



**Waterfront Advisory Committee
Meeting Agenda**

November 18, 2024
Council Chambers

1. Call to Order
2. Adoption of the Agenda
3. Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest
4. Adoption of Previous Minutes
5. Committee Member Reports
6. Items for Discussion
 - 6.1 – Correspondence – Toronto Sun Article (Attachment 1)
 - 6.2 – Waterfront Advisory Sub-Committee Meeting ‘Post Event Takeaways’ (Attachment 2)
 - 6.3 – Waubuno Bridge Update (Clayton Harris)
 - 6.4 – Waterfront Master Plan Update (Clayton Harris)
 - 6.5 – 2025 Meeting Schedule
7. Next Meeting
8. Adjournment

Waterfront Advisory Committee Minutes

Date: Monday, September 16, 2024

Time: 5:15 pm

Place: Town Office Council Chambers

Members Present: Alana Torresan, Anne Bossart, Stefanie Veneranda, Bonnie Keith, Doug McCann, Bob Bowland, Maddy Lawrence, Seanan Megyesi

Regrets: Bob Corrigan

Guests: Nancy Cunningham

Staff Present: Clayton Harris, Jeff Thom, Mike Kearns, April McNamara

1. Call to Order: Alana called meeting to order at 5:15pm
2. Adoption of the Agenda-
Moved by: Stefanie Veneranda
Seconded by: Bonnie Keith
That the September 16, 2024, Waterfront Advisory Committee agenda be approved.
Carried
3. Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest and the general nature thereof: N/A

4. Adoption of the Minutes-

May 13, 2024

Deferred- not included in agenda package

June 17, 2024

Moved by: Doug McCann

Seconded by: Bob Bowland

That the June 17, 2024 Waterfront Advisory Committee minutes be approved.

Carried

5. Parks & Recreation/Public Works- Lines of Communication

April McNamara (Manager of Parks and Recreation) and Mike Kearns (Director of Public Works) attended the meeting and answered questions about the trail and waterfront and maintenance. April explained that the entire area fall under the responsibilities of public works so inquiries and maintenance requests should be directed to them. Parks and Recreation staff meet needs and perform tasks as

needed. There is a report a problem portal on website for service requests if people are unable to reach public works by phone.

Anne thanked April for the replacement of the two Tom Thompson interpretive signs and for a new one about the Trestle that was installed not far from the Skate Park. April explained that the cost of the signs was covered by a grant received for the trail, which will also cover the cost of the replacement of the fitness equipment next year, the installation of two sets of binoculars for viewing activities out on the sound, a webcam, garbage cans and a good stockpile of gravel. There are also benches and accessible picnic tables awaiting installation.

Mike spoke about a pilot project camera installation that can count pedestrians, cyclists, snowmobiles and could trigger a crosswalk signal that would likely be installed at the Bay Street crossing.

Bonnie had a question regarding interpretive signage for the 7 Grandfather feathers at the Town Dock. April reported that she has been unsuccessful in obtaining guidance regarding proper verbiage for signage. Anne will help

6. Committee Member Updates

Doug shared information about a summer visit to Port Carling. He was struck by cleanliness of their public washrooms in comparison to those at our Town Dock. He reported that over the summer many people have spoken to him about creating more public greenspace at our Waterfront. He wondered if the new master plan will identify the possibility of converting certain spaces like salt dock in larger public greenspaces.

Alana asked about Town Dock management.

7. Waterfront Master Plan Survey Update

Alana reported that 392 surveys were submitted on line and Bonnie had submitted 220. Bonnie feels that number doesn't truly represent the number of people she interacted with as many conversations with a group of people resulted in one survey being completed. She felt we would have benefitted from having more of the group doing in person surveys. She reported that people she spoke to at Waubuno beach were pleased with the cleanliness of the washrooms but thought there should be changerooms and longer hours of access. There is a renovation of the facility planned for 2026.

The planning consultants are compiling the data, and the results will be presented at the October 7th event.

8. A Wave of Possibilities- Oct 7th Event update

Alana thanked members of the subcommittee who have been working on planning and promoting the event all summer long and updated the Committee. A \$200 expense was approved to assist the Museum with printing some historical photos to display at their booth at the event. There was a discussion regarding thank you gifts for invited speakers. It was decided that a donation to Harvest Share would be made in the names of the speakers in the magnitude of \$50-100 each. The offer of paid milage will also be made to the person who has volunteered to speak about the Orillia Waterfront planning process.

There was a lengthy discussion surrounding the program schedule for the evening. Bonnie was adamant that there be an opportunity for people attending the event to speak and ask questions even though the event was not intended for that purpose. She felt that the whole evening is too lengthy but the intermission not long enough. Despite explanations by the subcommittee about what they were tasked with, it was agreed upon that Clayton and the Sub-committee will speak to the consultants about how to adjust the event to provide opportunity for the public to contribute without morphing the event into a town hall meeting. The subcommittee feels it is imperative that the spirit in which the developers were invited not be violated.

9. Town Dock/Cruise Ship update

Clayton reported that Pearl Mist challenges at Town Dock sorted out. Following discussions with DFO engineers, it was agreed that the Pearl Mist can tie up at the dock and will return for the 2025 season. Other ships need to go through a similar process to be approved for berthing.

The Town is pursuing funding opportunities for the necessary repairs to bring the Dock up to standard.

10. Next Meeting: Monday, November 18th, 5:15 pm

The Event Subcommittee will meet after the event and send a wrap up report to the Committee prior to the November meeting

11. Adjournment: 6:11 pm

Advocating for our right to walk on by

Mark Wessel

Published Oct 04, 2024 • 4 minute read

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In Fort Erie, waterfront landowners have tried to block access to Lake Erie beaches by erecting fences that run out to the water line.

Waterfronts are magical, they should be public for all to enjoy

Despite Canada's reputation as a country blessed with an abundance of nature, far too many cities and towns have a shortage of parks and public space.

It's a shortcoming that negatively impacts both the physical and mental health of residents in these communities; especially in more disadvantaged neighbourhoods where there is often a lack of green space to begin with.

To address that problem, a growing number of forward thinking planners and civic leaders are exploring ways to add more places to play through such measures as transforming parking lots into parks.

But sometimes the biggest community challenge isn't about the lack of amenities, but access to them.

A prime example of that sadly, can be found in Fort Erie where we live, where for years, waterfront landowners have tried to block access to Lake Erie beaches by erecting fences that run out to the water line.



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Earlier this summer I encountered two workers on the local beach who actually apologized for installing two barriers they were being paid to erect by the owner of a massive waterfront home.

The fences are designed to deter residents from walking along the beach while boxing them into a narrow public beach “window” as the town calls them.

After reaching out to local officials, I learned that due to the lack of oversight of their predecessors decades ago, some of the homeowners actually do own the beaches right down to the high water mark of Lake Erie, sometimes right into the water.

Through additional research I also discovered that the area's previous local MPP (Kim Kraitler) had tabled a private member's bill known as the “Great Lakes Shoreline Right of Passage Act” back in 2011.

The overarching goal of that proposed legislation was to reverse laws – some of which go back over 100 years, so that residents and visitors are given a “right of passage” along Great Lakes beaches.

Sadly that bill died on the table – in my mind -a prime example of our MPPs looking after the interests of a select few versus the general public.

In the latest twist to this saga, I've been informed that local politicians are exploring the legalities of preventing waterfront homeowners from erecting fences in the first place.

As someone who fully supports the success of this endeavour (and I suspect most locals feel the same way) it will be interesting to see how this plays out.

So what is the takeaway from all of this?

To paraphrase a recent LinkedIn post by Toronto-based urbanist Gil Penalosa, “waterfronts are magical (including) along rivers, lakes (and) creeks. God's gift to everyone. They should be public for all to enjoy.”

Expanding on this notion, he observes that a “great indicator of a quality city is all that is free (including) trails, parks, sidewalks... libraries (and) schools.”

Conversely, in communities where people’s access to such amenities as a Great Lakes shoreline is restricted, the quality of living of those residents is compromised.

Despite Canada’s lofty position as Global North, G8 member... countries like Barbados do a much better job of promoting access to such amenities as public beaches.

As the country’s website states “there are no private beaches in Barbados; all beaches are public (and) properties which front onto a beach may own the land to the high-water mark only.”

Consequently, everyone is entitled to walk along the beach, enjoy the setting and in the spirit of Ontario’s own Participaction program, stay active.

The argument in favour of opening up our Great Lakes beaches to the public is a subset of a more universal concern in many of today’s cities – the lack of infrastructure to make it safe to walk in the first place.

To its credit, last year councillors in Thorold, another Niagara Region city, expressed concern for residents vis-à-vis new residential developments due to the absence of sidewalks and greenspace in the initial plans, a shortcoming that is endemic in our cities.

Toronto for instance has hundreds of kilometers of roads without sidewalks. And both the safety and economic numbers associated with an absence of sidewalks are telling.

In Ottawa, the city’s previously published Pedestrian Plan notes that “residential areas with no sidewalks had 23 per cent of the pedestrian collisions but only 3 percent of the pedestrian traffic (and) compared to the overall sample of streets, local streets without sidewalks had 2.6 times more pedestrian collisions than expected.

In other words, people walk less in areas without sidewalks and unsurprisingly, are more likely to get hit by oncoming vehicles.

Conversely, despite the focus of some levels of government on building more roads for just cars rather than allocating some of that money for sidewalks, the plan points to numerous savings that can be associated with having more sidewalks, which in turn makes walking safer and more desirable.

Benefits cited include: lower vehicle ownership costs (thanks to people using their cars less), fewer vehicle-related emissions (and with that, improved air quality) healthcare cost savings (realized by having a more active community) and economic benefits for local businesses. All benefits linked to having a more pedestrian-friendly city.

Whether it pertains to a local beach or along a street that connects you to other public amenities, if we want to create healthier, more vibrant communities, we need to make it both easier and safer to, walk on by.

Mark Wessel lives in Ridgeway, Ont. and is an advocate for living more sustainably at home and in the greater community. Visit him at www.markdouglaswessel.com.



Town of Parry Sound Waterfront Advisory Sub-Committee Meeting POST EVENT TAKEAWAYS

The Waterfront Advisory Sub-Committee was pleased with the overall success of the October 7th Event “A Wave of Possibilities - An Evening of Waterfront Conversations” held at the Stockey Centre. The event effectively raised awareness about the update to the Waterfront Master Plan (WMP) and encouraged community participation in the engagement process. This report outlines key successes, areas for improvement, and challenges to address in future events.

Successes

- Turnout - The number of attendees was truly impressive, demonstrating significant interest in the waterfront’s development. The strong presence of residents highlights the community’s commitment to staying involved in the planning process.
- Good variety of speakers - The diversity of speakers offered something for everyone. While many attendees may have come to hear the Beatty Lands developers, they left discussing insights from all presentations.
- Working with MHBC consultants - The MHBC consultants played a crucial role in the success of this event. They provided exceptional guidance and support throughout the planning and execution stages, proving to be an invaluable resource for the Sub-Committee.
- Effective Use of the “Parry Sound Waterfront” Facebook Page” - This page was the primary platform for promoting the event and proved critical to its success. The recommendation is to continue using this page to foster ongoing engagement and consultation opportunities related to the Waterfront.
- Dot-Democracy exercises - While the event’s primary focus was not to collect feedback, the dot-democracy exercises gave attendees a way to get involved. This interactive feature served as a preview of future public consultation opportunities and sparked conversations during the intermission.
- Addition of a Panel - The inclusion of the panel was a good addition to the agenda, offering attendees the chance to ask questions about the presentations. Although some questions, such as those about the housing crisis, strayed from the waterfront topic, the panel created space for people to be heard.

- Stockey Centre - Great experience working with Stockey staff. They accommodated our request for the bar and popcorn machine, which was a nice addition. Would highly recommend they invest in a slide show clicker for speakers to use during presentations.
- Museum - The Museum's participation in the event was greatly appreciated. It was beneficial to highlight how much the waterfront has changed throughout time.

Improvements/Takeaways for Future Events

- Arrival Experience - To create a more welcoming atmosphere, it would have been beneficial for all Committee members and Town staff to greet attendees as they arrived.
- Blocked off seating for Committee Members - It would have been nice to have blocked off a row to have all Committee members sitting together. This should be considered for future Committee events.
- Event Recording - In the days leading up to the event, several residents inquired about whether the event would be filmed. Unfortunately, due to time constraints, this wasn't possible. Moving forward, we recommend recording all future Town events of this scale to accommodate those who cannot attend in person.
- Limited promotion from the Town - The event's Facebook page was only shared by the Town once, despite requests for assistance from multiple departments. Interestingly, the Parks and Recreation Department, which wasn't involved in the event, ended up helping the Sub-Committee by sharing it. Additionally, the banner on the Town's website did not link to a dedicated splash page with event details, and the "News" posting on the main page only read "A Wave of Possibilities. Waterfront Master Plan", therefore there was no indication that there was an event occurring. Given that this was a Town event, more support from the Town's communication channels would have been greatly appreciated.
- Committee Reimbursement - Obtaining reimbursement for event-related expenses proved to be difficult for Committee members. If an Advisory Committee is tasked with organizing a similar event in the future, a clear and streamlined process for reimbursement should be outlined to avoid delays.
- Limited Diversity in Attendees - While the event turnout was strong, the majority of attendees were aged 50 and above. In future engagement events, efforts should be made to attract a broader demographic, ensuring participation from younger residents and other underrepresented segments of the municipality.
- Committee Feedback - Although the Sub-Committee provided progress updates on the event throughout the summer, feedback from the larger Committee was only received two weeks before the event. This late input resulted in last-minute revisions for both the consultants and the Sub-Committee. While feedback is always appreciated, a more timely response would have made the planning process smoother.

- The Committee's Terms of Reference Were Exceeded – As an Advisory Committee, this event surpassed the scope outlined in the Committee's Terms of Reference. Several tasks that would typically fall under staff responsibilities were instead handled by the Sub-Committee. As a result, the event became more extensive than the Sub-committee initially anticipated. Moving forward, it is recommended that clearer roles and responsibilities be established for both staff and Committee members.

The October 7th meeting demonstrated the valuable role the Waterfront Advisory Committee can play as a bridge between the Town of Parry Sound and the community. Given the success of the event, it is crucial for the Committee to continue encouraging residents to actively participate in the Waterfront Master Plan process and future public consultations related to the Waterfront.