

## Leonard Lake Stakeholders Association

A community focused on protecting, nurturing and cultivating the natural, physical and social characteristics of Leonard Lake



### In This BLAST:

- Update on Leonard Lake Plan (LLP)
- Call with the Township about the LLP policies - most specifically the prohibition of new boat houses.
- Let's hear your opinion - YES to a new boat house prohibition; NO to a new boat house prohibition; and/or DO YOU support additional requirements for new boat house applications?

### LAKE PLAN UPDATE

For several years, the Township of Muskoka Lakes (TML) and the District Municipality of Muskoka (DMM) have encouraged small and medium lake associations such as the Leonard Lake Stakeholders Association (LLSA) to develop a Lake Plan (LP) with lake specific policies designed to address lake specific challenges. The Township made a commitment to work with interested lake groups and to embed relevant LP policies they felt they could support, into the new TML Official Plan (OP). Draft #2 of the OP is the latest version and draft three will be released in the next month or so.

The LLSA in 2004 worked with property owners to develop [the original Leonard Lake Plan](#). The goals of the Leonard LP (LLP) formulated by a majority of property owners in 2004 focussed on water quality, bio-diversity, trees and shorelines, and property development and land usage. The mutual goals formulated in 2004 have not only driven the mandate of the lake association since that time, but have increased in relevance given the water quality, climate and environmental challenges of today. The 2004 Plan provided the foundation for discussion with property owners at the 2018 LLSA Annual General Meeting (AGM).

Association members at the 2018 AGM voted to engage beyond membership with all Leonard Lake property owners to develop a new Plan that would include lake specific policies, and to work with the Township to have the Leonard Lake Plan and policies embedded in the TML Official Plan.

In late 2020, 97% of property owners (waterfront and back-lot) were sent a survey and invitations (5) electronically to participate in a zoom and/or personal consultations to discuss the results of the survey and the draft Leonard Lake Plan and policies. Just over 50% of LL properties participated.

There was good debate about the policies and a strong majority of 94% of the participants voted

YES to the plan and YES to submitting the plan and policies to the Township. The [LLP](#) submitted to TML is posted on the LLSA website.

Meridian Consulting is leading the work on the TML draft Official Plan on behalf of the Township. That work in 2021 included the review and redrafting of Lake Plan policies submitted to TML by Leonard Lake and four other lakes. TML and Council agreed to include the Leonard Lake Plan in the current draft (#2) of the TML OP with revisions. The revised Leonard Lake policies included in E10.3.4 of the [TML draft #2 Official Plan](#) are as follows:

- No further lot creation on the waterfront, except for conservation blocks, easements or separating existing uses onto two lots.
- Site Plan Control required for new development (*this is also proposed by TML in draft #2 of the OP*).
- Maximum gross floor space for main dwellings shall be approx. 3,500 sq ft.
- New boathouses shall not be permitted.
- Maximum lot coverage of 8% and 30m setbacks for new dwellings.  
(*N.B.: 8% lot coverage and 30m setbacks for Leonard Lake are both in the 2013 current TML Official Plan, Section 9.5*)
- New commercial uses shall not be permitted in the LL waterfront.
- Wetlands shall be protected from site alteration and maintained in a natural state.

The Township is in the process of consulting with each of the lakes in the Township that have requested to embed a lake plan into the draft TML Official Plan. The purpose of the consultations is to review and discuss the draft policies and the viability of those policies with each of the five lakes (i.e., Leonard Lake, Three Mile Lake, Skeleton Lake, Little Long Lake and Brandy Lake).

### **Call between the Leonard Lake Stakeholders Association and the Township of Muskoka Lakes**

TML Planning, Meridian Consulting and LLSA recently met online to discuss the Leonard Lake Plan. All policies were discussed and there was agreement that the language revised by Meridian Consulting for draft #2 of the TML OP, had muddied the intent of some of the initial Leonard Lake policies. As a result, policy wording will be adjusted in the next draft of the OP.

Please note that the Leonard Lake Plan does not attempt to deal with issues of grandfathering related to redevelopment which are the sole purview of the Township.

### **Boathouses**

Meridian Consulting is not in favour of an outright prohibition on new boathouses on Leonard Lake due to the difficulty in defending an absolute position if a property owner chose to appeal a rejected new boathouse development application. That being said, the 2013 current TML OP E4.3 (f) does include an outright ban on boathouses on the 64 smaller/remote/undeveloped Category 3 lakes within the Township.

As an alternative, the recommendation from Meridian is that Leonard Lake consider additional requirements for new boathouse development applications that would minimize environmental and

water quality impacts and consider lake character and viewscape implications.

The challenge facing LLSA at this point is that the policies in the Leonard Lake Plan followed consultation with LL property owners, and the decision to agree or disagree with the Township's advice/direction on this policy is not one that the LLSA should or will make in isolation of property owners.

[Once you review the background information that follows, please send LLSA your opinion on the boathouse prohibition by return email or directly to leonardlakemuskoka@gmail.com](#)

- **YES**, you agree to a new boathouse prohibition, or,
- **NO**, you do not agree to a new boathouse prohibition in the Leonard Lake Plan.
- **DO YOU** support an alternative approach to the prohibition that would mean additional requirements for new boathouse applications?

It is important that we hear from you and from a majority of Leonard Lake property owners by Friday, May 6<sup>th</sup>. LLSA will report back in an EBLAST once the results are known.

**Background regarding the LLP boathouse policy:**

The LLSA survey of 2020 sent to LL property owners did not include a question on boathouse prohibition, but comments were sent in with survey responses recommending 'no new boathouses' on the lake with the rationale that:

- Unlike the "big lakes", LL has no real tradition of boathouses - the lake presently has few boathouses,
- an increase in boathouse construction would have a significant and negative impact on lake character, and,
- an increase in boathouse construction would have a significant and negative impact on viewscape given the size of Leonard Lake.

The majority of comments received during the zoom consultations favoured 'no new boathouses', however, there were participants that disagreed with a boathouse prohibition stating that boathouses increase lake property values and that property owners should have the right to build a boathouse if they chose to do so.

There are approximately 168 main dwellings on Leonard Lake, and according to the Muskoka Water Web Shoreline Land Use Survey Structures, those 168 residences have a boathouse count of 1 - 1 slip, 2 - 2 slip and eight on-land boathouses in total.

Our water quality team lead offers the following points regarding the potential impact of boathouses on the environment. This shortened list is important when considering the building of any shoreline/over-the-water structure:

- Due to shading and bottom disturbance, all structures on the water have environmental impact. Floating docks, pier docks and crib docks have increasing impact in that order.

Boathouses have the greatest impact due to the requirement for more piles/cribs for the extra weight of the structure.

- While docks allow rain to flow into the water between planking, boathouses concentrate precipitation along eaves. The nearshore area is most vulnerable to nutrient loading due to concentrated precipitation impact where eaves empty onto the land. Leonard Lake has examples of possible near-shore nutrient loading resulting in algae booms.
- Boathouses tend to be wider structures at the shoreline than docks and this connection to the land disturbs the riparian zone.
- Boat houses contain storage and sometimes living space, thus increasing the traffic along the shoreline at the boathouse entrance and consequently the likelihood of shoreline disturbance and erosion. With storage there is more risk of unintended spills into the water.

### **Is there an alternative approach to the prohibition?**

The Leonard Lake Plan was developed based on stakeholder feedback and input, but a Plan like this often requires compromise and regard for your neighbours' views to be successful.

An alternative to an outright ban on new boathouse construction is to craft some additional requirements around boathouse development that would offer some additional environmental, lake character and viewscape protection? For example, consider these suggestions from TML and the consultant:

- 1 storey boathouses only (*this is presently the policy in the current OP*)
- 1 slip boathouses only,
- increase the side set-back requirements to reduce the impact that a boathouse could have in terms of blocking the view of neighbours,
- reduce the extent to which a boathouse protrudes out into the lake,
- reduce the width of the structure that is permitted along the shoreline,
- no roof-top decks, and,
- no boathouses on a "narrow water body" portion of the lake.

### **Please share your opinion.**

- **YES**, you agree to a new boathouse prohibition, or,
- **NO**, you do not agree to a new boathouse prohibition, and/or,
- **DO YOU** support an alternative approach to the prohibition that would mean additional requirements for new boat house applications?

This is your lake, and collectively our lake, and we all share a common goal - to keep this place healthy and vibrant for our families in the future.

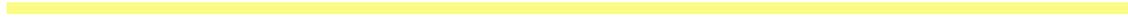
We look forward to hearing from you on any aspect of this correspondence. If you prefer to speak by phone, please send an email to [leonardlakemuskoka@gmail.com](mailto:leonardlakemuskoka@gmail.com) include a preferred phone number and you will be contacted.

Sincerely,

Leonard Lake Stakeholders Association

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