



Box 298, Port Carling, Ontario, Canada  
POB 1J0  
Phone (705) 765-5723 Fax (705) 765-3203  
E-mail [info@mla.on.ca](mailto:info@mla.on.ca) Website  
[www.mla.on.ca](http://www.mla.on.ca)

September 12, 2018

Mayor and Members of Council  
Township of Muskoka Lakes  
Box 129  
Port Carling, Ontario  
POB1J0

sent via email [cmortimer@muskokalakes.ca](mailto:cmortimer@muskokalakes.ca)

Dear Mayor Furniss and Members of Council:

Re: OPA 51 and Zoning By-Law Amendment 2018-105

The Muskoka Lakes Association previously provided comments on this application (December 13, 2016) to the Committee of Adjustment concerning and Official Plan Amendment and Zoning By-law amendment to allow for the creation of 5 new lots on Leonard Lake. Leonard Lake is deemed to be an over threshold lake by the District of Muskoka and thus new lot creation was not appropriate. An environmental impact study was to be completed to inform further consideration of the lot creation.

OPA 51 is required to implement site specific development policy that will implement the recommendations of the Environmental Impact Study (EIS) and Water Quality Impact Assessment (WQIA).

There is much debate about the quality of the water in Leonard Lake and the sensitivity of this lake to further development. The EIS and Water Quality Impact Assessment have both determined that the lots can be created subject to a number of conditions that when applied will result in no change to the environment. Other experts have not been so optimistic. The WQIA did not take into account the work of Dr. Sue Watson or a very recent confirmation by the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP) in August of this year of blue green algae in a sample from the lake.

This application is caught in the transition between the existing official plan and the new official plan of the District of Muskoka (DOM) where the lake health policy framework has changed. In the new lake health policies, Leonard Lake would be flagged for a causation study due to the presence of blue green algae recently confirmed by the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP) (*DOM C2.6.3.2 a) iii) A blue-green algal (cyanobacteria) bloom confirmed and documented by the Province and/or the Health Unit*). DOM policy further states that:

*C2.6.6; C.2.6.6.1 a) A waterbody will be added to Schedule E2 .....and/or when the water quality indictor identified in Section C2.6.3.2 a) iii) is confirmed to be present*

*e) Until such time as a causation study is completed and any recommendations adopted by Muskoka District Council and implemented through policy, the water bodies listed in Schedule E2 shall be subject to the enhanced protection policies of this plan.*

*f) should a Causation Study determine that the primary cause of or principle contributor to the water quality indicator is related to development, and enhanced protection policy will apply or waterbody specific policies will be developed to ensure that any additional lot creations....may proceed without negatively impacting water quality or to appropriately limit further development.*

A causation study is not the same as an EIS as it looks to determine the causes of water quality issues facing the lake and to determine if development or other causes are contributing to the observed condition.

The Township of Muskoka Lakes staff report to council notes that the committee may wish to defer their decision to allow for further evaluation by the water quality and environmental experts who have been involved in Leonard Lake.

Until such time as the causes of water quality concerns on Leonard Lake have been confirmed, the MLA submits that it is premature for the Township of Muskoka Lakes to permit the creation of 5 new lots on an over threshold lake with documented presence of blue-green algae. The precautionary principle would dictate that the Council defer this application until such time as water quality experts can come to some agreement about causation.

The MLA requests notice of any additional meetings with respect to this item. Notice of the council's decision is also requested.

Yours truly,



Deborah Martin-Downs,  
Chair, Political and Land Use Committee

c.c. Leonard Lake Stakeholders Association [Leonardlakemuskoka@gmail.com](mailto:Leonardlakemuskoka@gmail.com)  
Christy Doyle, District of Muskoka,