

MINUTES OF THE 2018 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

of the

EELS LAKE COTTAGERS ASSOCIATION

Date – April 18, 2018

Time and Location - 7:00 PM at the Whitby Public Library, Whitby, ON

In Attendance -

- President Pete Tolev, Past-president Peter Philp, Board Members Alex Bilyk, Michael Nicholishen, Jim Tranter, Sean Davis, Ernie Bruns, Sandy Kilgour, Don Davis, Eddie Stinson, Sandy Moffat.
- Board Member Regrets - Betsy Blanchard, Shawna Barnes, Jolanda Baird,
- Guest Speaker – John Smith, Kennisis Lake Cottage Owners Association.
- Other Association Members present - 42 persons.

Proceedings -

1. Opening Remarks by President Pete

The meeting began at 7:05 pm with a welcome from President Pete who identified the board members present, provided an outline of the agenda and thanked all in attendance for coming.

2. Guest Speaker – Presentation by John Smith, KLCOA

Don Davis introduced John Smith by saying that the board has under consideration mounting an investigation into our lake's water quality. He said we are at the very preliminary stage of defining the scope of the project and identifying any potential problems, and whatever is to be accomplished will require the full engagement of all property owners on the lake. This project, if taken on, will take time, be extensive and deal with matters likely requiring changes to current cottage owner operating practices.

John Smith was introduced by Don. He is a member of the KLCOA Board of Directors and lives full time on Lake Kennisis. It is the largest of three reservoir lakes that supply water to the Trent-Severn Waterway, the others are Redstone Lake and Eels. There are over 600 property owners on Kennisis (we have 405) and about three years ago their association, in an effort to improve water quality on the lake, undertook an initiative to have their local municipality, the Township of Dysart, pass a by-law requiring mandatory septic tank inspections on their lake. This by-law was passed last fall and is considered by their association as a prerequisite for improved lake water quality. *(Ed. Note: This is a requirement that this board does not have under consideration.)*

The following additional points were made by John during his presentation;

- The various levels of government in Ontario are keen to keep our lake and river waters clean knowing that not to do it will negatively impact tourism, recreation and local tax revenues. While some money has been set aside to address this the onus is on local property owners to do it themselves.
- Poor water quality is measured by pollutant levels and water clarity.
- The two principle causes of poor water quality on lakes are poor septic tank maintenance and owner modifications to natural shorelines such as growing grass. Two years ago, they distributed to each cottage on their lake a list of the top 10 things to do to properly maintain a septic tank system.
- It is imperative to first know what the overall trend in our lake water quality has been over time. We need to go back as far as possible and examine MOE records that measure ammonia, phosphorous and calcium levels.
- Two lakes in The District of Muskoka were closed last year due to the presence of blue algae. *(Ed. Note: For information on this most undesirable toxin go to www.ontario.ca/bluegreenalgae)*
- Last summer KLCOA did a photographic shoreline survey of Kennisis called, "Love-the-Lake" that was undertaken by students and sponsored by the province. They found that only 8% of cottage waterfronts are regenerating naturally.
- John stated that in 1970 the province started a property septic tank program. In the early 1980's there was a move toward concrete tanks and the use of steel tanks eliminated. He feels that steel tanks are no longer functional and should be replaced. In 2011 the Provincial Building Code for municipalities was changed requiring all septic system installations to meet a specific standard.
- KLOCA's program toward change was driven by a firm belief that what individual property owners do, or not do, when it comes to septic tank maintenance practices affects everyone on the lake. Unacceptable behavior is

just that, unacceptable, and that the education of cottagers, while working directly with their township politicians and staff, was the way to proceed. They undertook a test with 27 volunteer cottage owners (without obligation) to test the structural soundness and operation of their respective septic systems. A demonstration of a proper inspection was done at John's cottage followed by some 29 others. The result was that 10 required some sort of repair and 1 had to be replaced. This represented a surprising overall failure rate of 41%. Repairs are now underway to all of these. John noted that the approximate cost of a proper inspection was about \$225 and about \$250 for a tank pump out.

- The current situation on Kennisis is that all septic systems must be formally inspected over the next few years (schedule not known) to ensure they are functioning as designed and structurally sound. Property owners are now mandated to do so. Defects must be corrected and if warranted the township will undertake the work and the cost will be added to the cottager's tax bill.
- John made comment on the septic tank inspection program initiated by Highlands East last summer. The inspections were by summer students and he was not complementary about the detail and rigour with which it was done.
- In conclusion, there was a comment by John regarding the importance of owners being mindful of renting their cottagers to tenants, who are accompanied by a larger number of guests, leading to the septic system being overloaded. The Federation of Cottage Owners Association (FOCA), of which we are members, have produced a rental agreement document which includes this subject.

John's discussion was well received and he was thanked by Don. He left the meeting at 7:55 PM.

3. Year Ending (March 31, 2018) Treasurer's Report by Michael Nicholishen

Mike noted that the financial prospects for the current year are good. The sale of merchandise by Sandy Moffatt has been very positive and supportive. A reduction in our annual liability insurance premium, the reduced cost to produce and distribute our final hardcopy edition of the newsletter (Sandy Moffatt), reduced costs for the Regatta (Shawna Barnes and Ed Stinson), and the end of our obligation for the expense pertaining to our Memorandum of Understanding with Parks Canadas were noted. The initial costs of establishing our website are now behind us and further expenditures should now be less and more predictable. (*Ed. Note: Advertisement revenue from the*

website will be important in the future.) The Treasurer's reported was accepted and Mike was thanked for all his efforts.

4. Membership Update by Sandy Moffatt

Last year's membership reached 176 and this year the current total is 70 which is similar to where it was last year at this time. Our membership data base is in much better shape than a year ago and is more user friendly. Sandy and Treasurer Mike will in the future receive the respective contact information inputted by members when they register/pay via website. We all need to be diligent in pursuing new members. Sandy was thanked for her all her good work.

5. Fashion Update by Sandy Moffatt

Sandy undertook this initiative on her own to raise money for our association. She has designed all the available products herself and initiated sales. So far, she has raised over \$1500. Her approach is to have a total of approximately 30 pieces before she places an order with the supplier. Considerable interest in this was shown by those in attendance with suggestions (ball caps, jackets) for other pieces of wearing apparel put forward. Sandy was again thanked for all she has done in support of our association.

6. Water Committee and 2017 Lake Level Survey by Sandy Kilgour

(Ed. Note: The website contains a complete copy of Sandy's report as well as a copy of the Lake Level Report conducted last October by Sandy and his team and referenced below. You are very much urged to read Sandy's report as it details the very successful progress the Water Committee has made over the last year. What follows are selected highlights of that documents.)

- The TSW are considering moving away from reducing lake water levels during the summer based on an "equal % drawdown" scheme in favour of an "equal damage drawdown" scheme,
- They now recognize the need for safe navigation on all lakes,
- They are moving toward a 5-log winter set (rather than 4) in our dam,
- The "3 Men-in-a-boat" lake level survey conducted last October confirmed that the removal of the 4th log from our dam would render vast areas of Eels Lake unnavigable.

- We are looking for volunteers to assist with the Lake Trout Rehabilitation Program on our lake sponsored by the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources.

7. Returning and New Board Members by President Pete

Deferred

8. Questions from the Floor by President Pete

Q1 – Has the board considered different locations for this meeting, such as at the conclusion of the Regatta?

Ans. We have over the years and it can be considered again. There was no support from those present for holding it as part of the Regatta or on the Regatta weekend.

Q2 – Do those present support an investigation of water quality on the lake?

Ans. Yes

9. New Business

None

10. End of Meeting

The meeting ended at 9:05 pm

Don Davis – Minute Recorder

