

November 8, 2017

Langmaid's Island Workshop Report

The Dwight Community Centre was the site of an invitational workshop on the future of Langmaid's Island on the afternoon of **Tuesday October 24th, 2017**. About 20 invitees gathered to hear Langmaid's Island's new owners outline their intention of seeking approval to subdivide the island into cottage lots (see **Appendix A** for List of Participants).

The new owners have summer roots in the Lake of Bays area and have enjoyed cottaging there. They plan to keep several lots for themselves and family members and eventually build their own cottages, so they are particularly sensitive to the importance of meeting and talking with members of the community.

The new owners also made it clear they wanted to hear from the workshop group before moving ahead with a formal submission for the cottage lot severance on the island. They also announced that a public open house will be held in December in Lake of Bays where details of a preliminary cottage lot plan will be available for further discussion and comment.

Among those who came to offer their views, concerns, opinions and advice were local elected officials, including Mayors of Lake of Bays & Huntsville, senior Township & District planners, representatives of Muskoka Conservancy & the Lake of Bays Heritage Foundation and Lake of Bays Association. The discussion was led by professional facilitator Glenn Pothier, who, along with MHBC Planning partner Debra Kakaria, took notes on the input offered by the group.

Prior to the group discussion, presentations on the background, history, geographic and environmental features of Langmaid's were made by Jim Dymont, a partner with MHBC Planning, and Al Shaw, senior ecologist at Riverstone Environmental Solutions.

FACILITATED DISCUSSION

Following the presentations, the group was lead through two exercises by Glenn Pothier;: (i) D.R.I.V.E and (ii) KnoWonder.

The **D.R.I.V.E** exercise encouraged workshop participants to provide their thoughts in the following categories:

- i) What do we want the Langmaid Island ‘cottage lot site design solution’ to **Do**? - what is the range of desired outcomes?
- ii) What are the **Restrictions**? – what must the ‘cottage lot site design solution’ not do?
- iii) What are we willing to **Invest** – what resources are available (time, money, energy, people, etc.) to help realize aspirations for the ‘cottage lot site design solution’?
- iv) What **Values** (and/or principles) must be embraced as part of the process?
- v) What are the **Essential** Outcomes – things that must be accomplished for the ‘cottage lot site design solution’ to be a success?

The **KnoWonder** exercise had participants provide feedback on two main categories:

- (i) What do we **know** (or think we know) that needs to inform the discussion; and
- (ii) What are we **wondering** – what outstanding questions (or issues or ‘itches’) do we have relating to the future of Langmaid’s Island

WHAT WE HEARD

Based on the detailed notes taken at the meeting, the following is a summary of **what we heard** grouped together under eleven (11) main headings.

1. Values & Principles

Respect for nature and the environment is important when deciding where cottage lot lines should be drawn. Respect for the surrounding community and the overall review and approval process are also vital. While it was acknowledged that amendments to the Township’s Official Plan and Zoning By-law would be required, lot creation and building standards should have regard for the current policies and provisions set out in the Township’s Official Plan, Zoning By-law and Development Permit By-law. The principle of ongoing open communication, as exemplified by this first workshop, was also supported, along with a desire for transparency and a forthright exchange of views and positions.

2. Lotting Plan and Size

Many voiced a clear preference for larger and fewer lots than might be technically possible. The lotting plan should not come before the natural heritage features are understood and mitigation is incorporated. Each lot should consider natural constraints, setback requirements and where the building and septic envelopes can be located to avoid unintended consequences (e.g. blasting hillsides to keep cottages better hidden).

3. Building

One participant noted that “Lake of Bays is not Toronto”, and that cottage design on the eventual lots should be respectful of the existing character of the Lake in terms of the size of cottages and avoidance of lawns down to the shoreline. Others noted that when cottages are constructed, they should be appropriately set back from the shoreline to minimize visual impact and disruption to natural shoreline vegetation. The possibility of ‘nesting’ future boathouses along shared property lines was raised to allow for longer contiguous stretches of undisturbed shoreline in between. It was also suggested that future cottages should fit into the landscape and minimize the need to blast rock during cottage construction.

The issue of eventual staging and access for cottage construction was also raised, although it was noted that the building of structures on an island such as Langmaid's is unlikely to happen "all at once", but rather over several seasons, even if the eventual lots themselves are sold quickly.

4. Conservation & Wildlife

Some expressed the hope that parts of the island could be preserved as 'conservation areas'. Concern was raised about the ability to administer and maintain ‘public lands’ and the notion of 'public access lands' on the island was a non-starter.

The environmental report provided by Riverstone indicated only two identified species at risk on or near the island: barn swallow (in the boathouse) and potential bat habitat in forested vegetation communities. Riverstone confirmed that when the boathouse is to be replaced, the activity will be registered with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry, and will require the creation of a nesting structure for Barn Swallow. Appropriate timing restrictions for tree removal will also be a condition for bats. Based on mapping and assessment protocols from the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry, it is the opinion that deer wintering habitat is not present on the island. Although the presence of neither snapping turtles along the shoreline nor birds nesting on cliffs was noted by Riverstone during its many visits to the island, it will re-visit the property in response to questions that were raised.

A preference was expressed to limit the fragmentation of natural features so that portions of the island would remain undisturbed.

5. Mainland Access

Questions were raised about how, and from where, cottage lot owners, their visitors and contractors would eventually access the island properties from the mainland, where they would park their vehicles and whether environmental and other assessments had been conducted on any possible mainland access points. The need to accommodate ongoing servicing of future seasonal residents once cottages are built was also raised.

It is noted that this subject will be up for discussion again, as no firm proposals had been made at the time of the meeting on October 24th.

6. Infrastructure

It was noted that consideration should be given to where infrastructure (septic systems, utilities) will be eventually located for cottage construction and whether an internal road system will be built into the design to minimize potential impacts on shoreline vegetation during eventual construction and future maintenance of cottages. The inland roads on Bigwin Island were cited as an example of a servicing network.

7. Emergency Services/Insurance

Providing emergency services (fire, ambulance, policing) is always more challenging on any island, and Langmaids is no exception. It was noted that the Lake of Bays fire department is a volunteer department. The Langmaids' owners were advised to obtain liability and other insurance on their property.

8. Cleanup of island

Part of the environmental presentation involved discussion of the derelict buildings and their contents currently on the island. The interiors of the abandoned buildings, including the main lodge and bunkies, have been destroyed by vandals over the years. All the structures and their remaining contents will need to be carefully removed in an environmentally safe manner. Related questions were also raised about how to manage trespassing, given the previous burning of a bunkie on the island and ongoing misuse and littering.

9. Island as Community

Some expressed the view that the island should ideally operate as a community, perhaps with some shared services, such as a boat shuttle and/or community docking.

10. Investing Resources, Time, Talent & Knowledge

A number of participants indicated they, or the groups they belong to, were willing to contribute knowledge and time to positively impact the cottage lot design. Muskoka Conservancy, the Lake of Bays Heritage Foundation, Town of Huntsville and Township of Lake of Bay staff all indicated they can contribute a range of knowledge including information about best practices, natural shorelines and appropriate plantings. It was noted that the Township's resources are limited and that 'patience' is needed as we go through the review process. Those who took part were thanked for already investing their time and knowledge in the workshop. It was noted that representatives from various stakeholders can help spread information to the broader Lake of Bays community and residents through newsletters, social media and websites.

11. Preferred Outcomes

The group, including the new owners, agreed that the best outcome would be one in which all interested parties felt that the result of the cottage lot creation process represented a "win-win", with reasonable 'give and take' on all sides, and a sincere desire for a balanced approach.

NEXT STEPS

- i) MHBC will hold a **pre-consultation meeting** with Township and District Planning staff Langmaid's consultants in November to confirm application requirements.
- ii) As technical studies are further completed, a **concept lotting plan** will be prepared and will be made available at an open house in December to receive initial overall feedback and initiate discussion with the community.
- iii) Since the workshop, it has been confirmed that the **Open House** will be held as follows:

Langmaid's Island Public Open House
10:00 am to 12:00 pm
Saturday, December 2, 2017
Baysville Autumn Leaves Senior Centre

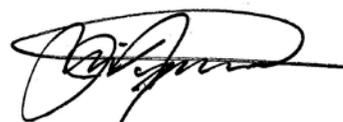
- iv) In addition, Langmaid's owners will be undertaking **further cleanup works** on the island including removal of refuse and debris as well as boarding up and securing the various structures for winter.

Yours truly,

MHBC



Debra Kakaria (Walker), MBA, MCIP, RPP
Partner



Jim Dymont, BES, MCIP, RPP
Partner

APPENDIX A: LIST OF WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS

Those who attended:

Robert Young, Mayor, Township of Lake of Bays
Scott Aitcheson, Mayor, Town of Huntsville
Bob Lacroix, Ward Councillor, Township of Lake of Bays and District of Muskoka
Nancy Tapley, Councillor, Township of Lake of Bays
Summer Valentine, Director of Planning, District of Muskoka
Jeremy Rand, Manager of Planning, District of Muskoka (*in place of Melissa Halford*)
Elizabeth Reimer, Senior Planning, Town of Huntsville (*in place of Derrick Hammond / Kirsten Maxwell*)
Wendy Gibson, Director, Lake of Bays Association (*in place of Ian Beverley*)
Brian Simpson, Planning Co-chair, Lake of Bays Association (*in place of Ian Beverley*)
Judith Mills, Vice-President, Lake of Bays Heritage Foundation
Scott Young, Executive Director, Muskoka Conservancy
David Smith, President, Eagle Landing
Al Shaw, ecologist retained by Owners, Riverstone Environmental Solutions Inc.
Jim Dymont, Partner (Planner), MHBC
Debra Kakaria, Partner (Planner), MHBC
Vanessa Hicks, Planner, MHBC
Marg Walton, Partner (Planner), PlanScape
Jim Maclean, Public Relations Consultant, TA/SC Inc.
Glenn Pothier, Facilitator, GLPi

Those who were invited:

Dan Armour, Ward Councillor, Town of Huntsville
Nancy Alcock, Councillor, Town of Huntsville and District of Muskoka
Terri-Lyn Magee, Planning Technician, Township of Lake of Bays
Derrick Hammond, Director of Development Services, Town of Huntsville
Kirsten Maxwell, Manager of Planning, Town of Huntsville
Ian Beverley, President, Lake of Bays Association
Tom Pinckard, former Mayor, District Councillor, and member of the Board of Bigwin Island