

Still Waiting For OMB Ruling On Quarry...

(Issued November 1, 2006)

We all continue to wait very patiently, and with measured optimism, for the final decision on the proposed rock quarry near Pen Lake. However, there have been no significant developments since our July update immediately following the public Hearings. Of course, as soon as we have it we'll let you know the result.

That ruling could come anytime now, so perhaps its appropriate to reflect a moment on what's been accomplished.

It was just one year ago this week that the OMB Hearings began into the appeal by Mr. Kris House, a recent purchaser of land in our neighborhood/community wanting to start a new quarry. He was objecting to the unanimous decision by our elected township Council denying rezoning of his property (from rural to industrial), as now required to start any new quarry. This local Lake of Bays decision had been made precisely three years ago this week (November 2003) by our previous Council, as many of the hundreds who attended that session will recall.

Then last winter, following the unexpected adjournment of the OMB Hearings due to a jurisdictional technicality, the current Council again reviewed this proposed quarry application, once again rejecting it unanimously. Now, we are on the cusp of a new Municipal election, which will mean yet another new local Council this month as we continue to wait for the OMB's final determination in this matter. ***This has certainly certainly been a lengthy struggle to prevent an unnecessary encroachment of industrial development and its negative effects into the tourist/recreational and residential community at Pen Lake.***

Regardless of the final outcome, the essential point we want to make at this time is that ***this effort has actually been a remarkable example of solid, focused grass-roots community-based activity on the part of the entire Pen Lake community, its immediate neighbours and the broader community within Muskoka. As such it represents a unique attempt to put meaning into words such as "preserve and enhance" our environment, the very words which guide the activities of your Peninsula Lake Association...and of course, the heart of Pen Lake's "Plan" for the future.***

Our case opposing this new quarry now has been made, and we believe it was made very well. That was possible only because of broadly committed support within this area, for the values outlined in the Pen Lake Plan as well as the Municipal and District Official Plans (to which so many area residents have actively contributed over the years). Most remarkably, given the daunting costs required to resist undesirable development---to preserve and protect our environment---***our case was made without resort to any form of debt or any bridge financing at all. And, we're pleased to say, it was made within budget.*** In short, whenever case developments (such as the unexpected OMB adjournment one year ago) required additional funding, those funds were provided through many generous donations---large and small---from a broad range of supporters. That says a lot about the tremendous character of Pen Lake, because at the end of the day we think that no lake

is stronger than the characters who are prepared to protect it, to actually act to “preserve and enhance” it.

This case has surely been a test of sorts for the Pen Lake community and its neighbours. And it has not always been certain that we could or would fight as well as we have. It's been said that defeat is an orphan, while victory has many parents. **At this time, waiting for the OMB ruling, we all can take pride and comfort in a fight well fought for a wonderful and valuable cause.** And while we certainly hope to win, of course that was never a certainty. Indeed, that fact alone makes the response by this community, by everyone who helped, even more incredible.

Now, with our battle essentially over and before the verdict is in, we simply say again to each of you on behalf of the *Committee for No Quarry@Pen Lake*: **“Thank you so much for your care, your concern for our common cause, your encouragement and for all of your contributions that have taken us to where we are today....patiently waiting for the OMB ruling.”**

Pat and Joe Doyle, Jean Fraser, Tom Jeruzalski, Catherine Moffat, Dick Morse, Cathy Purvis, Len Ross