

RESPONSE FROM TOWNSHIP PLANNER TO LOBA MEMBER COMMUNICATION JULY 8, 2015 RE BACK LOTS

From: Stefan Szczerbak <SSzczerbak@LakeOfBays.on.ca>

Date: July 10, 2015 at 3:58:17 PM EDT

To: "Robert Young (External)" <bobyounoglob@gmail.com>

Subject: FW: LOBA NEWS - IMPORTANT - PLEASE READ

Hi Bob,

Here is our reply to their reasons for objecting to the reduction in area for waterfront backlots from 10 acres to 7 acres. I had a great conversation with Glenn Tunnock and we are both on side with the following:

- Backlot development should be permitted where it does not further reduce the biological capacity of an adjacent water body (and in this sense is no different than the first tier of lots along a shoreline); hence new lot creation must consider the impact on water quality if the lot to be created is within 500 m of a water body.
- A reduction in the minimum lot area of a large lot from 10 ac to 7 ac does not materially change the concept of requiring large back lots since the character of the development will remain very low density. The smaller 7 ac lot area would not be expected to change the potential market for these lots. People who purchase backlots are those who want to live in a "rural" setting close to water and who prefer the privacy and sense of a large open space area that is afforded by these kind of lots. Such lots may still provide a source of fuel wood depending on the forest species. The reduced size of the lot should not detract from their ecological function where, for example, they are located within a deer yard since the building envelope will remain relatively small by comparison to the overall lot area. A reduction in the lot area to no less than 7 ac will not facilitate re-subdivision of those lots. The same servicing requirements will apply and lots of this size can be serviced with on-site individual sewage disposal systems and wells without the requirement for a hydrogeological study. In other words the reduced lot size does not change the purpose for permitting back lots.
- The reduction continues to conform to the District of Muskoka Official Plan
- The realty value or purchase price of smaller lots may be less, but the extent of the difference would be unknown without an inventory of real estate sales. The difference in lot values may have little influence on the market since they categorically have the same appeal and the difference in price may not have any substantive influence to the buyer.

- The impact on municipal services should not be disproportionate to the costs of those services. Road maintenance is the key service and where you get double frontage, the property tax revenues will better offset the operational costs of road maintenance. There will likely be an increase in maintenance costs since increased volumes of traffic will require more frequent grading, dust control, brushing, etc. The issue is whether the incremental maintenance costs from a slightly higher density will be offset by increased property tax revenues. Our Asset Management Plan and Capital budgets should provide a good indication of what the costs are for ditching, dust control, and grading/graveling. Winter maintenance costs should remain the same.
- The change in lot area would not be expected to have any difference in impact on other issues such as the assessment or conservation of archaeological resources or the relationship to the rural natural resources base.

In summary, there should be no significant changes to environmental or ecological impacts on the natural landscape from the revisions to the lot area. From a growth management standpoint, there will be potential for more rural/waterfront based development (i.e. more lots), but the potential will be dependent on the particular market appeal for large waterfront backlots (do not have shoreline frontage).

Please feel free to copy or forward this to LOBA. I am not going to weigh into the e-mails submitted to date...unless you would like me to weigh in.

Stefan
(Stefan Szczerbak, Planner, Township of Lake of Bays)