

April 7, 2014

**Mayor and Members of Council
Seguin Township
5 Humphrey Drive
Seguin, Ontario P2A 2W8**

Dear Mayor Conn and Members of Council:

Re: Della Maestra rezoning application

The Muskoka Lakes Association (MLA) represents more than 2,500 families with seasonal and permanent residences in Muskoka and Parry Sound. This is a region whose natural beauty – of pristine lakes, rock outcrops, and forests – is the basis of its economy and attracts residents who wish to live here, and businesses supporting a tourist industry. It is a delicate balance. Too much development or overdevelopment on an individual property destroys that balance between the natural environment and built environment.

Seguin has extensive Official Plan policies to protect its environment and the character of the township. These policies are implemented in Seguin's zoning by-law. Occasionally, as is the case with the Della Maestra development, landowners ignore the policies and regulations and build without consideration of the impact of that development, not only on the natural surroundings, but also on the adjacent neighbours.

Such irresponsible action should not be allowed to stand.

According to the staff report, the owner initiated construction of the dwelling unit with a building permit, but was not required to submit a site plan application. Site plan approval would have given the township the opportunity to review the massing, the building materials, its design and building elevations under section 41 of the Planning Act. While building design is a matter of taste, had an initial review of the building drawings been done it would have indicated, at an early stage, that this building was not sympathetic to the Muskoka landscape and not in keeping with its official plan policies.

Having received a building permit for the dwelling unit, the proponents then proceeded to construct a sports complex with substantial piers, an observation deck, a pool with lower level utility rooms and an elaborate stone gateway, all without building permits or safety inspections. In our opinion, these are all structures and should be treated accordingly.

The MLA's Political and Land Use committee has discussed this issue at length. We believe Seguin should prosecute this particularly grievous offence to the fullest extent possible and request a substantial fine. We believe this is the only way to discourage developers from ignoring rules and regulations in the future.

We understand that the proponents in this case have further proposals, including acquisition of the township owned shoreline road allowance and construction of a boathouse and docking. The

township has no duty to sell its land and no assurances should be given that additional requests for building coverage will be granted.


The MLA supports the staff recommendation that a site visit be initiated prior to any decisions regarding the zoning by-law amendment application being made. The MLA also requests that the concerns of the neighbours be given consideration in the resolution of this development.

Summary

The MLA submits the above comments to council for their consideration.

Please inform the MLA of all future meetings and applications respecting these lands including site plan applications, applications for acquisition of the shoreline road allowance and council's decision on the proposed zoning by-law. We request a copy of council's decision when the new zoning by-law is adopted.

Yours truly,



Anne McCauley
Chair, Political and Land Use Committee



Michael Langdon
President

c. township clerk
c Christopher Madej Director of Planning
c. Mayor Conn
c.Councilor Chidley
c.Councillor Gibbon
c.councillor Osborne
c councilor Sainsbury
c.councillor jacklin
c councilor Hepworth