

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF OFFICIAL PLAN AMENDMENT (OPA) FOR THE COGNASHENE COMMUNITY PLAN**

Following input from the community, the original OPA distributed on 29 July 06 and then revisited on 19 August 06 was modified in several significant ways. The full OPA document adopted by Township Council on October 16<sup>th</sup>, 2006 and the District of Muskoka on January 22, 2007 can be viewed by visiting the Cognashene Cottagers' Association website at [www.cognashene.com](http://www.cognashene.com). Cognashene's OPA is No. 15. There were no appeals following District approval.

The OPA was submitted to the Township on August 31<sup>st</sup>, 2006. A public meeting was held on September 25, 2006 at the Township Administration Building. There were a large number of people in attendance. Of those who chose to speak, comments were made both against and in favour of the OPA. At the end of the day Council decided to defer their decision until the next council meeting in October 2006.

The OPA makes numerous references to its purpose which, in a nutshell, is to provide planning policies designed to preserve and enhance the character and beauty of the area as well as the quality of its water without unduly infringing on the rights and interests of individual property owners. Ensuring that human presence and structures complement and blend with the distinctive landscape of Cognashene – not dominate or alter it - is one of the community's basic principles.

### *New Lot Creation*

To create a new lot 1.0 hectare (2.5 acres) will be required. (No change from the current by-law.) What is new is that the required shoreline frontage to create a new lot will go from 120 metres (400 ft.) to 180 (600 ft.). New lots are required to have navigable access by boat without blasting.

### *Existing Undersized Lots*

Development on existing undersized lots (with a minimum lot area of 1.0 hectare, 2.5 acres, and 120 metres or 400 feet of frontage) will be permitted so long as the lot was created prior to November 1981 (which is when a planning regime first came into being in the Twp). If an undeveloped undersized lot existed PRIOR November 1981 and has at least .4 hectares (about an acre) and frontage of 60 metres (approx. 200 feet) it could still be developed so long as the lot is found to be suitable for development. A site evaluation report will determine that.

### Cottage Size

The cap on gross floor area will be 25 square metres (approx. 269 square feet) per 1,000 square metres (approx. ¼ acre) of lot area or 2 square metres per metre of frontage, whichever is less, to a maximum of 325 square metres (3498 sq. ft).

On undersized lots a dwelling unit of 140 square metres (approx. 1500 square feet) will be allowed. In some circumstances, this is actually a liberalization of existing rules, which do not address cottage size directly but which place caps according to the totality of all the buildings as a percentage of lot area. There will now, however, be a sliding scale leading to an absolute cap.

Cottage height is restricted to 1.5 storeys, which squares with the intent of the Twp.'s existing by-law but more definitively identifies that a full second storey will not generally be permitted. On the outer islands, structures are restricted to 1 storey.

There is an overall lot coverage cap (i.e. all buildings) @ 5% of the front 90 metres of the lot.

### Shoreline Structures

Wetland preservation: no building on or close to identified wetlands.

Some limits (15% or 20 metres, whichever is less) as to how much of the shoreline can be dedicated to docks, boathouses, etc. Over the water boathouses will not be permitted, but one is now be permitted to have BOTH a boat port (i.e. with open sides) AND a dry land boathouse - one storey maximum height and the dry land boat house will not exceed 30 square metres (322 square feet). Docks shall not project more that 20 metres (66 feet) into the water.

### Blasting and Dredging

Blasting below the water to access existing lots and public channels will be allowed. Shoreline blasting is not permitted to create a new lot. All new lots must be accessible without blasting. Limited blasting may be allowed for the sole purpose of lowering the dwelling height. This blasting shall not exceed 5 cubic metres.

### Septic Systems:

New systems shall be set back a minimum of 30 metres (98 feet) from the shoreline. The OPA recommends regular inspection and re-inspections will be undertaken. Property owners are encouraged to upgrade existing systems.

### Boating

This is a Provincial and Federal issue however the Township is committed to working with these levels of government to address such issues as noise, grey water, trespassing speed, safety and wake concerns. The Township will encourage greater use of the outside channel.

### Special Policy Areas

Musquash area has been identified as containing a number of sensitive environmental features. Due to this sensitivity the minimum lot size has increased to 4 hectares (10 acres) and 200 metres (656 feet) of frontage.

Longuissa special policy area has been temporarily removed from the OPA for the purpose of developing proper wording to ensure that the sensitive nature of this area is preserved while meeting with the needs of the families in the area. Existing policy is in effect until such wording can be determined.

Outer Islands, as mentioned earlier, will be restricted in dwelling height to one story.

Minnicognashene Island's special policy reflects the family's desire to keep the total number of lots to 16 and prohibits any building on the west and north-west shores.

Palisades Bay/East Bone Island has been designated as a special area in order to determine the appropriateness of establishing specific policies for that area. Until that happens, existing Township of GB policies apply.

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