



**2022 Municipal Elections, Candidates Questionnaire
Township of Lake of Bays, Franklin Sinclair District Councillor Candidates
Charles Cooper, Martin Mann, Mike Peppard**

Click on any question to go directly to the answers for that question.

1. What should the Township/Town do to reduce its carbon footprint and facilitate movement away from fossil fuels?
2. The Muskoka Watershed Council is recommending an Integrated Watershed Management Plan for Muskoka which would require municipalities to base planning decisions on impacts to the entire watershed, not just the local municipality. Do you support this approach? Why or why not? How could this change planning decisions in the Township of Lake of Bays/Town of Huntsville?
3. What area(s) of the Township/Town budget do you think receives too much funding and why? What area(s) of the Township/Town budget do you think receives too little funding and why?
4. There has been an increase in year-round use of seasonal properties due to the Covid pandemic, retirement, and other factors and trends. How should this affect municipal services such as roads and garbage, and other non-municipal services such as internet?
5. How should the Township/Town evaluate its Short-Term Rental Licensing program?
6. The Lake of Bays Association has identified several Election Priorities (see cover letter). What can the Association do to help council address any one or more of these priorities.

Township of Lake of Bays Candidates Only

In April 2022, LOBA sent a letter to the Township of Lake of Bays outlining our concern about variances on non-complying waterfront properties and by-law enforcement. In summary, the letter expressed the Association's concerns about a perceived trend in the number of variances being granted by Council on legal non-complying lots, particularly for increased lot coverage. The Association also expressed concern about by-law enforcement particularly regarding the unwarranted removal of shoreline trees and vegetation. The following two questions relate to these concerns.

7. When faced with planning applications, how will you work to achieve balance between the need to improve or replace existing structures and protecting the environment and character of the lake?
8. Do you support stronger enforcement tools and more assertive policies to deal with people who do not comply with by-laws, particularly the Development Permit System by-laws?

District Councillor Candidates Only

In June 2021, LOBA sent a letter to the District of Muskoka and Meridian Planning Consultants regarding the Muskoka Resort Policy Review. The letter contained seven key comments: 1. The objectives of the Official Plan should no longer strongly support resort development, 2. The District's OP should clearly define resorts to be commercial, to the exclusion of any residential density beyond local residential standards, 3. Resorts that would be accompanied by a residential component should only be permitted in municipally serviced areas, 4. The District's OP must allow local area municipalities to further control resort development and re-development, 5. Down zoning of resort properties from commercial to residential should only be permitted if the resulting density is no greater than current residential standards in the immediate area, 6. Short-term rentals are increasingly accommodating vacationers wanting to live the "cottage experience, and 7. The Lake of Bays Association does not agree with relaxing the requirements or restriction on resort development.

9. What are your views on resort development and redevelopment in the Township of Lake of Bays/Town of Huntsville? Specifically, should commercial resorts be allowed to include a residential component such as condominiums or townhouses, should resort development be considered on properties not connected to municipal services, and under what circumstances do you support down-zoning from commercial to residential zoning?

10. Do you think the structure of District Council needs to change in the next term? If yes, how? If no, why?

Contact and other information.

1. What should the Township/Town do to reduce its carbon footprint and facilitate movement away from fossil fuels?

Charles Cooper: Invest in infrastructure that will allow for more electric transportation, This would include creating charging locations for e-bikes, electric boats/ recreational vehicles and road legal transporation. The Township and District can also champion improved electrical distribution network to better handle renewable generation as well the increase load for the wave of electric vehicles that are coming. The District can also leverage biomass electrical generation opportunities, at sewage treatment plants that can also can utilize the significant food waste from the local hospitality industry.

Martin Mann: I beleive that this has started but more research is needed as planning on this should have been done 10+ years ago as you don't just plug into a outlet, you need bigger lines suppling the subdivision with power and new homes need to have at lease 400 amp service to support this endeavor and infrastructure, In some areas a hybrid can work but more research is required for work trucks and snowplows which can be out for 16hrs or more and can take hours to charge, how much equipment will be needed. How is the electricity produced and what happens to the used batteries.

Mike Peppard: Both the Township and the Mike community need to work together to assist one another. The Township declared a climate emergency and are actively working on a plan. In my view an aggressive transition to an all electric fleet when vehicles become available and supporting the installation of electric charging stations would be a great start. The Township will be coming out with their corporate plan late this year. In the meantime I will be inviting members of our community to discuss what we personally can do. Given the rural nature of our community personal vehicle use is a significant contributing factor and I look forward to helping our community to come up with a plan. One that I will be pleased to champion as a member of council. Ultimately it will be the creativity, and motivation of our community members that will truly drive efforts forward.

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2. The Muskoka Watershed Council is recommending an Integrated Watershed Management Plan for Muskoka which would require municipalities to base planning decisions on impacts to the entire watershed, not just the local municipality. Do you support this approach? Why or why not? How could this change planning decisions in the Township of Lake of Bays/Town of Huntsville?

Charles Cooper: I propose to eliminate the multi-tiered local government system that is in place today. This will force an Integrated Watershed Management Plan on Muskoka. The District of Muskoka commissioned the Rice Report in 2000 to determine the benefits of a single tier government. Benefits would include significant annual savings to ratepayers plus unified means to implement environmental, watershed, fire service, public works, roads, planning and permitting requirements. For a copy of the Rice Report please visit my website at www.charlescooperlob.com

Martin Mann: More research is required.

Mike Peppard: I absolutely support this approach. As a long term member of the Muskoka Watershed Council, and appointed to the executive I am an active participant in bringing Integrated Watershed Management approaches to our community. The Muskoka Watershed Council hosts a Community Round Table to look at the results of 12 different on-going projects including those looking at water quality in Muskoka, and opportunities to mitigate flooding. The projects are ultimately looking at a holistic approach to managing the health of our watershed. This means looking at the land, as well as the water, and looking at our activities on the land, and in the water. This is the only approach that will ensure a clean and healthy environment for generations to come. The first step is to complete the studies that are being funded by the Province. Next we need to find a way to integrate what we have learned. The Township of Lake of Bays has an excellent opportunity to do just that as our Official Plan is coming up for its 10 year review next year. By that point the goal is to have distilled what we are learning about Integrated Watershed Management down to a series of recommendations for our municipalities and those beyond Muskoka but still in the watershed. For a municipality to base its decision making on a watershed approach will not be an easy transition, but in the case of the Township of Lake of Bays I think it will be possible. While our new Community Planning Permit System has not yet passed all the necessary hurdles, it brings the benefits of our shoreline development permit system to community zone and rural areas. This is a huge opportunity as it will allow greater control over the landscape that impacts our waters well beyond the shoreline. My final thoughts are the protection of wetlands. Not just large wetlands, or open marshes, but smaller, seasonal wetlands. These are critical to watershed health, flood prevention, drought mitigation, and they are where many of our frogs, toads, and salamanders come from. I am keen to see this process move forward.

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**3. What area(s) of the Township/Town budget do you think receives too much funding and why?
What area(s) of the Township/Town budget do you think receives too little funding and why?**

Charles Cooper: The Township of the Lake of Bays and the District of Muskoka spent far too much money on transfers and administration between the current two levels of local government here in Muskoka, with minimal benefit to ratepayers. Overall my impression is the Township of Lake of Bays runs a very lean operation with minimal waste, whereas the District appears to lack fiscal discipline. I would like to see more money spent on roads and storm management infrastructure (larger culverts, more holding ponds and less hard surfaces) to ensure storm events are better managed to the benefit of the local watershed.

Martin Mann: I would answer if I had a copy of all budgets.

Mike Peppard: I don't see anywhere in the Township that receives too much funding especially considering the inflationary pressures that are hitting us all. I am quite proud of the fiscal management at the Township especially new efforts to build up our own reserves such that future large expenses, known, or unforeseen can be budgeted for. I would like to see the environment receive more funding. This could include hiring consultants to look at innovative ways to reduce our carbon footprint. I would also like to see more funds allocated to the expansion, or renovation of our Dwight library but I'll hold my thoughts on that for the moment as there may be opportunities out there for grants to support the efforts to enhance the Dwight library's role as a community hub. The Township has shown great support on this so stay tuned.

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4. There has been an increase in year-round use of seasonal properties due to the Covid pandemic, retirement, and other factors and trends. How should this affect municipal services such as roads and garbage, and other non-municipal services such as internet?

Charles Cooper: Additional year round residences is welcomed and will be a significant benefit to the community, by increasing spend within the area and reducing the seasonal swings that impact the local economy. The Township of Lake of Bays needs to ensure services are equally available to all year-round residences. This includes roads, internet, cellular and protection services . There needs to be a Paramedic station located in the Dwight or Baysville area. Likewise I propose a ten year plan to bring all Township owned roads upto the standards required for year round maintenance (capital for widening and snowplow turnarounds & operational to have these roads plowed). Garbage is another pressing issue for the District with dispoal options limited. More waste diversion needs to take place. Examples include onsite organic food processing that was recently trialed in Burks Falls. That town provided breadbox sized devices to residences that converted organic matter into soil in a few hours. This can eliminate a lot of organics from the current waste stream in a practically fashion, vs the Districts current plan of having the ratepayers haul the smelly and leaking organics in their vehicles to a transfer station. At the end of the day all permanent residences deserve the same access to services as those who have been here for generations.

Martin Mann: This will effect municipal services so that services are done in a timily period As for internet we still don't have fibe after four years + and need to push for this to happen. I will make it my goal to get better internet.

Mike Peppard: An increase in seasonal activity no doubt has an impact on our roads but I don't believe that it has as yet become an extra stress on our maintenance schedule. Weather however can have a significant impact. In the 12 years I have been here we have seen tornadoes and blow-downs, and ice storms. These can stretch our staffing and equipment capabilities, and cause delays to regular maintenance schedules as staff strive to clean debris off roads etc. Regarding garbage I was very disappointed to see the amount of littering that occurred in our Township at the peak of Covid but thankfully that has slowed down. Our transfer stations now have composting drop off facilities which is not just a boon for the environment but will save the District of Muskoka, and therefore the taxpayer, a lot of money as we slow down the filling of our one and only landfill. Likewise, the District has engaged a new company to manage recycling in the District with a goal of at least 60% waste diversion. Again, the taxpayer will benefit from this. Internet is perhaps the toughest challenge. But not impossible. Township and District are working hard to support every new initiative to bring broadband to Muskoka and Lake of Bays. Work is underway to lay fibre optic in the more central parts of the Township such as the Dwight area, and should be arriving at the Baysville Public Library soon. Ultimately the increased activity in our area and many other recreational areas of the Province is here to stay, and that means welcoming new members to our community where no doubt they will fall in love with all that we have to offer as we all have.

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5. How should the Township/Town evaluate its Short-Term Rental Licensing program?

Charles Cooper: The Township should not be in the business of licensing short-term rentals. The Township should mandate the standards these properties must adhere to including parking, noise, cleanliness, pets, fires, and insurance, the majority of which are already covered by current bylaws. Non-compliance should result in a fine for the owner and the renter. Owners must be able to supply, for enforcement purposes, the names and address of any tenant in the last twelve months. Each short term rental should have a mandatory fact sheet prominently displayed, letting renters know the 911 details of the property (and any special instructions) plus recreational best practices for boats, atvs, snowmobiles etc. and details on how to reduce the spread of invasive species. The local economic coordinator should provide a local business guide and attractions to every short term rental (just like hotels in the city do). Everyone should have the ability to enjoy Muskoka whether as a permanent or short term resident.

Martin Mann: The township effective January 1 2022 passed a bylaw for a licence for short term rentals and should be enforced by the bylaw department.

Mike Peppard: In short, we need to make sure it works. The process is a three year one starting this past spring. First we look at how many STR's we have found to be active on the internet. We then look at how many STR's have completed the application and how many were granted or denied. Finally, staff will be reporting on complaints, both for registered STR's and those that haven't. Council gave staff the power to inspect, and manage STR's and where necessary to impose fines. Regular reporting from staff will ensure that any red flags will come to the attention of council and the public.

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6. The Lake of Bays Association has identified several Election Priorities. What can the Association do to help council address any one or more of these priorities.

Charles Cooper: The Lake of Bays Association can best serve its members and other ratepayers by championing for a single tier local government. The savings identified in the Rice Report, which was commissioned by the District of Muskoka, showed \$4.6 Million dollars of annual savings to local ratepayers, extrapolated out since the report was authored would have been over \$100 Million of savings to ratepayers. A single tiered government will simplify planning, permitting and delivery of services. There are 72 elected positions this election within the District of Muskoka, The City of Toronto operates with 24, does this appear reasonable? My premise is less elected positions will raise the caliber of the candidates running. Which will result in better governance, improved stewardship and more accountability from your elected leaders. For the Rice Report please visit www.charlescooperlob.com

Martin Mann: Affordable Housing, Infrastructure, High Speed Internet, Local Healthcare, and action against climate change will take many years of planning and research for the best possible solution.

Mike Peppard: Climate Change – The association can be a great help in soliciting input on a community-based climate change strategy. This is different than the Corporate Climate Change plan being developed by the Township. But the two are meant to work together. District-wide integrated watershed management – LOBA can work through its representatives and the Township to ensure that recommendations coming from the Muskoka Watershed Council led Community Round Table on IWM are given a great deal of consideration. LOBA can also provide additional representation on the Community Round Table (which intends to go on long after the current Provincial project finishes in 2023). Sustaining healthy water quality – LOBA members are already doing a lot in terms of advocacy, volunteer monitoring, and education to sustain healthy water quality but a once a year deputation to Lake of Bays council on issues of concern would be very helpful. Shoreline environmental protection – advocate for approval of minor variances in shoreline development, and redevelopment to be minor i.e. small allowable percent increase only. Effective by-law enforcement – educate the public clearly on what is allowed and what isn't. The public is the new Community Planning Permit System will be helpful in this case but, as always we appreciate the fact that LOBA has volunteers who review permit applications and comment when needed. Good municipal services with a responsible budget – ask about our new efforts to fund our own projects long down the road, and keep in mind that in order to maintain the current level of service in our community we are under the same inflationary pressures, and staff shortages as everyone else. A good year-round economy, high-speed internet, and affordable community housing – support your local businesses at every opportunity; support Township efforts to bring high-speed to more of our community by contacting your MP and MPP; promote the District's effort to get more people to invest in in-home suites for rental by requesting and sharing District information on attainable, affordable housing.

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In April 2022, LOBA sent a letter to the Township of Lake of Bays outlining our concern about variances on non-complying waterfront properties and by-law enforcement. In summary, the letter expressed the Association's concerns about a perceived trend in the number of variances being granted by Council on legal non-complying lots, particularly for increased lot coverage. The Association also expressed concern about by-law enforcement particularly regarding the unwarranted removal of shoreline trees and vegetation. The following two questions relate to these concerns.

7. When faced with planning applications, how will you work to achieve balance between the need to improve or replace exiting structures and protecting the environment and character of the lake?

Charles Cooper: Replacement of any existing structure (privately or publically owned) is always beneficial to the environment eventually (long term reduction in annual emmissions will exceed those utilized in the initial construction). Newer structures are better designed, better insulated and longer lasting. These all reduce green house gas emissions. The Township can encourage the use of green roofs, pourous surfaces and vehicle charging ports. Replacement of roads, bridges etc should take into account the higher storm loads and include means to handle larger volumes of water over shorter periods of time. Reducing flooding and impacts to the local watershed.

Martin Mann: I will voice my opion on any applications good or bad and whats best for the township and its residents.

Mike Peppard: I have and will continue to advocate for all minor variances to remain minor. From time to time applicants ask council to approve variances that I consider to be far an above minor. I have spoken out about this at council and to applicants and their agents alike on many occasions. I think council needs to get very firm on these applications. The right to rebuild on an existing footprint regardless of its proximity to the lake I support. What I do not support is significant increases in these rebuilds. Lots that are too small to accommodate large rebuilds should be kept VERY close to the allowable. Ie. Minimal increase in lot coverage, shoreline activity area, and amount of shoreline cleared. I am very thankful that the policies at Lake of Bays allow us to demand revegetation of shorelines in lieu of minor variances but I think we need to be careful how far we take that. In other words, while additional shoreline vegetation is very beneficial it cannot always mitigate larger builds.

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8. Do you support stronger enforcement tools and more assertive policies to deal with people who do not comply with by-laws, particularly the Development Permit System by-laws?

Charles Cooper: The Development Permit System (DPS) purpose is to set community standards. Allowing for variances to this system for special situations should be expected but not the rule. Continuous variances to the DPS, negates the purpose of a DPS. Either current council has no plans to adhere to the standards stated in the DPS or the DPS does not correctly reflect the expected standards of the community. Why did the Township of Lake of Bays implement a system that is different then the rest of Muskoka? Ratepayers deserve a single tier of local government with a common set of planning, permitting and bylaws with the rest of Muskoka. This may include a District wide DPS or a lot by lot zoning approach, but we need one system. This will simplify planning matters, construction activities, and will ultimately encourage more affordable building sites by standardizing the size of backlots (to smaller parcels)

Martin Mann: That has been a major problem for years We have to enforce policies with people that do not comply with by-laws.

Mike Peppard: Absolutley! Once a piece of shoreline wetland is damaged for example the fix and the fine can't always make up for it. The challenge is enforcement. In my term of council we had the pleasure of hiring our first ever fulltime by-law enforcement officer. This has helped a great deal but we may need to do more. I would like to see extra inspections to ensure that shoreline replanting has been completed but this is extra staff time which may mean extra staff which will mean extra cost to the taxpayer.

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In June 2021, LOBA sent a letter to the District of Muskoka and Meridian Planning Consultants regarding the Muskoka Resort Policy Review. The letter contained seven key comments: 1. The objectives of the Official Plan should no longer strongly support resort development, 2. The District's OP should clearly define resorts to be commercial, to the exclusion of any residential density beyond local residential standards, 3. Resorts that would be accompanied by a residential component should only be permitted in municipally serviced areas, 4. The District's OP must allow local area municipalities to further control resort development and re-development, 5. Down zoning of resort properties from commercial to residential should only be permitted if the resulting density is no greater than current residential standards in the immediate area, 6. Short-term rentals are increasingly accommodating vacationers wanting to live the "cottage experience, and 7. The Lake of Bays Association does not agree with relaxing the requirements or restriction on resort development.

9. What are your views on resort development and redevelopment in the Township of Lake of Bays/Town of Huntsville? Specifically, should commercial resorts be allowed to include a residential component such as condominiums or townhouses, should resort development be considered on properties not connected to municipal services, and under what circumstances do you support down-zoning from commercial to residential zoning?

Charles Cooper: Resorts in Muskoka offer a unique value to those that want to explore the value of our lakes and woods. These business should be supported to ensure they can continue to offer these services into the future. The costs associated with waterfront properties continues to climb, therefore the resorts of Muskoka need to be given the latitude to expand their revenue sources. This includes the ability to offer various residential options. The township and the district should specify reasonable land coverage limit to limit density but should not micromanage these business owners use of their properties. MPAC (who sets the value of properties) mandates that all commercial properties in Ontario be utilized to their highest value, this applies to Resorts and Camps as well, driving them to consider the highest value they can achieve on these beautiful properties. Access to municipal services is ideal but that is not possible in the majority of Muskoka. The Ministry of Environment and Climate Change already specify the standards to water quality and onsite sanitary treatment for resorts and summer camps. Why does the Township and District need to apply additional oversight or restrictions?

Martin Mann: No to all statements in 9.

Mike Peppard: In short, residential development should NOT be allowed at resorts without municipal services (sewer and water). A lot of work has gone into the study of the Minett Resort application in the Township of Muskoka Lakes that has made it clear to council that that risks to the environment and the taxpayer are too great. Regarding down-zoning from commercial to residential it could be possible if it were a small number.

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10. Do you think the structure of District Council needs to change in the next term? If yes, how? If no, why?

Charles Cooper: The structure of District Council does need to change, Muskoka as a whole needs to eliminate the current 72 elected positions and reduce that to 12 councillors and one Chair / Mayor. Then divide the District in to 12 equal wards by population. Reducing the number of councillors will allow for a reasonable compensation for the position. This will raise the talent of our elected officials resulting in improved stewardship, accountability and governance. One tiered government will simplify operations of the district, eliminate overlap between townships and district, and provide consistant service to all ratepayers with mill rate determine by access to various types of services. For more details please see the Rice Report at www.charlescooperlob.com

Martin Mann: I think that as a district Councillor changes needed are, that only the district councillors need to represent Lake of Bays at the District and report back to the township and Mayor. Currenty the Mayor also attends.

Mike Peppard: It would be preferable and fair if it did. I believe that the three rural townships should have equal say at the District Council table. Unfortunately, the three Towns in Muskoka did not agree. Perhaps we can change their minds in the next term.

Contact and other information.

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