



In the winter months we wrote letters to the federal government with regards to the underused housing tax and a letter to the Township about our members' concerns with safety on the water.

We received a reply from the Deputy Assistant Commissioner - Assessment, Benefit, and Service Branch - Canada Revenue Agency but nothing from the ministry of finance.

We worked on CALA's vision and bylaws so we could comply with the rules under ONCA (Ontario Not- for-Profit Corporations Act). The spring Federation of Cottage Associations AGM was very helpful since they also had to comply and we were able to use their revised bylaws as a guide.

The summer season started with a Meet and Greet in Elgin on June 1 with Natasha Mathieu (Source Protection Outreach Lead) from Quinte Conservation. She talked about the importance of protecting our drinking water and how to look after our water sources. Much of the valuable information can be accessed on our website.

Canada Day quickly came around and we were off to the races - the duck races at Chaffey's Lock. We sold out fairly quickly even though we had 600 ducks. Unfortunately, we couldn't retrieve all of them - I believe there are maybe around 50 still out there somewhere.

At the end of June we had 2 students from Watersheds Canada do the Love Your Lake assessment program of Indian, Benson and Clear Lakes.

In July, Rideau Lakes Township sent a notice to property owners at the end of Indian Lake Road (myself included) that a tiny property [76.2 m wide (east – west) along Indian Lake Road, by between approximately 16.7 and 18.8 m deep (north – south) with a total surface area of approximately 0.33 acres in size (1,342 m²)] was asking for considerable variances. The property is zoned Residential Waterfront and is abutting a wetland of significance. However Township staff and the Planning Advisory and Committee of Adjustment seem to think the owners have a right to build on this property even though the dwelling will only be 6m from the water. Neighbours have written letters opposing these variances; however, as one councillor put it “these are just disgruntled neighbours” and he doesn't want to have to go to an LPAT hearing. (LPAT is now called the Land Tribunal). In addition this Councillor said that he hasn't seen that 30m setback in a while and he thinks the Committee can not turn this down. From the meeting I also learned that quite a few of these tiny lots exist across the Township. Which begs the question - how many other developments have been approved that don't meet the 30m setback requirements? The mayor mentioned at the beginning of the meeting that he didn't want to defer this application if the committee was to

ultimately turn it down. That seems to suggest a whole lot. Well, the committee heeded this and only decided to defer the application for the following reasons:

1. To provide more time to examine alternative dwelling layouts and sizing with the applicants that result in a maximized water setback;
2. To allow for more time for staff to work with the preparers of the submitted EIS to address the significance of adjacent woodland designations and any potential impacts to the woodlands resulting from the proposed development, and a determination of the water setback from the proposed dwelling to the unevaluated wetland on site. Should the setback be less than 6m which was included in the notice, a re-notice or amendment to the application is required;
3. That the amended EIS receive a peer review that is completed by a qualified firm to the satisfaction of the Manager of Development Services. The cost associated to the peer review shall be recovered by the Township from the applicant;
4. That an amended shoreline buffer planting plan be submitted that identifies additional plantings along the shoreline area; and
5. To allow for more time to receive formal comments from the CRCA and Parks Canada.

Therefore, it seems that if the conditions above are met, this new cottage on a tiny lot will be approved regardless of its proximity to the wetland.

Unfortunately there is a hierarchy in the municipal planning law:

- planning act
- provincial policy statement
- provincial plans ie a place to grow
- official plan
- zoning bylaws

Since the zoning bylaws (30m setback) are last in the order of importance, the planning committee doesn't want to bother following them in case the applicants appeal to the Land Tribunal. What is the point of having them if our elected representatives don't even want to bother with them?

On August 24 we held our AGM at Chaffey's Lock Community Hall. Our guest speaker was Chantal Lefevre, the Natural Edge Regional Coordinator at Watersheds Canada. Dr. Dave Philipp - professor emeritus University of Illinois spoke about bass spawning sanctuaries & the Coalition for Innovative Bass Conservation.