

**MINUTES OF THE 45<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**  
**OF THE OXTONGUE LAKE RATEPAYERS ASSOCIATION**  
**AUGUST 4<sup>TH</sup>, 2008, 10:00AM**  
**OXTONGUE LAKE COMMUNITY CENTRE**

**DRAFT**

Copies of the agenda, the 2007 AGM minutes, the Treasurer's Report, a Draft Motion to Council regarding the community center and a Draft letter to URS and the MTO regarding the Oxtongue Narrows Bridge Refurbishment were available at the door.

1. **Call to order and Opening Remarks** – Gary Schultz welcomed and thanked everyone for attending. He introduced our two guests: Reeve Eleanor Harrison and Councilor Diane Griffin.
2. **Approval of minutes** - Motion to approve – John Lawrence. Seconded by Gale Siegfried. Motion carried.
3. **Treasurers Report**- Jim Elliott presented the treasurer's report and budget for 2007. Motion to approve- Scott Hayden. Seconded by Marilyn Farber. Motion carried.
4. **Regatta Report**- Fran Gower on behalf of Tracie Parrott gave the report. The Regatta had great attendance, participation and competition. The Zabitz family has volunteered to organize the regatta for next year. Gary Schultz initiated a round of applause in appreciation of the work that Tracie and Korby have put into the regatta for the past years.
5. **Website Update**- Gary introduced Jim Grant. Jim announced that the website, [www.oxtonguelake.ca](http://www.oxtonguelake.ca) , was due to go live the next day at noon. He said that in this day and age a website stitches us together as a community and he has worked with Nora Heuer from Baytides Management on this site to make it less graphics intensive for those people without high speed internet access. There will be several places on the site for the community to offer suggestions and there will eventually be an audio and video component. Jim asked everyone to send in photos under 500 kilobytes that capture the spirit of Oxtongue as well as photos of family members and pictures of people who have passed on. He asked for any links that people might like to have included. Gary remarked that we have the right person for the job, that he has exceeded expectation and the challenge now is to maintain it. Jim remarked that the website will die without input from the community so he encouraged people to get involved. He mentioned that he also got a \$300 discount off the price!

6. **Ontario Lakes for the Future Program** – Gary spoke about how we are all stewards and stakeholders of Oxtongue Lake and we hope and think that the lake is a healthy one but we do not know for sure. That is what Ontario Lakes for the Future Program is about. Gary introduced Ben Teske from Wolf Den who “walks the talk” and has agreed to be the volunteer for this initiative. Ben spoke about his background at Fleming College and his active environmental participation. He gave some background about the Program and explained that he is monitoring the water quality of Oxtongue, specifically the phosphorus and clarity. We are fortunate at Oxtongue to have a hard substrate so phosphorus is released slowly as phosphorus is the primary factor in causing algae blooms. Faulty septic systems, fertilizer, soaps, and gardens by the water can cause algae blooms in a lake that shouldn’t have them. He emphasized that what we do to our lake, we also do to the communities downstream so we can compare our lake to the next. Ben goes out in a canoe and takes water samples. There is no data yet to know where we stand but there should be some by the end of the summer. To test clarity, Ben uses a SECCI disk. Ben suggested that we consider doing the bacteria test as well in the future. Ben discussed the plant watch guide and the frog watch handouts available at the meeting. The plants give an indication of climate change and the health of frogs is a good bio indication of ecosystem health since frogs are susceptible to environmental change. Ben emphasized that everyone should get involved in keeping our lake and environs healthy. Gary commended Ben stating that he was the right person for the job. He said that once we get baseline data for the health of the lake now, we will deal with the outcome. All the information will be on the website.

7. **Oxtongue Bridges Refurbishment** – Gary gave the background about the bridge refurbishment plan and spoke about how both bridges need to be replaced. He spoke about the informational meeting held at the community centre where the URS Consulting Engineers and Architects had potential proposals for the new bridges’ construction (this information can be found on the Oxtongue website). He mentioned that the deadline for public input regarding the plans will be at the end of the week. Gary said that the MTO and URS are looking at this as a “bridge in, bridge out” project and are not addressing anything that has handicapped us from former bridge constructions such as the fact that there is not a legal place for a school bus to stop, no sidewalks, no turning lanes at Outfitters, too high a speed limit, etc. The Executive wrote a letter to the MTO and submitted it at the earlier informational meeting. Gary stressed that this project will affect everyone, not simply the tourism industry although the community has lobbied as a tourism based community. We have industry support such as the Ministry of Tourism and PC critics. Gary remarked that the Executive has put out a statement to the community in the form of a follow-up letter that outlines community concerns and tries to get the MTO to take a proactive approach and deal with consequences before, not after the project begins. The Executive is neutral: it is not looking at individual proposals or favouring any option. They are looking at

the overall scope of community issues. Jim E asked if there were any additional comments to add to the letter. Suzanne Jones asked if the Truckers Association is involved since it is interested in safety issues. Tom Witter asked if the local business association is involved and Gary answered, "intimately". Eleanor asked if the businesses are looking into recouping their losses and if so, they need to keep track of everything. Jim Grant reiterated that we must familiarize ourselves with the bridge plans and write letters to Peter Wouk, the URS contact person. Hundreds of individual letters are best and all the information is on the Oxtongue website. Diane suggested that we make a motion to have a meeting with the MTO before the next public meeting. The OLRA should send something in writing to remind them that we were promised a meeting. Motion to send the letter we have as amended was approved. Motion carried to send a draft letter from the OLRA requesting a meeting was unanimously accepted.

8. **Fire Department Report** - Gary remarked that there are many pressures on the captains and fire chief these days and a lot of work is required with procedure. There is a thin line between full paid fire people and volunteers since there has to be the same level of response. Ted and others contribute a tremendous amount of time and energy to the community. Scott Hayden gave the fire report since Ted was not available. We have 15 volunteers and two new ones: Jen Cousintine and Becky Helsel. Given any particular call, five or six people generally show up at the scene although there have been as many as twenty. A southern fire department donated a set of jaws-of-life to the Oxtongue Fire Department and the volunteers have been training like mad. Rick Swift at AO donated an old van to practice on and cut up. The jaws were needed up at Ragged Falls a week after the department got it. When the department got the jaws -of -life and realized there was nothing to carry it in, the Township gave them a truck. Because people are better educated about fire prevention, the department rarely goes to fires. Ninety percent of the calls are for medical assistance although the department is called out to some forest fires and many false security alarms on houses. There are raffle tickets being sold at the door at today's meeting. As Ted would do, Scott said, "I will end the report by asking everyone to check their smoke detectors". Gary suggested that everyone should get rid of the old yellow signs with the numbers that was the first attempt at a 911 identification system. The current blue numbering sign must be up by your house.

9. **Snowmobile Club Report**- Scott Hayden gave the Snowmobile report. Typically there are twelve feet of snow but last year we had eighteen feet that came in waves. There was snow from the 15<sup>th</sup> of December right through April. He said that the Algonquin Snowmobile Club is part of the Muskoka Snow Region and since we generally have more snow, we put more hours on a groomer. The club is going to get a new tractor groomer (one with 4 tracks, not two, and it looks like a tall eleven foot ATV). It took \$3200 to repair last year's groomer but a tractor groomer still has life in it after it has finished grooming. The Algonquin Snowmobile Club has its own website and the new owners of

White Birches, Marlene and Tim, will have a webcam on the website. The Club has many social gatherings including a chili cook-off, a fish derby and pancake breakfast. Scott emphasized that when you ride the snowmobile trails in the summer be considerate and don't make big ruts. You can walk on the trails but some of them cross over private property so be mindful.

- 10. Community Centre Events and Update** – Fran Gower read a letter to the group (see attached). Gary spoke about the history of the community centre: it was a single room schoolhouse and unique in its structure back in 1948. It could have anywhere from five to fifty five students in one term. The centre is the focal point of the community. We are not a large community so we are bound to be “ad hoc” users of the community centre but it is still important to us. Gary read the Draft Motion to Council (see attached) that reiterates that we want to be cooperative and accountable. We have not submitted the letter yet. Eleanor requested that we hold on any motion until after her statements.

- 11. Report from Council-** Eleanor thanked everyone for the opportunity to be at the meeting.

**Landfill Update:** Council along with their Environmental Consultants have been involved in the process of applying for certification for a long-term landfill capacity and the preferred site is the Maple Lake site. Most of the documentation has been submitted but there have been some holdups. Final approval is hoped for by early next year.

- Oxtongue Hazardous Waste Day was August 26, 2008.
- Dorset's Hazardous Waste Day will be August 30, 2008.
- Algonquin Highlands has mandatory recycling and Eleanor congratulated us on our efforts.
- Recycle containers can be purchased in Dorset for \$10.
- The new landfill hours were chosen to provide consistent hours in the summer and the winter. Eleanor asked if the hours were working for us? There was a resounding NO from the group. Eleanor said they would look at the hours again but nothing would happen before the end of the summer. Fran Gower asked if the community could have input and once there are new draft hours, send it around for people to see. Eleanor agreed to circulate the new hours for comments.
- Big Red Program (for batteries, light bulbs, cell phones, etc) is on a trial basis at two sites. If it is successful it will move to other sites. Eleanor thinks it may be extended.
- Tipping Fees are trying to be standardized. The new fee for non-recyclable bulk garbage greater than 1 cubic yard is charged. It's \$20 per cubic yard.

**Stanhope Airport Update:** There is a comprehensive study to see if it is feasible to build the airport. The property has already been acquired. The MTO assessed that the existing runway had reached the end of its useful life.

The following money has already been spent:

|   |               |
|---|---------------|
| Purchase of property                            | \$ 305,000.00 |
| Legal, Surveys, Registration, Land Transfer Tax | \$ 22,659.39  |
| 2008 Budget for Engineering Studies             | \$ 156,000.00 |

Funding for properties was achieved by the sale of other surplus municipal properties.

|                          |               |
|--------------------------|---------------|
| Dorset School Property - | \$ 275,000.00 |
| Dorset School Residence  | \$ 57,500.00  |
| Fox Lake Property -      | \$ 150,000.00 |

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|--|---------------|
| Previous years' airport related property sales | \$ 403,199.05 |
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\*\* All property sales revenues were placed in reserve for future property acquisition requirements.

The results of the study will be announced at the Council meeting on September 18<sup>th</sup> (Eleanor said she had hoped it could have been in August). Fran Gower asked if the public could speak at this meeting and Eleanor said no. On September 20<sup>th</sup> there will be a public forum at the Dorset community Centre. All the professionals, engineers, environment people and the executives from associations will be there.

Tom Witter asked how far away is the airport from Oxtongue and Joe Lindsey responded 65 kilometres. Tom asked if the airport would impact our taxes and Eleanor replied, "yes, like anything else". Richard Copland asked if it is possible to get federal and provincial funding for the airport. Eleanor reported that in the years 1989 – 1990 the township received \$ 1,002,681.62 in combined funding from both the Federal and Provincial Governments for capital works enhancements carried out on the existing infrastructure including paving lighting apron expansion etc.

The principles that will be used to make the decision about the runway will be:

1. To enhance aviation safety
2. To provide sufficient length of runway for air ambulance, police services, search and rescue, etc
3. To provide greater air access for economic development

**Community Centre Update:** Eleanor said that the decision about the community centre is not only about raising money. She said that it is based on

constant and sustainable usage. The need for the facility has to be demonstrated by the residents. She said that we need to create programming and Melissa can help with that but she cannot help with organization.

Suzanne Jones asked if the key could be made more accessible. Eleanor responded that she would not answer today. It is a Council decision. There is a potential liability problem. Council has to know when the community centre is being used so the water can be tested. Internet communication was suggested to address that issue. Jane Tizel asked if there was anyone on the community who could test the water. Eleanor said she would like to keep it "in house". Jane said it would make sense for someone at Oxtongue to test the water and to have the key housed here. Eleanor responded with "no answers today."

Fran Gower asked if Melissa is available to help with activities and mentioned the letter she had received from William Mitchell, Chief Administration Officer, turning us down for help with next year's Canada Day celebration. Eleanor said that she doesn't ask staff to help with regattas, Canada Day, etc. nor does Melissa help organize events. Melissa responded that she works with recreation committees only.

Eleanor said that the staff report will look into revenue generation, how much the centre is used and the cost since amalgamation. At that time we will be given a report and then we can go to Council and ask questions. Gary asked if Eleanor could give us assurances now that they will not make a decision without our input. Eleanor responded that it was not the staff's decision, it is the township's decision. Gary said statistics do not tell all and obviously our statistics will be in the negative column when it comes to money and usage but it is imperative that we keep our community centre. We're willing to work with Council to keep the community centre open. Scott Hayden asked if we could see what the usage in all four halls in the township is so we can compare. He added that Oxtongue is 10% of the tax revenue in the township and once community property is gone, it is gone forever. He said that when the key was kept in the area, the locals did everything in the community centre. He asked what the criteria are for sustainability?

Through the motion to send the letter to Council we hope to formalize the relationship with Council and take down barriers for the community centre not being used. Motion to approve: Judy Clapp. Seconded by Scott Hayden it. All in favour.

**Review of By-law Changes-** New zoning was passed at the last meeting of Council:

Sleeping cabins are permitted as long as they are under 485 sq ft. For Oxtongue, the minimum setback from the regulated high water mark is 30 m (98 ft)



Wind turbines were taken out of the zoning by-laws for the meantime. It is the landowner's responsibility to keep their 911 signs visible.

- 12. Election of Directors** –Ted Keown, Betsy Siegfried, Gary Schultz and John Lawrence are staying on to complete their terms and Tracie Parrott, Jim Elliott and Richard Wesolowski are stepping off. Gary thanked each of the current board members, praising their individual strengths. The nominations for the openings were:

Scott Hayden  
Ben Teske  
Jim Grant  
Liz Magarucci

Judy Clapp recommended that the nominations be closed. Fran Gower seconded it.

**13. Other Business –**

**Beetle Trail-** The trail is officially open, the signage is up and the brochures are out. The new entrance is on Elliott Rd. It was noted that the brochures and website are already out of date. Laurie Scott should receive a cc on any correspondence that goes out regarding the Beetle Lake Trail.

**Meeting Adjourned**