

Via email

December 13, 2020

Dear Chair Edwards and Members of the Committee of Adjustment,

**Re: Minor Variance Application, Agenda Item 9g  
A-53/20, McGlynn, Part of Lots 24 and 25, Concessions 5 and 6,  
Parts 1-3, Plan 35R25046, (Port Carling), 5-4-043-03**

The Muskoka Lakes Association has been advised of a minor variance application being considered at tomorrow's Committee of Adjustment meeting, Agenda item 9g. The applicant is seeking permission to construct an addition to its existing boathouse to create an area that is identified on its drawings as a 'storage area', which will exceed the permissible lot coverage and boathouse width limits in the applicable zoning by-laws.

While the MLA understands that generally up to 11% lot coverage has been granted, we are concerned about this application for the following reasons:

1. Built Form Dominates: The aerial photographs of this property on the District of Muskoka's Geo Hub depict the difference in trees and vegetation between 2013 and 2018. We are attaching Geo Hub screen shots of the property at 1015 Robert Johnston Road. To view these directly on the Geo Hub, the property address can be entered in the search function at this link:

<https://muskoka.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=0f07e179998643bb962016ca4af982ba>

The extensive changes to the property between 2013 and 2018 have resulted in the built form now dominating the natural form, as compared to the reverse in 2013. The current application indicates that there is now a second garage on the property, which is not shown on the 2018 Geo Hub, further increasing the domination of the built form. We also understand that neighbours are concerned the applicant may have recently cleared additional trees on the property, and encourage the Committee to ask the applicant about this before granting any discretionary approval in their favour.

The Geo Hub data suggests that efforts at site plan control and retention of a shoreline buffer have not been effective on this property.

2. Lot configuration: There is a long and narrow area of the lot that provides road access and is not buildable due to required set backs. This strip has intensified the built form towards the front of the lot. As a result, adding a further 352 square feet of storage space to the shoreline results in a disproportionate impact on the waterfront as compared to a more regularly shaped lot.

3. No walls: Although the applicant indicates their intention to not have walls on this boathouse addition, once an extension is approved the applicant (or any future property owner) has the right to add walls. Any approval should take into account what will be permitted as of right, whether or not the applicant currently intends to exercise that right.

4. 4.7% is not minor: The addition will result in the boathouse width increasing by 14 feet, which exceeds the permitted boathouse width by 4.7%. In our view, this is not a minor variance, and the fact that there is an existing dock does not mitigate the concern over added built form to this particular shoreline in any respect. A boathouse of this width, length and height will, together with the current build form, detract from the natural character of the shoreline contrary to the Township's Official Plan Waterfront policies.

5. There are alternatives to storage space on the waterfront: We note that the applicant's drawings indicate the addition is meant for 'storage space'. There are ample alternatives on this property to locate storage space further from the waterfront for all of the reasons noted above. In addition, with flooding becoming more prevalent in Muskoka, storage at dock level should not be encouraged.

As a result of these concerns, the MLA recommends that this application not be approved. The MLA has been advocating for more emphasis on the view from the canoe to neighbours and the natural values for which Muskoka is famous. This is an opportunity to ensure that this value is upheld.

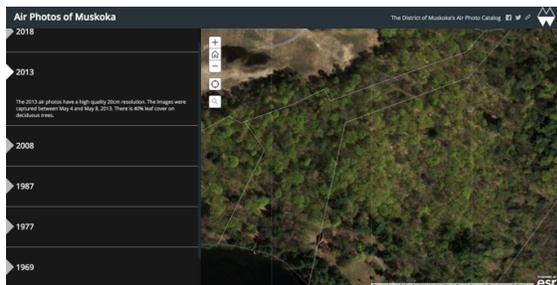
We appreciate this opportunity to provide these comments as we join you in trying to protect what we love in Muskoka.

Sincerely,

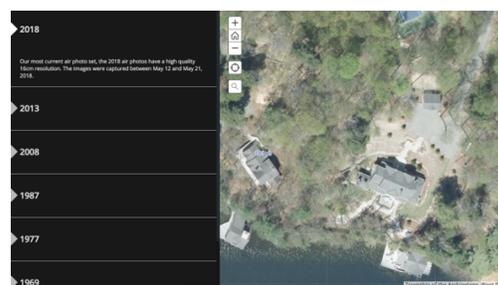


Susan Eplett  
Chair, Government and Land Use Committee

2013:



2018:



cc: Ms. Andrea Glazier, Coordinator/Secretary/Treasurer, Committee of Adjustment