



The Corporation of the Municipality of Whitestone

Addenda
Regular Council Meeting
Tuesday, March 18, 2025

In the Dunchurch Community Centre,
Zoom Meeting (Video) and Phone Call

*Every effort is made to record meetings with the exception of the Closed Session matters.
Both the audio and video are posted on the Municipal Website.
The written minutes are the official record of the meeting.*

6 Public Meeting

Addition of items

- 6.1.2 Margie Szilagyi – Official Plan Review
- 6.1.3 Lake Wah-wash-kesh Conservation Association – Official Plan Input

From: Margie Szilagyi < >

Date: February 10, 2025 at 10:51:39 AM EST

To: nigel.black@whitestone.ca, George Comrie <mayor.comrie@whitestone.ca>, Joe Lamb <councillor.lamb@whitestone.ca>, Brian Woods <councillor.woods@whitestone.ca>, Janice Bray <councillor.bray@whitestone.ca>, Scott Nash <councillor.nash@whitestone.ca>

Cc: Joe Szilagyi < >

Subject: Official plan review

Good morning everyone. I hope all is well in the snowy north.

I see that the official plan is up for review commencing in March 2025 and feel I would be remiss if I did not, once again, submit the request to bring Shawanaga lake road up to standards necessary for year round maintenance and to commence same. As you know I have requested, researched, delegated, petitioned and otherwise just plain and simple begged for this direction to return as it was on the 2003 official plan. I feel the homeowners in this area have substandard services compared to all other whitestone ratepayers, in that Shawanaga lake road is the only municipally assumed road which is not maintained year round over essentially its entire length. It's the road that time forgot. In 2003, residents were hopeful the direction in regards to improvements of Shawanaga lake road to year round standards by the municipality and council would come to fruition, as was written in the official plan. Despite years of dialog, Shawanaga lake road has not even been brought up to seasonal standards and remains only seasonally maintained by the municipality. Locals keep the road open during the winter down to Aviation blvd. Municipal care of this 2km section should be possible as was stated by the roads supervisor in 2012 and addressing this issue would alleviate the concerns of those residents who plough and mitigate municipal liability concerns. This direction and hope disappeared in the last official plan update when this language was removed and there has been no further interest by council to remedy this situation.

If you desire rate payers to reside in whitestone year round, as the official plan states, the ability to get themselves and emergency services to their homes reasonably and safely should be a standard service and a priority. We pay year round taxes the same as others accessing their home off a municipal road, but only get service four months of the year. Not acceptable.

Anyways, I am too tired of all of this to belabour the point. I could write pages. People have moved on, literally. We have lost Gerry Chaput(a local cabinet builder), the Plunketts(local nurse, local car salesman, mckellar historical volunteer and local weaver and quilter) and the Leemings(library staff and board member/volunteer). All of whom had lived here year round and all good people. On a personal note, my husband and I had to make arrangements after 10 winters in Whitestone to spend the majority of our winter season at our Hamilton condo. With all due respect, with that decision, you have lost a good volunteer and community advocate and a snowmobile trail groomer. Winter plowing and parking issues along Shawanaga Lake road remain. Many people use this access throughout the winter and very few contribute to the actual plowing. Altercations have already arisen this season as some who access their homes during the winter, feel no obligation to contribute to the cost of this upkeep for a municipal road and block plowing access for those who do.

I respectfully request that the 68 rate payers who use this road access deserve better. Council continues to sever lots at an abundant rate in this area, but progress to a more robust residency can only be achieved with reasonable access. ROADS need to take a front seat in the official plan.

Sincerely
Margie Szilagy
A Whitestone wanna be full time resident
Sent from my iPad

Lake Wah-Wash-Kesh

CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION



Input to Whitestone Official Plan

The updated Ministry of Whitestone (MOW) Official Plan will be important in setting the direction for Whitestone’s growth and prosperity, in building a strong community, while protecting its most important asset, its beautiful natural environment.

Lake Wah-Wash-Kesh is Whitestone’s, and Parry Sound’s, largest lake, with a surface area of 1,721 hectares and over 106 km of shoreline. Thirty percent of its shoreline is Crown land. Its waters support a range of fish species and is one of the rare lakes that supports Lake Trout. It consists of two basins, the southern “Big Lake” the northern “Top Lake” linked by a region called “The Narrows.” Of its over 280 cottages, roughly half have road access, while the balance is water access only.

The Wah-Wash-Kesh Conservation Association (WWKCA) anticipates many stressors arising from future development and climate change, and the updated Official Plan and related by-laws provides the opportunity to institute provisions that will protect the natural environment and assist in adaptation to the effects of climate change.

In updating the Official Plan and the associated by-laws, the Association urges the application of guiding principles, as follows:

- *Decisions are based on best available evidence*
- *Updates reflect the shared responsibility to the linked natural environment across the watershed*
- *Protections and development rules in the Official Plan and associated By-laws are maintained or enhanced.*

The WWKCA has a long-standing record of working to improve and protect our beautiful lake and to represent the interests of its property owners. In fact, it was the work of the WWKCA that informed the current lot width and setback requirements established over 20 years ago.

This past summer, the WWKCA, through its Lake Planning Committee, conducted an e-survey open to all residents and users of Lake Wah-Wash-Kesh¹. This survey had a robust response with over 300 respondents. The survey collected input on how the lake is enjoyed, what people think are its most important attributes, and what are their greatest concerns.

Three primary areas of concern were expressed by respondents to the survey about the current and future pressures on the lake, which is discussed in detail below. The input below should be considered our preliminary recommendations, with further detail to be provided in future consultations conducted by the Municipality.

Areas of Concern and Suggested Action:

1) **Environment.**

a) Maintaining Water Quality:

Over 90% of survey respondents considered water quality of “High Importance”. Lake Wah-Wash-Kesh is subject to wide fluctuations in water levels included the spring freshet, due to having many inlets, and only one outlet, as well as being downstream of many large lakes in the Magnetawan River system, with water levels tightly controlled by log dams. Survey respondents mentioned the difficulties this presents in shoreline management and preservation.

Suggested Action:

- i) The MOW should work with the watershed community and the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) to mitigate the spring freshet or other periods of high water by the undue release of water to Lake Wah-Wash-Kesh
- ii) Institute a septic reinspection program, particularly given the general thin layer of till and exposed rock on Canadian shield lakes such as Lake Wah-Wash-Kesh.
- iii) Enforce existing regulations and augment guidance on the maintenance of shoreline vegetative buffers
- iv) Support development of a Lake Wah-Wash-Kesh-specific Lake Plan, including a capacity assessment of Lake Wah-Wash-Kesh based on best practices

¹ A summary of the survey results will be released shortly

2) **Development:**

The vast majority of the Lake Plan survey respondents indicated that future development is an area of significant concern, with 62.7% and 24.7% rating their concerns either “High” or “Moderate” respectively. Respondents identified concerns related to impacts on water quality, the natural environment, including sensitive habitats and shoreline degradation, as well as increasing density that will change the overall character of the lake.

In addition, lake access continues to be a concern for Lake Wah-Wash-Kesh many water access lots due to overcrowding. Lake Wah-Wash-Kesh is served by two public launch and parking areas managed and maintained by the MOW.

Suggested Action:

- i) Require environmental engineering and survey reports for severances or new cottage building, including an assessment of the environmental impact and accurate topological maps indicating flood elevation and a suitable septic setback
- ii) Continue and enforce site plan control for Lake Wah-Wash-Kesh
- iii) Update, utilizing best evidence and input from the MNR, the Lake Wah-Wash-Kesh flood elevation (currently a 1:100 flood level - for Lake Wah-Wash-Kesh this is set as 229.57 metres above Canadian Geodetic Datum). Review this at appropriate time points (e.g. every 5 years) to reflect changing climate conditions
- iv) Clarify, using best evidence as above, the septic system setback in relation to the flood elevation
- v) Institute development charges for lot severance or subdivision and utilize them to enhance public parking and launches. It is noted that the current practice of having any new lots have a dedicated new and private mainland parking space, while well intentioned, is not regulated in terms of whether these are used, and it is difficult to find land for such lots close to public docking facilities. The result is increasing pressure on public parking

3) **Use of Lake Resources.**

Survey respondents expressed many concerns related to the impact of various uses of lake resources. This includes clearing the natural vegetative barrier, sand

dumping, neglecting to access appropriate permits for docking systems, using the MOW docks at the landings as semi-permanent mooring locations, temporary and longer-term trailer parking, and intrusive shoreline lighting to name a few. In addition, concerns were expressed about boat speeds when transiting any number of the narrows on the lake or approaching the shore, which together are all becoming safety, habitat and erosion issues.

Suggested Action:

- i) Clarify the MOW vision regarding the safe use of the areas they control (parking and docking) that are enforceable through well-constructed By-laws
- ii) Provide crucial clarity of vision and process as well as enforcement for any application-based projects, particularly for lot severances or subdivisions. This would include dockage, shoreline alterations, as well as septic and wastewater management. Unquestionably this needs to be covered in a robust site plan application for any development. The application should cover all costs to guarantee the identified process has been followed.
- iii) The MOW has many tools to encourage appropriate actions by its residents and visitors. The MOW should prioritize providing education and promoting awareness of appropriate actions. The MOW must also have and apply, when other means fail, viable enforcement processes.

We appreciate the opportunity to comment and council's consideration of our input.

Sincerely,

The Lake Wah-Wash-Kesh Conservation Association, with support and guidance from the Lake Wah-Wash-Kesh Lake Plan Committee, and residents and users of Lake Wah-Wash-Kesh.