

July 14, 2021

Dear Chair Bridgeman and Planning Committee Members;

Re: Meda Island Application

The Muskoka Lakes Association (MLA) represents approximately 2,000 families across Muskoka and is keenly interested in ensuring that Muskoka's shorelines are developed responsibly in a manner that prioritizes the natural character and protects the unique Muskoka environment.

The MLA appreciates this opportunity to provide our comments on the application to create five new lots on Meda Island, which is being considered at the Planning Committee meeting on July 15, 2021.

1. Mainland Parking and Docking

As we noted in our letter to Director Pink on November 27, 2020 relating to new lots on Meda Island, there are important policy reasons for ensuring that new water access or island properties satisfy the requirement in Official Plan Policy B.5.24(d) that 'adequate long-term parking and docking facilities are secured'.

The MLA supports the comments made in Part A of the Notice of Objection dated July 12, 2021 (Notice of Objection) submitted by Mr. Christopher Morgan on behalf of Friends of North Bay. In particular, the documents filed by the applicants fail to demonstrate compliance with the requirement in OP Policy B.5.24(d) that adequate long-term parking and docking facilities are secured, for the following reasons:

1. The docks at Mortimer's Marina do not exist, and the Marina is not required to build them.
2. The parking spots at Mortimer's Marina do not exist, and the Marina is not required to build them.
3. The document signed between the applicants and Mortimer's Marina is not a lease. For example, it does not include a rent amount. It is merely an unenforceable promise by Mortimer's Marina that if all the docks and parking spots are built, the applicants can have six of them.

4. Mortimer's Marina faces potential regulatory hurdles to complete the docks and parking facilities, including a zoning bylaw amendment, boat impact assessment, fisheries issue, and environmental impact statement. There is no certainty that these hurdles will be overcome.

The MLA urges Planning Committee to reject the severance application until such time as it has been established to the Committee that adequate parking and docking facilities are secured at the time of Planning Committee's decision.

In addition, the MLA agrees that any lease agreement with a marina should include at a minimum the terms set out in Appendix C to the Notice of Objection in order to satisfy the parking and docking access requirements of OP Policy B.5.24(d).

2. Number of Sleeping Cabins

Staff's Report dated July 15, 2021 notes that one of the resulting lots on Meda Island has four sleeping cabins. The MLA supports Staff's recommendation that only one sleeping cabin be permitted, for the following reasons:

- one dwelling and one sleeping cabin is permitted under OP Policy B.10.3, for the important policy reason of ensuring that built form does not dominate over natural form on the waterfront;
- permitting more than one sleeping cabin will create a negative precedent; and
- it is not possible to enforce the requirement that a sleeping cabin not be converted into a dwelling after final approvals are received.

3. Cumulative Dock Width

The Township's Official Plan Policy B.13.4 provides a maximum cumulative width for docks "to maintain a balance of natural and built form". The MLA urges Planning Committee to safeguard the natural character of Muskoka's shorelines by requiring lot 6 to comply with the Official Plan when it is redeveloped, and not providing the requested exemption for 95 feet cumulative width of dock at the time of redevelopment.

4. Peer Review of EIS

The application constitutes 'major development' under the Official Plan, since it involves creating more than three new lots. The MLA believes that this major development application should conform as closely as possible to the terms and intent of the Official Plan. We support Staff's recommendation that a peer review be conducted of the Environmental Impact Study of Michalski Nielsen. We recommend that the peer reviewer be asked whether it would be preferable to reduce the number of new lots from 5 to 4, on the basis that there are very steep slopes that may not support an extra lot.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide these comments.

Sincerely,



Susan Eplett
Chair, Government and Land Use Committee

cc: David Pink, Director of Development Services and Environmental Sustainability
Bryce Sharpe, Manager of Planning
Sam Soya, Planner II
Katie Edwards, General Manager, MLA
Christopher Morgan