

# **OTTER LAKE RATEPAYERS' ASSOCIATION**

## **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

**MAY 22, 2016**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Meeting called to order by Chairperson, Art Coles, at 10:00 a.m.

Introductory comments made by the Chairperson. Members welcomed to the AGM. Art introduced Mario Buszynski, Council Member and Bruce Gibbon, Mayor and also the members of the Board.

### **PREVIOUS MINUTES**

The minutes from the May 17, 2015 AGM were presented to the Membership. Moved by Marilyn Campbell and seconded by Jane Whitman that the minutes be approved as presented. Passed by the Members.

### **MEMBERSHIP UPDATE**

There are currently 233 Individual Members and 112 Family Members in the Association compared with 152 Individual Members and 81 Family Members last year. There was a discussion about the benefits of membership. Art indicated that he would do a follow-up to people who have not renewed their memberships.

### **TREASURER'S REPORT**

Daryle Moffatt presented the financial statements for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2015. Cash on Hand at January 1, 2015 was \$9,879.95. Total income for 2015 was \$8,629.73. Total Expenses were \$12,971.95 which left a balance of \$5,537.73 in the Operating Fund at December 31, 2015. The Reserve Fund balance was \$34,937.48 after receiving \$954.20 during 2015. The Environment Fund balance was \$14,543.18 after receiving \$800.00 during 2015. The balance of all funds held by OLRA was \$55,018.39.

### **OPEN FORUM DISCUSSION ABOUT OLRA**

Kerry Mueller shared with the Members that OLRA is 54 years old. The most recent newsletter contained an article about the history of the Association. Members were asked what OLRA has meant to them and what it should do in the future. It was suggested that a survey be conducted amongst the Membership to determine answers to these questions and get Membership input on the future of the Association.

Numerous Members identified reasons why they were involved with the Association. Such reasons included the following:

- a way in which to stay informed about Township initiatives and decisions of Council;
- to keep Council aware of concerns of the Membership;
- it is an effective way of ensuring an appropriate biological and recreational balance is maintained on the lake;
- it creates a sense of community among many residents on the lake;
- it has addressed and continues to address issues of concern such as the activities of The Ontario Camp of the Deaf, fractional ownership on the lake and train issues.

## **NEWSLETTER REPORT**

Kerry Mueller indicated to the Members that the newsletter is a team effort of 12 or more individuals. The current newsletter consisted of 23 pages with some advertising. Photos were added and she encouraged people to submit photos of life at Otter Lake. Members who provided their email address to the Association received their newsletter prior to those to whom it was mailed. Kerry encouraged people with email addresses to provide that information to the Association as it saves the Association a considerable amount when mailing is not required.

## **LAKE STEWARDSHIP REPORT**

Brian Nelson advised the Members that water quality samples are taken in the spring and late summer. The testing includes water clarity, water temperature and phosphorus. Brian presented the test results for water clarity and phosphorus testing and these results indicated that the lake quality is good. Brian also indicated that the Township conducts other environmental testing and provides a report which explains the various test results of its studies. It was recommended that the Board consider more extensive testing for such things as e-coli, dissolved oxygen, calcium nitrates, elevation of Mercury etc.

Brian further advised that Otter Lake is in the lower risk category with respect to water clarity and phosphorus. However, as indicated by Bruce Gibbon, in the last two years, water clarity has been noticeably lower. No explanation was available at the time of the meeting but the Council member for Otter Lake, Mario Buszynski, indicated that one contributing factor may be the shoreline erosion caused by the recent high water levels. He also indicated that the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry has advised that with climate change there is likely to be more rainfall in the spring and less during the summer months. This will create a difficult task for the Ministry in maintaining appropriate lake levels. As well as creating a greater potential for algae blooms on the lake. This may affect the "lake trout" designation for Otter Lake as decomposing algae uses up oxygen, something that is essential for the maintenance of the lake trout population.

## **PHOTO COMPETITION**

This year, there will be four categories for the photo contest: Scenery, Wildlife and People. There will also be one class of photographs in which children can submit their entries. All entries must be in by July 29th. Special stickers will be issued to vote for the Grand Prize. This will eliminate the problem experienced in the past where the voting procedure favoured children, who inevitably won the Grand Prize.

## **WATER LEVELS**

A letter from Tony Buszynski was read indicating the lake level was high in the spring and logs were removed from the dam to control the level. Some logs were put back to restore the level. At the date of the AGM, there were three logs removed from the dam. The water level is at its maximum level for Little Otter Lake for this time of year.

## **BARBECUE**

The barbecue was held at Grand Tappattoo Resort and was attended by 273 people. The revenue generated by the barbecue was \$1,422.78. Expenses were \$6,070.24. One of the challenges for the barbecue is to have people buy tickets in advance. Art explained to the Members that the barbecue was subsidized in order to create an awareness of the Association to non-Members and to thank Members for their loyalty and commitment. Grand Tappattoo's support of the event also assisted in keeping the costs lower than would otherwise have been the case. It had been originally estimated that 150 people would be in attendance.

Excellent feedback was obtained from those in attendance.

The price of tickets for this year's barbecue is \$10 per person if the ticket is purchased before July 31 and \$15 per person if purchased after that date.

## **OTHER BOARD ACTIVITIES**

1. Henvey Inlet Power transmission station: concern expressed as to the proximity to Foley Matheson Park. It has been communicated that it should be located closer to the train tracks.
2. Monitored a Minor Variance application on lands adjacent to the Marina. The decision of the Council was appealed to the Ontario Municipal Board (the "OMB").
3. Provided comments and support of the decision of Council to oppose an application to allow for the subdivision of a lot on Oastler Lake that would result in Oastler exceeding its authorized recreational capacity. The decision was upheld by the OMB.
4. Communicated with Seguin as to Seguin's proposal to allow hunting on Sundays and the safety concerns of some residents on Otter Lake if such proposal is approved. The Council approved Sunday hunting.
5. Brian explained that the Province of Ontario and the federal government are trying to expand broadband coverage. He explained the Smart Initiative in West Parry Sound and its goal to provide Ethernet services to rural homes. He identified concern that sections of Otter Lake will not be serviced.

## **LOON UPDATE**

Kerry Mueller advised that there has been a greater early presence of loons on the lake this year. Two loons are on Little Otter Lake, five on Big Otter with two being near Goddard Crescent and one on the Long Arm. The loons had a longer winter stay this past winter with two Loons still seen on the lake Dec. 22<sup>nd</sup> 2015. These were likely the two Loon chicks that had hatched on Otter and Little Otter in 2015. It is hoped that if the chicks survive the summer, they will eventually return to nest. A Loon platform on center Otter Lake was relocated last fall to a quieter spot to hopefully encourage nesting.

## **FIRE WORKS ON THE LAKE**

With the dry weather, concern has been expressed about fire safety and fireworks on the lake. Brad Chittick, who cottages on Ski Bay, explained to the Members the manner in which he and other cottagers conduct a successful fireworks display each year. He also explained the manner in which the program is funded and encouraged others on the lake to enjoy the fireworks presentation.

## **FIRE RISK**

This year, the fire hazard has been extremely high, being 15 times the 10-year average. Members were encouraged to speak to the Township with respect to fire safety issues and to only have fires when safe to do so.

## **ELECTION OF DIRECTORS**

The terms of Art Coles and Sonja Cigler expire at the end of the Annual General Meeting. Both individuals have consented to stand for re-election. There were no further nominations from the floor for additional directors. It was moved by Brad Chittick and seconded by Jane Whitman and unanimously passed by the Members that these individuals be re-elected to the Board.

## **TOWNSHIP UPDATE**

Mayor Bruce Gibbon advised the Members that the residents of Otter Lake are well represented on Council by Dale Grace and Mario Buszynski. He advised that water quality testing on the lake is now done by Brian Nelson.

Bruce advised that Otter Lake was fully covered with ice on January 5, 2016. Ice-out was on April 17, 2016. Ice cover on the lake was 103 days compared with 95 days in 2015. The greatest number of days for ice coverage is 136 days for 2014. The least number of days was in 2013 when there were only 60 days of coverage.

He spoke about the Stewardship Seguin Program which has been successfully implemented on Otter Lake. It is now being promoted throughout the Township. He also advised the Members that throughout the summer there would be a Speaker Series addressing various topics such as: "Living in cottage country and what you need to know", "Shoreline Naturalization 101" and "Species at Risk".

Bruce advised that the fees would be waived at the Orrville Landfill Site from June 24 to September 11, 2016.

He also advised the Members that the increase in municipal taxes for the current year would be .34%. For every \$100,000 of property value, municipal taxes would increase by \$1.87. This increase was necessary in order to cover an additional \$400,000 in expenses related to operational costs and Ontario Provincial Police policing services.

He also advised the Members that Art is retiring from the Finance Committee but Daryle, who also sits on the Township's Finance Committee, will be representing the Association.

Mario Buszynski then addressed the meeting and commented on numerous matters including:

- upgrades to Three-Legged Lake Road;
- a concert by Dolly Parton in September;
- the installation of compactors at the various landfill sites throughout the Township;
- Sunday hunting;
- the recreational and biological carrying capacity on Otter Lake and that no further development is to take place on Otter Lake as it has reached its biological carrying capacity;
- the Township will be represented at all hearings concerning any changes to carrying capacity on the lakes within the Township.

## **GEORGIAN BAY BIOSPHERE RESERVE**

Glenda Clayton gave an excellent summary on the designation by the United Nations of the area from Port Severn to French River as a Biosphere Reserve. She indicated that there are 44 species at risk within the Reserve. Otter Lake lies within the Reserve. She addressed issues such as water quality, natural ground cover (wetlands), and the importance of education to save the numerous species that are at risk within the Reserve. Such species include the Eastern Fox snake, Spotted turtles, Canada Warbler and Broadleaf fern.

## **NEW BUSINESS/ADJOURNMENT**

There was no additional business. Art thanked the Members for attending the meeting and the meeting was adjourned.