



Skootamatta District Ratepayers Association

P O Box 146 Cloyne Ontario K0H 1K0

June 23, 2023

Christine Reed
CAO/Clerk-Treasurer
Township of Addington Highlands
72 Edward Street
P.O. BOX 89
Flinton, Ontario K0H 1P0


Dear Ms Reed,

The Skootamatta District Ratepayers Association is providing comment on the draft Official Plan, as presented on March 27, 2023.

Arcadis and IBS Group, further referred to as consultants, provided a series of recommendations. Some of which are of concern to the SDRA and may impact our members as well as the local community.

The consultants make reference to developable lot creation and to consider increasing the number of severances, from 3 to 4, that are permitted. The consultants also identify that waterfront properties have limited additional availability and that “area lakes are at capacity.” With an increase in seasonal dwellings becoming permanent homes, and a rapid increase in short-term rentals, where some are occupied beyond the septic limits, any additional severances must be carefully considered. Continuing pressure on local lakes should require an assessment of new lot creation that will place undue stress on the environment. As mentioned by the Lake Weslemkoon Conservation Association, if the Township wishes to investigate housing stock increases, this should focus around existing settlements, which would prove to be more cost effective. However, it would seem that economic opportunities and environmental stewardship would create a better return on investment.

The topic of short-term rentals is not new to the council or to our members. Many of these rentals are seasonal properties, and some are advertising more capacity than their septic systems are designed to handle. The Township should be considering a policy or by-law for short-term rentals to ensure compliance and minimize the number of rentals requiring grandfathering of conditions.



Houseboats and floating dwellings is a topic that the SDRA has discussed in the past, and one of which we have provided comment on as well. There are many concerns with such dwellings, not the least of which include non-compliant floating structures, enforcement, sewage disposal, and occupant safety. Such structures would also place considerable pressure on boat launches that are not designed for the potential weight. Houseboats and floating dwellings should not be permitted on local lakes. **As the SDRA has a land use permit for the Trail's End boat launch, we would ask for clarification on jurisdiction to restrict vessel types at this particular boat launch.**

In addition to topics surrounding housing, there were some specific recommendations on waterfront development. There needs to be a full understanding of what it means to remove the differentiation between seasonal and residential waterfront properties in the Official Plan. What impact will this have on existing seasonal residents and what can they expect to change in their interactions with the Township (including development applications and taxation).

The SDRA supports a strengthening of protections for the riparian zone, and encourages the Township to contract appropriate consultants to review the most effective means of developing such protections.

Septic systems have been a topic of concern for many years. As seasonal properties convert to permanent residences, and some short-term rentals exceed recommended capacities, system failures are only bound to increase. The SDRA agrees with the LWCA that all building permits should require a septic tank inspection. In addition, a voluntary septic inspection program should be offered to residents to ensure appropriate sizing and function.

The consideration of Lake Plans as a tool in land use planning within the Official Plan is supported. The SDRA has a lake management plan that is updated periodically and looks at the various pressures on our lake community. This local knowledge could be of considerable use to the Township when reviewing the Official Plan.

The review of the Official Plan is an opportunity to engage the local community and ensure efforts are being directed where they will have a measurable and desirable impact. The SDRA is available for additional consultation, as we have been with many topics in the past.

Sincerely,

Joel Arthurs
President