication in print format in 2023. Specifically, the MLA and FOM support the District's Official Plan Amendment to address any shortcomings in the public participation process by adopting alternate methods of providing notice.

The MLA and FOM support an update to Section M9 of the District of Muskoka Official Plan at this time. We believe that the alternative notification measures will reach a greater number of our members and other members of the public. We support the proposed amendment to add a variety of alternative notification measures in accordance with the *Planning Act* including:

- i. personal service or prepaid first class mail;
- ii. e-mail;
- iii. public notice signs;
- iv. surveys, electronic or mail-out;
- v. neighbourhood open houses and/or public information centres;
- vi. neighbourhood working groups or focus groups;
- vii. information meetings;
- viii. statutory public meetings;
- ix. electronically circulated newspaper;
- x. District website or internet engagement platforms; and/or,
- xi. any other methods as deemed necessary by the District Clerk.

We would also encourage the District to investigate methods to expand e-mail lists as these have proven particularly effective in reaching our membership.

It may be beneficial to coordinate expansion of email lists through an opt-in measure led by lower-tier municipalities. The communication sent with tax bills could provide information to residents about how they can request to receive email communication on planning notices through the engagemuskoka.ca portal. In addition, while we acknowledge that the *Planning Act* sets standards for circulation of planning applications, we would encourage District to strive to extend notice beyond the minimum standards. Lake Associations may be helpful in this regard.

Please accept this letter as written request to be notified of the decision of the District of Muskoka on the proposed District Official Plan Amendment.

Sincerely



Susan Eplett
President, Muskoka Lakes Association



Laurie Thomson
President, Friends of Muskoka

Cc: Amy Back, Clerk