

Trent Severn Waterway Review Panel
August 7, 2007 – Baxter Ward Community Center

We are representing a group of water access only cottagers that are increasingly concerned with the rapid erosion of marina access that we are experiencing on our lakes. We are witnessing a number of marinas in our area, Gloucester Pool and Little Lake on the Trent Severn Waterway, which are either for sale, closing or being redeveloped into Condominium Corporations. This will effectively eliminate access to our cottages and to this body of water. If this development is allowed to continue without proper planning by all levels of government, this very unique way of life, including a diversely rich marshland, will be increasingly threatened.

Specifically we are before your committee today to draw attention to the fact the Narrows Marina the only marina located where Gloucester Pool joins Little Lake on the Trent Severn Waterway, has made application to the Township of Severn to develop the Marina Property into a Residential Community. While the issue of water access or the loss of water access goes well beyond this community the timing of your review is relevant to our specific situation.

Through the various efforts to deal with this matter we do not get the sense that there is a strategic plan in place by both Municipalities (Township of Severn and Township of Georgian Bay) relative to this common body of water. It is because of this Municipal division that the seriousness and full impact of this proposed redevelopment is not being realized. Adding the Trent Severn Waterway to this formula would make sense and therefore we are hoping that by brining this matter to your attention, we can help raise awareness of what we believe is a precedent setting case that could possibly set the standard for other marina development in of Ontario.

In addition to the precedent setting nature of this case we are faced with the following concerns.

Firstly, the issue of access is critical. The redevelopment of this marina is equivalent to removing the road to anyone's home – Narrow' Marina is the only Marina located where Gloucester Pool joins Little Lake and provides an essential service to the water access properties in the vicinity. Some of these cottagers have had access from this location for over 25 years. With the redevelopment of this property, residents will lose an entry point not only for their properties but also for emergency and service personnel for all properties in the vicinity of Narrow's Marina (Police, Fire, Ambulance, Hydro and waste collection).

It is also worth noting that some of these boaters/cottagers that will be displaced by this rezoning, have been contributing to the tax base of these municipalities as far back as the 1920's making them a part of the very foundation of this community. Taxes paid by these individuals have contributed to the building of roads, bridges, community centers,

libraries and schools. In return for their contribution, these citizens do not require all, the services of a permanent resident.

Secondly but no less important, is the potential damage this rezoning could have on the environment. This plan proposes the sale and building of 20 lots homes some to be located in rich marshland that is home to various flora and fauna and much wildlife. We have a responsibility to protect this rich diverse marshland as much as we have the right to protect access to our cottages.

We understand that running a marina as a private business entails that the owners have the right to sell. It is how these marina properties are being sold and redeveloped that concerns us. Historically we have seen mutually viable solutions that have been reached by marina operators and the customers that use them. Nicholson's Marina located on Gloucester Pool is currently operating as a cooperative. When the decision was made by Mrs. Nicholson to retire from the Marina business she offered her clients the right to purchase the marina for dockage and they did. This example should be looked upon as a standard for both protecting access to the Island cottager and the water access only properties and for protecting commercial land from being overdeveloped or redeveloped.

Twenty years ago, Marinas were thriving and available. The Ontario Marina Operators association and the Trent Severn Waterway could not provide us with the data that would support the number of Marinas available today compared to four years ago. This is alarming, as we need these statistics in order to fully realize the magnitude of the challenges we may soon or may already be facing in the rapid erosion of marinas and the services they offer. Marinas provide an essential service essential services should not be removed or reduced without a viable alternative in place. By viable we mean one that does not lessen property values does not impact access and does not put anyone in harms way and always protects our treasured environment.

The infrastructure of the Trent Severn is as reliant on Marinas as the 400 hundred series of highways is on its service centers.

We are at a crossroads by we I mean all of us. We believe that the decision and the process that we follow with the proposed Narrow Marina Redevelopment will form the basis for similar decisions to be made across Ontario. Together we have the opportunity to make these decisions that protects water access for cottagers and boaters while also protecting the environment. The time for action is now.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today.