



Lake Associations – 2020/2021 Update

A Year of Challenge and Change

“Life doesn’t get easier or more forgiving, we get stronger and more resilient.”
- Dr. Steve Maraboli.

Good day residents of Lake of Bays,

I hope this letter finds you all in good health. To those who may have experienced loss due to the pandemic, please accept my deepest condolences.

We have all experienced a profound difference in the way we carry out our day-to-day business over the last year. The Township has had to deal with a dramatic series of changes in the way we conduct our business.

- Our Emergency Control Group has met regularly throughout the pandemic to ensure the safety of staff, residents and visitors.
- Our Parks department worked through the many challenges to maintain the Provincial regulations as the public enjoyed our facilities.
- Our Administration staff have had to adapt to working from home, much the same as the GTA, due to health protocols along with a monstrous intake of continuous legislation that has kept many working well beyond regular hours.
- Our Building & Planning departments have seen a huge surge (a doubling and tripling) in requests for service as a great deal of our residents have made new construction plans. Planning has also tackled LPAT caseload along with major policy changes like the Short-Term Rental policy development and the new Community Planning Permit By-law.
- Our Economic Development has pivoted to assist our many businesses to access funding to bridge the economic hardships brought on by health protocols.
- Our Public Works crews continued to keep our roads safe and clear while adapting to the new public health measures.
- Our Libraries embraced online services by hosting many educational opportunities and interactive readings with Miss Rebecca for our youth to enjoy and provided curbside pick up to our residents when permitted.
- Our Finances are in a good financial position, especially considering the COVID-19 pandemic. Based on the 2020 Audited Statements, total reserves increased by more than \$825,000. There are also additional funds provided by the province, \$500,000 remaining to offset any additional COVID-19 related revenue losses and expenses.

- Council has dealt with a great deal more calls for service from our residents along with adapting to the use of ZOOM for our Council meetings during the entire pandemic.

My workload has extraordinarily increased with many new requests made by the public and unscheduled meetings called regularly to discuss the high demands placed on us from the Federal and Provincial governments. I currently sit on twelve committees and Chair five of them. Some of the duties were always directly related to my job description however, others were created to cover areas that needed extra attention during this pandemic.

This is a brief snapshot of some of the challenges that Staff and Council have overcome to continue to bring you the best service we can provide based on current budget and personnel limitations.

Needless to say, we are making headway and are looking forward to a summer that may bring some degree of normalcy back to our lives. I would like to thank the residents of Lake of Bays for being resilient and adhering to the Public Health Guidelines. However long it takes and whatever lies ahead, we will get through it and we will get through it together.

Mayor Terry Glover

The following provides further detail on some of the discussion points noted above.

Council meetings have been held electronically and you can now view them on the Township's Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/lobtownship/>



Introducing #AlertMuskoka – powered by Voyent Alert!—In times of crisis it is important that residents have access to trusted, timely and accurate information to ensure their own safety and that of their family and loved ones. In response to this need, the Muskoka Emergency Response Committee (MERC) has chosen Voyent Alert! as the communication service provider for these kinds of events. It is intended to keep you informed during critical incidents such as fires, or floods.

By downloading the Voyent Alert! app and registering, residents and visitors can select to receive notifications from a wide variety of communication channels including mobile apps, text/SMS alerting, email or voice calling. The system will also allow you to create and track multiple locations such as “Kids School”, “Work”, “Cottage” or “Mom’s House”. Any event or communication related to your tracked locations will be forwarded to you along your preferred communication channel(s). Smart alerting capabilities ensure that you will only get notified when a communication is relevant to you or one of the locations you are tracking.

Be informed. Be prepared. Voyent Alert! is Muskoka’s new Emergency Alert System: [Register Now!](#) #AlertMuskoka.

Township Initiatives

Our voices were heard at the annual AMO (Association of Municipalities of Ontario) & ROMA (Rural Ontario Municipal Association) conferences held virtually. I facilitated the discussions with the Provincial Minister of Long-Term Care regarding challenges for the Muskoka Tax base to support new builds for two acute care hospitals: and the Provincial Minister of Infrastructure on the expansion of fiber optic infrastructure and broadband access.

Working with the Premier, Ministers and [Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit](#) regarding the vaccine roll outs, messaging regarding health guidelines and the importance of immunization as it prevents disease and saves lives.

Council have supported resolutions regarding the mapping and controlling invasive Phragmites along highways, the endorsement of a 9-8-8 suicide and crisis hotline put forward by our MP. I lobbied for change and was successful in how capacity limits for restaurants were calculated due to COVID restrictions. Supported the Safe Quiet Lakes decibel initiative; and are participating in the Province's consultation of Municipal Code of Conducts.

A new [Noise By-law 2021-27](#) came into effect on April 6, 2021 after public consultation and review in early 2021.

LAKE OF BAY ARTS & CULTURE GROUP

Excited to be a part of this arts and culture initiative run by local artists and business owners with the objective to promote arts and culture in Lake of Bays creating an economic driver and benefit for small businesses. More information coming soon once the website is finalized.

District Initiatives

MUNICIPAL MODERNIZATION COMMITTEE

After many Committee meetings, public consultations, Special Advisors meetings and the township Mayors continuous attempts to gain equal representation at District Council consensus was not achieved.; Minister Clark advised he would not enact his powers to change District Council composition and we maintain status quo.

HEALTH SERVICES COMMITTEE

Shortage of Personal Support Worker certified caregivers in Ontario. The province is covering education for some however, the uptake has been slow. I personally have concerns for our financial demands for health care in Lake of Bays. These include the rehabilitation of Fairvern Nursing Home and the reconstruction plans for our local hospitals.

MUSKOKA ECONOMIC RECOVERY TASKFORCE - REGIONAL BROADBAND

Understanding current service levels - worked with Blue Sky Net to complete a gap analysis for Muskoka that determined Lake of Bays is particularly underserved.

YOU CAN HELP: we are asking residents to take a [speed test](#) to help us understand the situation. The mapping tools rely on information provided by the Internet Service Providers, and we know that even though they advertise a certain level of service is available, that may not be the case for the end user.

Regional Strategy

- Through our task force, the District of Muskoka will be contracting a consultant to develop a Regional Broadband Strategy. You can learn more about it on the [broadband subcommittee website](#). This will help us determine which solutions make the most sense for the different areas in the region. Our beautiful geography (rocks and hills and lakes) is incredibly challenging and cost prohibitive to rely completely on fibre. The strategy will provide recommendations for an effective mixture of infrastructure. For example, there are places where it makes sense to install fibre and other areas that might be served better by wireless solutions. And of course, LEO (low earth orbit satellites), like [Starlink](#), may be useful in filling in some of the gaps.
- Advocacy and Funding
 - We are using the information we have to advocate for more funding and support from the Provincial and Federal levels of government. I have presented to various Ministers on this topic and those levels of government are certainly aware of our challenges.

We continue to work closely with our local Internet Service Providers providing support for their expansion plans as well as funding applications. Although details have not been released, we are aware that one or more ISPs have been successful in funding applications that may have components in Lake of Bays.
