

April 19, 2018

Dear Wollaston Lake Home & Cottage Association Members,

Most of you are aware of issues relating to the ongoing development of the Bear Ridge Campground and Cottages property. Some of you are aware that the development, and commentary from all sides of the issue, has become contentious. Most recently, the Lake Association Executive has come under criticism by a vocal minority of individuals for the positions we have taken, commentary we have provided, statements we have made, and communication practices we have used. We believe that the majority of the criticisms are unwarranted and unfair. As a small group of volunteers, with Wollaston Lake in our hearts, we strive to do our best to research information and to plan actions which will best reflect our mission statement and advocate for the health of Wollaston Lake.

We want to provide clarity about what we believe to be our mission and objectives. Our By-laws state that the Wollaston Lake Home and Cottage Association (WLHCA), “considers itself custodian, active steward, and advocate of Wollaston Lake and its surrounding environment.” Our primary objective is to protect and preserve the health of Wollaston Lake, and we undertake to do so through communication and advocacy with our members. We have done so, and we will continue to do so, notwithstanding criticisms that some people might have when we respectfully differ with them in our opinions or actions. We believe different opinions and viewpoints are healthy, but we also believe they should be tendered respectfully and without person attack.

We appreciate that many of our members chose to inform Township Council of their independent and considered opinions about the By-law 10-15 Amendment Request, both verbally at the March 9 meeting on the subject, as well as in writing in advance of the meeting. These letters, we have been informed by Jennifer Cohen, Township of Wollaston Clerk, are considered public documents and can be shared with interested parties once addresses and emails have been removed, leaving the text of messages and writer’s names. The consultant from Bear Ridge has accessed these documents from the Township, on Bear Ridge’s behalf. When the amendment to By-law 10-15 comes before Council, all the aforementioned letters will be included as documents for Councilors to read in their background package of information. We do not know of a date for this meeting yet, as negotiations are continuing with Bear Ridge on the agreements that are required to accompany the site plan.

As of yet, we have not seen the majority of your comments, we assume there were a number on either side of the proposed amendment to By-law 10-15. The WLHCA Executive will ask for a copy of the letters from Wollaston Township to provide us with information about positions that have been presented on this issue. We respect that you arrived at your opinions based on your own observations, analysis of documents you were able to obtain, your own beliefs about what you think is right for our lake, comments from friends and family, and commentary we have provided.

Prior to the March 9th Public Meeting, we had made an interpretation error relating to the Bear Ridge septic system. We acknowledged the error and corrected it as quickly as we could in a

fashion we felt would get the correction to you and into the public realm as quickly as possible. We apologize again for any confusion our error caused.

There was a certain amount of confusion around what would be discussed at the March 9 meeting. The Association Executive only became aware that the dock would not be part of the public meeting, just before the meeting. The Notice of Public Meeting posted by Wollaston Township had included the docks as part of the discussion. We had received a letter the Bear Ridge owners had sent to their residents in an effort to build support, including a form letter their residents were encouraged to submit to Township Council in support of their proposal. Both the letter to Bear Ridge residents and the form letter mentioned the dock. As a result, the Executive included the reference to the dock in the presentation that I made at the March 9 meeting. It was unfortunate that I was stopped from continuing that part of my presentation. It was valuable information for the Council to hear, as the dock that Bear Ridge has proposed in The Recreation Capacity Study is significantly larger than the existing approved dock. Eventually questions about potential impacts to Wollaston Lake must be discussed by Council, and we believe valid research must be done to examine possible effects that development and increased boat traffic may have on water quality.

In Jennifer Cohen's opening remarks at beginning of the March 9 meeting, she explained two important points that had not been made clear in advance of the meeting. Certainly, the Notice of Public Meeting did not make them clear. She explained that the items in By-law 10-15 which related to building the swimming pool and the required recreational activities (item 1.e) would be moved to the Site Plan Amendment and its accompanying agreements. These were still under negotiation between the Township and the owners of Bear Ridge at the time of the March 9 meeting. According to Jennifer Cohen, the Site Plan and the agreements that accompany it would be enforceable documents that would speak to some of the elements originally contained in the "Minimum Recreational Facilities" requirements in the existing By-law. Furthermore, she explained that since the dock would be the subject of a future negotiation between the Township and the owners of Bear Ridge around a Land-use Agreement of the shoreline allowance adjacent to Bear Ridge, no discussion on the subject would be allowed at the March 9 meeting. The Association Executive was not aware of the Site Plan Amendment negotiations, nor were we aware that the Shoreline Allowance Land-use Agreement was contemplated. According to the Township Clerk, neither of these Agreements has been finalized as of April 12, 2018.

You may have become aware that the owners of Bear Ridge and some of their supporters are criticizing the Association Executive and Association members who have requested that an environmental assessment of the lake and its shoreline be completed before the Township approves any additional development activities. In 2014 Bear Ridge commissioned an Environmental Impact Statement regarding the campground expansion. While the Environmental Impact Statement was a valuable study to do in light of the development that Bear Ridge was undertaking, it did not include the potential impact of the development on Wollaston Lake. The author of the assessment (entitled, "Scoped Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Bear Ridge Campground and Cottages"), Mr. Dan Mansell outlined in his introduction, "This scoped EIS will focus on the potential impacts of the proposed redevelopment on Frog Creek and the existing local wetlands". We maintain that a thorough environmental assessment, focused on potential environmental impacts on the lake itself, should

be completed before agreements are reached between the Township and Bear Ridge on the Campground's use of Township-owned land at the lake's edge. This is crucial, considering Bear Ridge's plans for a much larger dock and the significant increase in boating activity that may go along with that. Both the Township Reeve, in a short discussion after the March 9 meeting, and the Township Clerk in a discussion this week, indicated that it may make sense to have further study regarding lake impact completed in advance of finalizing a Land-use Agreement, although they both indicate that no such assessment has been funded or commissioned at this time. The Executive of WLHCA would support the Township of Wollaston in initiatives to proceed with an environmental assessment of Wollaston Lake. We would like to share information from our research about contacts, qualified firms and resources recognized for expertise in assessments of the well-being of lakes.

Recently, the Association Executive has been accused of creating confusion by spreading misinformation. It has never been our intention to detract from honest and open debate about the Bear Ridge development. Rather, we have shared information and perspectives based on information we believed to be correct. Public interest and discussion about the Bear Ridge development by the Association Executive, as well as by many other interested parties, gained pace once the March 9 meeting was announced. Information was scarce in advance of the meeting, even though the Association Executive requested "all relevant documents" almost 2 weeks in advance of the meeting. More information became available at the meeting and undoubtedly, more will be added to the discussion in the coming months. We are aware that some of you may be receiving notes from people who disagree with the position you have taken on this important development. We remind you that you are entitled to your opinions, as are they. We encourage you to continue to be respectful in expressing your opinions. As always, we encourage all members to inform themselves as best they can, from as many sources as possible, and form your own opinions about the development.

We believe that members of the Association agree with the Executive that we are not against development in Wollaston Township but wish to ensure that all development occurs with the appropriate consideration for the health of the lake. Neither are we against the development of Bear Ridge Campground and Cottages. We would like to see it completed in a fashion we can all be proud of and by which the owners and the community benefit. Our advocacy with respect to the Campground aims to ensure that appropriate environmental assessment of the potential impact on lake health is completed before changes occur which might have an adverse effect on lake quality. We continue to ask the Township to ensure that complete and timely information about the Bear Ridge development and any other major development be proactively available, that full consideration is given to protecting Wollaston Lake, notwithstanding activities within the Campground, and that all agreements between the Township and the Campground be fully enforced.

Regards,

Peggy Stewart

President – Wollaston Lake Home and Cottage Association