



CLEAR LAKE PROPERTY OWNERS' ASSOCIATION

Torrance, Muskoka, Ontario
www.clearlakemuskoka.ca



SPRING NEWSLETTER

MAY 2021

Hello everyone! The days are getting warmer and Victoria Day is just around the corner. I was able to spend a week working from the cottage earlier in the Spring and the change of scenery was wonderful. I hope everyone is safe and healthy, and hope to see everyone this summer.

2020 CLPOA MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

We received 128 memberships in 2020, which was an increase over 2019. A huge debt of thanks goes to Sharon Cleverdon and Ron Algate who spent countless hours following up in person and going door to door. I also want to thank everyone who paid their membership dues. Last year was a challenging year for many, and the continued support of our members allow us to continue with marker buoy maintenance, liability insurance, membership records, contact lists and mailings, donations to support groups deemed beneficial to property owners (Muskoka Lakes Association, Safe and Quiet Lakes, Guardians of Muskoka's Dark Sky, and the Torrance Community Centre), and water quality testing.

This year, without an opportunity to pay in person at AGM, we ask for payment prior to July 3rd by one of the three methods outlined below:

OPTION #1: E-TRANSFER (INTERAC EMAIL MONEY TRANSFER)

- Set up CLPOA as Recipient (membership@clearlakemuskoka.ca)
- No security Question/Answer--CLPOA's bank account is set up for "Auto Deposit"
- Your E-Transfer will identify to us that you are the sender
- CLPOA's bank will send you confirmation that your deposit has been received
- You may choose to add message--payment is for a cottage address or family name(s)

OPTION #2: TD BRANCH to TD BRANCH TRANSFER (No Charge)

- CLPOA's TD Canada Trust information: Branch #1997, Account #0000667
- If you use Online Banking with TD, call Easy Line at 1-866-222-3456. Add CLPOA as a Personal Payee for the purpose of transferring money. (This is not the same as a Bill Payment—it is a Payee for transfer purposes only). You may then transfer \$30 from your TD account to CLPOA's TD account, either online or by telephone.
- IMPORTANT--Please email membership@clearlakemuskoka.ca to confirm your branch-to-branch transfer. This is the only way we can know that the deposit came from you.

OPTION #3: CHEQUE payable to Clear Lake Property Owners' Association

Address: CLPOA c/o Sharon Cleverdon, 1077 Clear Lake Rd., Torrance, ON P0C 1M0

IMPORTANT: ARE YOU A 'MUSKOKA LAKES ASSOCIATION' (MLA) MEMBER?

Let us know by email (membership@clearlakemuskoka.ca). We pay MLA approximately \$775 per year to manage our Water Test Program tests and results. MLA will deduct \$30 from this amount for every CLPOA Member who is also an MLA Member. Please see www.mla.on.ca to check out other benefits of membership (\$125 annually). NOTE: MLA is different from MRA (Muskoka Ratepayers Association).

Please also remember that "One paid membership = One Vote", required to elect the Board of Directors and to vote on issues needing Association approval. The cottager's contact list is available only to paid members.

REGATTA (BOAT PARADE) - Saturday, July 31

As always, we will be holding the Boat Parade as part of the Regatta this year. We had a lower turnout than expected last year but hope that this year we get a few more participants. Feel free to decorate your boat on Saturday, July 31 and meet in the big bay at 11 am for the parade. We are still discussing logistics for a BBQ event, stay tuned!

CLPOA AGM Saturday, July 3 via Zoom

Once again, we will be holding our AGM virtually. While it is likely that a majority of members will have had at least their first vaccination, holding the AGM in person would undoubtedly exclude those who haven't and those who are not yet comfortable in large indoor group meetings. It also excludes members who still may not cross the border. Zoom meeting details and agenda will be send in early June.

TWO HABITAT HOMES TO BE BUILT IN BALA

Everyone needs a safe and affordable place to call home. According to the District of Muskoka, a home priced at less than \$335,000 is affordable. In the District there are currently fewer than 20 homes listed as actively for sale, none for less than \$400,000. Locals and those who live here year-round are being priced out of the Muskoka housing market. Rentals are equally challenging - online ads searching for a home or apartment to rent far outnumber the listings. Any units that are available, even a one-bedroom, are at least \$1,200 per month, not including utilities. That's 44% of gross monthly income for someone making \$26,918 per year, the median employment income in Muskoka.

The shortage of affordable rental units and affordable homes for purchase is a critical issue for those who have lived in the Muskoka region for years, most of whom hold the service jobs we all rely on.

The Habitat for Humanity vision is a world where everyone has a safe, decent, and affordable place to live. Today, more than ever, the residents of The Township of Muskoka Lakes need a suitable place to shelter, work, and learn. COVID-19 has created many new challenges and exacerbated issues that existed prior to the pandemic, including access to affordable housing for Muskoka families.

This year, Habitat for Humanity Ontario Gateway North is gearing up to add two (2) affordable homes to the supply in Bala. For full project details, check out 'Building Futures in Bala' at <https://www.habitatgatewaynorth.com/upload/editor/images/Builds-in-Motion/Building-Futures-in-Bala-2021-2022-Compressed.pdf>

Please consider helping build affordable homes for two Muskoka families by donating to the Bala Build today: <https://www.habitatgatewaynorth.com/donations/donate>. They also accept 'in kind' donations 😊

MUSKOKA SHORELINE DENSITY POLICY DEVELOPMENT

The Township of Muskoka Lakes Council has just released a draft of the Minett Official Plan Amendment for development of the Clevelands House property. While they are not exactly neighbours, the policies being adopted could impact development at the properties with resort permissions located throughout Muskoka. If you would like to learn more, or would like to provide feedback, the Friends of Muskoka and the Muskoka Lakes Association and put together an information package here:

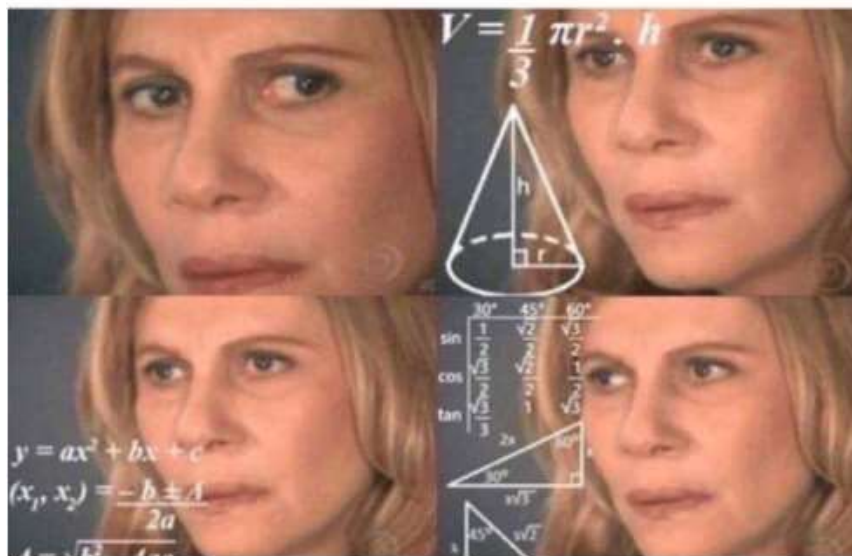
https://mcusercontent.com/0bc9a57646e52fb01d8c0f1f9/files/30156a99-ae2c-4168-b404-af5c2594536d/Background_on_Minett_Policies.pdf

INTERNET OPTIONS

It's that time of the year again, when you dust off the cobwebs, clean up the mouse droppings, fetch your runaway dock from the neighbours, and look into internet service providers to see if you have the best internet plan.

Ok, one of those things is not like the others! If you're anything like us, you have probably been on the same internet plan for the last 10 years. So, with COVID having us all working from home for the foreseeable summer, we figured it's as good a time as any to update our plan. And this year - we've done the research, so you don't have to!

CLPOA DECIDING WHICH INTERNET PROVIDER TO CHOOSE



We called up all the internet service providers to see what the best plans were for Clear Lake. If you don't want to read the whole thing - the answer is: Bell. You should probably go with Bell.

The competition:



Lakeland Networks acquired CORE Broadband & Interactive North in early 2020. Lakeland provides fibre internet to customers along highway 11 and Gravenhurst. However, they do not have fibre reaching Clear Lake. As with all the providers on this list, one needs a line of sight to their tower. After speaking with someone there, it appears there's not a lot of service for the Ridge Rd side, while the Clear Lake Rd side could be better with address numbers 1020 - 1176 potentially being serviced. Their **50mbps** plan is **\$140/month**.

Xplornet works similarly with a line of sight from a dish to a tower, and if that is not available, they do offer a Satellite plan. If there is line of sight to a tower, their **50mbps** is **\$110/month**. Their satellite plan is 10mbps for \$130/month with a 150gb cap. Their nearest tower is located at Cox Bay, and it wasn't clear whether Clear Lake would have good line of sight.

Starlink is the new entry from Elon Musk, and this author was really excited about it. Starlink is launching a network of satellites that beam high speed internet down to receiver dishes (at the time of writing - 1,445 satellites are in orbit). The remarkable thing with Starlink is the very low latency they have achieved. Normal satellites have a latency of ~600ms (very noticeable lag while browsing the internet), while Starlink's satellites operate in very low orbit, meaning they have a latency of 20-40ms, which is comparable to cable/fibre. Starlink also has the advantage that as long as your receiver can see the sky, it will work - which is obviously great for remote cottages. It is still in early access, so getting it this summer is definitely not guaranteed. It is also quite expensive. For the rest of the providers here we haven't mentioned the initial connection fees because they are all relatively low, but Starlink has a **\$650 setup fee**, plus another **\$130/month** thereafter for **50-150mbps** (fast!).

Rogers - we tried calling Rogers a few times and never managed to get a hold of anyone. A bad sign! In fairness they may have a good plan that we just did not find out about.

And finally, Bell. Bell has been aggressively expanding its tower infrastructure recently and have introduced their WHI towers in rural areas. Most all of the cottages on Clear Lake should have access to the nearest tower which is located fairly close, somewhere around Torrance. Their plan is a no contract **\$90/month** for **25mbps** with a **350gb cap** - after which your speed is throttled to 10mbps. Frankly, this plan is... very good. 350gb is quite a lot of data to get through (around 233 hours of zoom calls, or 175 Netflix movies), and even if you do hit the cap, the throttled speed of 10mbps is still quite fast. There is a \$10 discount for the first 6 months that offsets the setup fee. There are also higher speed options available (\$150/month for 50mbps) and there are also internet + TV packages available. However, in our view, the \$90/month is the best deal. And the killer feature? You can **pause your internet plan** for up to six months for a flat \$50 fee. If you are not using the cottage in the winter this is a great feature. Note that this is currently a promotion plan and it may change at any time.

For these reasons, in our opinion, Bell is the clear choice for Clear Lake cottages. This author just switched to Bell and - so far so good.

Did we miss anything? Are you on an even better internet plan? Let us know!

*if you do want to switch to Bell, you can contact suella.lawson@wpci.com who can set you up.



GOODBYE, PIE

The PIE pizza restaurant did not renew their lease and they are no longer operating out of the building on the corner. However, the Clear Lake Brewery will be expanding into this space and hopes to be up and running by the weekend of May 24th.

TORRANCE BARRENS UPDATE

The Torrance Barrens Working Group has been meeting regularly over the winter, and we are happy to announce our progress. With the support of Ontario Parks, work is underway to designate the Torrance Barrens a provincial park under the Natural Environment classification. This could take up to 4 years to fully implement, but we have the support of Ontario Parks and they will be bearing the full cost. As part of that classification, a limited number of controlled camping spots will be designated within the Barrens. Camping will only be allowed at these designated spots, and the fire cairns provided in these camping spots will be the only places fires are allowed. In this way, the large number of unregulated fires on vegetation will be eliminated and replaced with a few safe fires. Finally, in the short term, along with the highway adjoining Hardy Lake, the road passing through the Torrance Barrens has been designated No Parking along one side. With fewer vehicles accessing the area, we hope to see fewer examples of being over capacity. We still maintain that no fires be allowed in the area immediately surrounding the Torrance Barrens, and are working with local government to enact a fire ban.

Also, after the success of the clean up day last year, another clean up day is being organized, tentatively planned for Saturday, July 10th. Stay tuned for more information.

PADDLE UP THURSDAYS

Every Thursday night we invite our members to paddle or row the lake. Come out in your paddle boat, kayak, or canoe and meet up with fellow paddlers to get on the water and enjoy the lake.

REMINDER - BOAT RAMP - HOURS 9am-1pm & WASH YOUR BOTTOM

Please respect Boat Ramp hours. Tell your marina, visiting friends and renters that these hours must be recognized. It is a very small stretch of shoreline between cottagers enjoying their properties to either side and a narrow road to travel. Even though our ramp is no

longer on private property but instead using public access to the lake, the ramp was built by the Township on the condition these hours be followed. Ensure boat hulls are carefully washed down before entering the lake. Any bilge must have been emptied before trailering to the ramp. It's a boater's keen responsibility to prevent invasive species from entering Clear Lake.

Ian McClellan, on behalf of CLPOA Board of Directors, Margaret Kenwright, Ron Algate, Lisa Pennycook, Mike Silver, Charlie Wilkins, Jeremy Silver, Tom Skopek