



**2022 Municipal Elections, Candidates Questionnaire
Township of Lake of Bays, Ridout/McLean District Councillor
Robert Lacroix (ACCLAIMED)**

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?

Robert Lacroix:

- Invest in hybrid or electric vehicles were possible
- Invest in solar panels for existing structures
- Could relooked at investing in dam power
- Have reduced permit fees for builders who use products which produce a home with a smaller carbon footprint. We know using less concrete and spray foam insulation does reduces a structures carbon footprint quite significantly. This is one area that the Township could have a real impact on climate change because we could implement this change ourselves.

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?

Robert Lacroix:

- It is always a good idea to work as a single entity so I would support the decision for a Muskoka Wide Watershed Management Plan.
- With the recent flooding which has occurred in Bracebridge and Muskoka Lakes it is a wise to refocus on this important issue.
- The challenge would be to work with the MNRF to control the flow of water for all areas.
- Since Lake of Bays is at the top of the watershed it would have less impact on our decisions in planning for Lake of Bays.

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?

Robert Lacroix:

- In my opinion there are no department which receive to much funding.
- The two departments which need more funding is the Public Works Department and the Parks and Facility Department.
- When it comes to our roads the township needs to keep investing in more brushing and ditching, along with improving our existing culvert system.
- The Parks in Lake of Bays need a major facelift. All our Parks could be an essential benefit to attract more people to our beautiful township.

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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?

Robert Lacroix: It is obvious that with more people in the area it does put stress on all our infrastructure. The good news is that our roadways are in good shape and the District has kept pace with our garbage needs especially with the addition of the new organic program. It does show that we need better internet infrastructure for our rural residents. However the two libraries in the Township do play an important role in helping mitigate this problem. The area which is being taxed the most is our overworked Planning and Building Departments. A good problem to have it does generate funds for the Township but it becomes a problem when more staff is required.

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

Robert Lacroix: The Township has implemented a short term rental program which given time should eliminate a lot of our residents concerns. Again to implement this plan to eliminate as many concerns as possible the Township may need to hire more staff to bring this program to its full potential.

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.

Robert Lacroix: No comment.

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?

Robert Lacroix: Every application is different but the one thing they all have in common is the environment. When it comes to waterfront applications trying to keep the shore activity area as close to the 25% as possible is a priority. Planting new vegetation where needed (open spaces) and when shoreline structures are removed creates a healthy shoreline. If possible moving structures away from the shoreline (new build) or completely out of the 20m shoreline zone is something that must always be considered.

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?

Robert Lacroix: I believe there needs to be a penalty system put in place for contractors who know better and build without permits and who completely ignore the development Permit System. Fines don't work for these individuals but if there somehow could be a list kept restricting these individuals from receiving building permits not only in Lake of Bays but all of Muskoka I believe most of these builds would disappear. If residents came in to get their own permits to try and circumvent this list the permit should have a line asking which company or individual builder the home owner intends to use. Contractors who do the right thing and follow all the rules are being penalized by waiting for their permits (could be months) while the contractors who don't follow the rules (builds and moves on to another job) builds, pays a fine and in the end makes more money.

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Robert Lacroix: No large developments (condos/townhouses) should be consider without Municipal Services. However if a commercial entity fails a subdivision could be considered if lots are large enough to keep the development at no higher then the existing failed resort.

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

Robert Lacroix: Yes the structure should change at the District level. Council should be represented by 2 councillors from each area for a total of 12 councillors. It was proposed during the last term of council but failed to pass a majority at the District level.

Contact and other information.

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