

Acton Island Association

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Report to Members Fall, 2005

I hope that you had a great summer. The weather was fantastic and continued so right into October. Lets hope that the winter weather allows us to do all those winter activities that make some of us believe that winter in Muskoka is almost better than summer in Muskoka.

The purpose of this letter is outline to you matters that your board believes would be of interest.

Annual General Meeting

This year's AGM was held on Sunday June 26, 2005 at the Bala Community Centre. Some of the items covered at that meeting are as follows:

1. **Members' Roster** The first edition of the Members' Roster was handed out to those attending the meeting. Copies were subsequently sent to all members of the association. The Members' Roster is meant to provide you with telephone numbers and other important contact information about fellow members. It will allow you to easily contact friends and neighbours, especially if you notice a problem that they would want to be aware of. If you did not receive a copy of the Members' Roster please contact Leslie McCann at 705-762-5784 or at leslie@summitmortgage.ca or write to her care of the association's address noted above. There will inevitably be corrections that need to be made to the roster. While you will be able to send in requested changes with next year's membership renewal request, please feel free to email or write Leslie with your corrections prior to that. However, please do NOT phone in your changes. Thanks again to Leslie McCann for all of the time spent producing the roster.
2. **Map of the Island** Jim Claydon has been working to produce a map of the island and surrounding area. We hope to be able to send members a copy next spring or summer.
3. **Bears** Bears continue to be a problem but hopefully a decreasing one as more and more members purchase metal containers for their garbage. Metal containers will discourage the bears but the best solution is to drop off your garbage at the Transfer Station prior to leaving for the city or any time that you are heading into Port Carling. If the bears can't smell garbage they will tend to stay away from your cottage.
4. **Donations** Again, this year the members at the AGM voted to contribute \$500 to WRAFT (Waterfront Residents after Fair Taxation) and \$500 to the Muskoka Lakes Association Marine Patrol.
5. **Taxation** WRAFT (Waterfront Residents after Fair Taxation) has been lobbying the provincial government on behalf of 107 associations representing over 25,000 property owners and close to 100,000 voters to improve the equity in

waterfront taxation. While their goal of having the government defer the 2005 reassessments has not been achieved, their continuing discussions with the government will hopefully be successful in the future.

6. **Stewart Martin** Stewart Martin, your District and Township Councillor spoke to the meeting on a number of matters and answered questions from the audience. Some of the very interesting information that he passed on to us was on the responsibilities of the District and Township and on where your tax dollars are spent.
 - a. District and Township Responsibilities Stewart pointed out that while both levels of governments have a variety of responsibilities the District, which comprises the townships of Georgian Bay, Lake of Bays and the Muskoka Lakes, spends a large part of its budget on providing welfare, long term care facilities and ambulance and police services. The Townships, ours being the Township of Muskoka Lakes, spend the largest part of their budgets on the upkeep of roads, including public docks and on by-laws and their enforcement.
 - b. Taxation Stewart gave the meeting an approximate breakdown of where their taxes go. Approximately 13% of taxes go to the Township, 47% to the District and 40% to the province to cover Education costs. He pointed out that these tax revenues are collected approximately 80% from waterfront property owners, 10% from inland property owners and 10% from farms and businesses.
7. **New Directors** The AGM elected Malcolm Foulkes (1054 Kemp Road) and John McMechen (1314 Innisfree Rd) to the association's Board of Directors and accepted the resignations of Jim Claydon, Bob Anderson and Gwen Jocelyn. The meeting thanked the departing Directors and authorized the new Board to purchase a thank you gift for each of them. The names of all of your directors are listed at the back of this newsletter.

2005 Notices of Assessment

You will shortly be receiving, if you have not already received your 2005 Notice of Assessment. When reviewing it remember that the percentage increase in your assessment does not automatically mean a corresponding percentage increase in your taxes. If the percentage increase in your assessment is approximately equal to the average percentage increase in all assessments then your taxes will probably not go up as long as the budgets of the Township, District and Province re Education do not increase. If your increase is larger than the average increase then your taxes will probably go up, but the extent of the increase will depend on a number of factors. More information on the impact of changes will appear in the press and in your 2006 tax bill.

Advertising Signs on Acton Island Road

A number of members who attended the AGM expressed concern about the growing number of signs appearing on Acton Island Road, especially near highway 169. The Board was asked to look into the matter. On August 9, 2005 I wrote to Len Troup, the Superintendent of Public Works requesting the removal of advertising signs attached to trees on Township property. I am pleased to report that Mr. Troup's office has informed me that the signs will be removed.

Update on Mr. Colacci

Mr. Colacci owns property on Innisfree Road, about 500 meters east of Acton Island Road. A couple of years ago he applied unsuccessfully, as a result of the objections of a large number of Acton Islanders, to have his property rezoned from residential to institutional so that he could erect a Catholic church. The Township refused this request as their policy is to permit this type of land use only where properties border on major thoroughfares and thus allow easy access. However, he has continued to hold gatherings on his property two to three times per year, with two to three busloads of attendees.

A number of parishioners of St. Anne's in Whiteside, including a number of Acton Island residents met with the new Bishop of Peterborough to voice their complaints and worries about the use of Mr. Colacci's property. Their successful meetings have resulted in the Bishop writing to Mr. Colacci, expressing his concern about Mr. Colacci's alienation of his neighbours. We understand that the Bishop has indicated that the Diocese does not need additional churches in the area and that he will not authorize the construction on any new churches or similar buildings on Acton Island. However, we understand that the Bishop indicated to Mr. Colacci that upon request, the Diocese may authorize a pilgrimage or assembly, once or twice a year on Acton Island. Hopefully, Mr. Colacci will follow the Bishop's wishes in this matter.

Bala Falls Generating Plant

The water level in Lake Muskoka is currently controlled by the Ministry of Natural Resources which is charged with maintaining the lake level within a normal operating level from high level to low level of approximately 15 to 17 inches. They have been quite successful at maintaining a level well within these ranges, normally within a 7.5 to 8.5 inch high to low level.

There have been some discussions about transferring this MNR's responsibility to the private sector. Your association, The Muskoka Lakes Association and others are concerned that a private power generating company may be motivated to raise and lower the lake to its maximum and minimums on an ongoing basis in order to maximize its profits.

The Swift River Company now owns the small generating plant at Bala and will be unveiling its plans for it at public meetings later this year or early next year. Your Board will be monitoring its plans.

New District of Muskoka Web Site

The District recently unveiled its new website, www.muskokawaterweb.ca, The web site is divided into eight major sections covering all aspects of water in Muskoka. These include information about septic systems, the results of water monitoring, who is responsible for what and how to maintain your property so as to protect the water quality for you and your family. Please consider visiting this interesting site.

Other Current Issues

Your Board is working on a number of other issues that may affect you. They are:

1. Access to High Speed Internet

Larry Rozak, a cottager on Innisfree Rd who is, like many of us, frustrated by the lack of high speed internet service, will be working over the next few months on behalf of the board to determine what options are available, their

cost and the pros and cons of each. If you are frustrated by the lack of high speed service, would like feed back on this matter or would like to contribute suggestions, please contact Larry at larry.rozak@sympatico.ca or at 762-1431.

2. Wakeboarding between Acton Island and Muskadasa Island

A number of members have expressed their frustration at the number of people from outside the area that use the quiet waters between Muskadasa Island and Acton Island to enjoy and practice their wakeboarding and the noise and large waves that this sport produces. John McMechan, one of your directors, will be working with residents to determine if there are options available to mitigate the problem.

3. Association Liability Insurance

Your association does not currently have liability protection for its directors as we believed that the possibility of a claim was remote given that we did not operate a regatta or other large event where a claim could potentially arise. Several articles have appeared recently that suggest that the mere giving of information to association members may create a problem should a member use this information and suffer damages. Leslie McCann has agreed to follow up on this matter and report back.

Your Township Mayor and Ward C Councillors

Mayor – Susan Pryke, spryke@township.muskokalakes.on.ca or 705-765-3156
Dist/Township Councillor - Stewart Martin, smartin@muskoka.com or 705-765-3370.
Township Councillors - Karen Ellis (705-765-6337), Brian Hare, brabbit@muskoka.com. (705-765-5527)

Your Acton Island Association Board of Directors

President: Gord Richards, 1153 Acton Island Rd., 705-762-5394 or 416-486-0507, g-richards@sympatico.ca
Past President: Jim Lewis, 1043 Innisfree Rd, 705-762-1799, eleanor.lewis@sympatico.ca
Secretary: Brian Atkinson, 1153 Acton Island Rd, 705-762-5394 or 416-486-7404, brianratkinson@sympatico.ca
Director at Large: Malcolm Foulkes, 1054 Kemp Rd., 762-3664, r.d@bellnet.ca
Director at Large: Sally Hastings, 1029-2 Ham Rd., 705-762-5171
Director of Membership: Leslie McCann, 1133 Innisfree Rd., 705-762-5784, leslie@summitmortgage.ca
Director at Large: John McMechan, 1314 Innisfree Rd., 705-762-3748, kmcmechan@hotmail.com
Treasurer: Bruce Patterson, 1250 Acton Island Rd., 705-762-5270, oldpeakroad@yahoo.com
Director at Large: Bill Tannahill, 1022 Guys Rd., 705-762-0938, tannahill@encode.com

Your Board is here to serve the needs of its members. If you have ideas or would like to become involved please contact me or one of the other board members.

Gordon Richards, President