

BY EMAIL

January 11, 2024

Mayor Lorenz and Members of Council  
Town of Gravenhurst  
3-5 Pineridge Gate, Gravenhurst, ON  
P1P 1Z3

**Attention: Mayor Lorenz and Members of Council**

Dear Mayor Lorenz and Members of Council;

**Re: Public Meeting Tuesday, January 23, 2024  
regarding proposed amendment to Gravenhurst Official Plan  
OPA 02-2023**

The Muskoka Lakes Association (MLA) and Friends of Muskoka (FOM) would like to express support for Gravenhurst's proposed Official Plan Amendment OPA 02-2023 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. We appreciate the Town's proposal to find alternative methods to notify and make residents aware of Planning Act applications.

Specifically, the MLA and FOM support Gravenhurst's Official Plan Amendment OPA 02-2023 to address any shortcomings in the public participation process by adopting alternate methods of providing notice.

The MLA and FOM support the update by adding measures to Section K9 and K10 of the Town's Official Plan. 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. Town website or internet engagement platforms; and/or,
- xi. any other methods as deemed necessary by the Town and established by amendment to this plan.

We would also encourage the Town of Gravenhurst 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 measures led by the lower-tier municipality. 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 [engagegravenhurst.ca](http://engagegravenhurst.ca) portal. In addition, while we acknowledge that the *Planning Act* sets standards for circulation of planning applications, we would encourage the Town 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 Town of Gravenhurst on the proposed Official Plan Amendment.

Sincerely



Susan Eplett  
President, Muskoka Lakes Association



Laurie Thomson  
President, Friends of Muskoka

cc:

Melissa Halford  
Director of Development Services  
[melissa.halford@gravenhurst.ca](mailto:melissa.halford@gravenhurst.ca)

Adam Ager  
Manager of Planning Services  
[adam.ager@gravenhurst.ca](mailto:adam.ager@gravenhurst.ca)