

Minutes of the Virtual TLA “Annual General Meeting” 2021

The 90th TLA AGM was held via Zoom webinar on Tuesday, October 19, 2021. The minutes will also be posted on the TLA website at: <https://tla-temagami.org/tla-business/meetings-and-minutes>.

Explanation of Webinar Features: Michelle Lewin, Communications Coordinator for the Federation of Ontario Cottagers’ Associations (FOCA), provided a technical overview at the beginning of the meeting.

Greetings and Remarks: President Paul Tamburro welcomed TLA members and FOCA staff to the meeting. He provided opening remarks, commented on the unique qualities of Lake Temagami and TLA members, explained that we are stewards of the Temagami area, and delivered a First Nation acknowledgement.

Introduction of Board of Directors: Paul introduced the current Board Members – all of whom were in attendance: Rob Corcoran, Greg Goodman, Diane Green, Brit Hyde, Margaret Langfitt, Carol Lowery, Terry Males, and Tarik Muzaffar. He emphasized that the Board members are engaged and insightful.

Quorum and Call to Order: Approximately 87 TLA voting members (and others) were in attendance and represented by proxies. After quorum was confirmed, Paul called the meeting to order at 7:39 p.m.

Motions:

- A motion to approve the “Agenda for the 90th TLA Annual General Meeting” (October 19, 2021) was moved by Rob Corcoran, seconded by Brit Hyde, and carried at 7:40 p.m. (96% approval).
- A motion to adopt the “Minutes of the TLA Annual General Meeting 2020” (included in the AGM invitation and published on the TLA website) was moved by Margaret Langfitt, seconded by Brit Hyde, and carried at 7:41 p.m. (95% approval). There was no business arising from these minutes.

RESOLUTIONS

Resolution 1: Brit Hyde presented the 2020 financial statement with an overview of the TLA’s income and expenses. He noted that revenue was down due to the pandemic (i.e., some members did not renew, advertisers were given discounts), and that we strived to “do more with less” (e.g., reduced staffing at the HQ, produced a digital Directory). The motion for “the Resolution respecting approval of the 2020 TLA financial statement” was made by Tim Richardson, seconded by Daniel Buckles, and carried at 7:46 p.m. (93% approval).

Resolution 2: The motion for “the Resolution respecting approval of actions of the Directors and Officers since commencement of the 2020 TLA Annual General Meeting” was made by Michael Bloomfield, seconded by Marty Martelle, and carried at 7:48 p.m. (92% approval).

Recognition of TLA Members:

Paul thanked Allan Eustis for serving six years on the Board of Directors (2015 to 2021). Allan has offered significant time, effort, and expertise to our Association – including co-founding the TLA Facebook page (with Kelly Romans Bancroft).

Paul introduced new Board members Diane Green (who will fill the open Board seat until 2023) and Carol Lowery (who will fill a seat for a three-year term – to 2024) and gave a synopsis of their biographies.

Paul recognized Brit Hyde for his service as TLA President from 2018 to 2020 with a “Thank You” plaque and gavel (sent to him by mail). Appreciation was expressed for Brit’s service and expertise during a period of transition. Brit remains active on the Board, Chairs the “Planning and Municipal Affairs” committee, and is a regular attendee at Municipal Council meetings.

Paul then congratulated Carol Lowery for being selected 2020 “Member of the Year”. She does many things to assist the TLA – especially during the off season (e.g., ensuring that the TLA mail is forwarded from Temagami to the Administrative Coordinator), and habitually attends Municipal Council meetings. She will receive a complimentary, one-year membership.

Paul lamented the loss of TLA members since the 2020 AGM: Don Fraser, Dennis Goodman, Robb Hindson (2019), Ted Hyde, David McFarlane, Barbara Nelson, Barbara Paltrow, Niki Plumstead, Cindy Sappington, Henry Schutta, Martin Vantol (2018), and Shirley Vantol. All will be greatly missed.

A member requested that opportunities be given to discuss motions before voting takes place. There were no immediate questions or comments, but members were invited to submit any during the Q & A segment.

Review of the TLA Vision (2020-2022):

Paul Tamburro noted that in 2020, the Board adopted the “TLA Vision 2020-2022”. A copy was shared on the screen. He noted the following highlights with respect to this plan:

- A lot has been done with respect to engagement with other community members and groups (e.g., Temagami Mayor and Municipal Council, TAA, TFN). For example, Paul, Tarik Muzaffar, and Terry Males met in person last month with Mayor O'Mara, Deputy Mayor Dwyer, and Councillor Leudke to discuss some specific projects.
- There has recently been significant involvement by TLA members in Municipal affairs (e.g., letters to Municipal Council and attendance at Council meetings). More opportunities for members' input will be forthcoming and could make a notable difference in what happens in the Municipality.
- The TLA employs its own planner (Tony Usher), who has worked very well with the Municipal planner regarding technical issues related to the new "Official Plan" (OP) and has provided direction to the TLA's "Planning and Municipal Affairs" committee. Some of the TLA dues are used to pay our planner.
- Ideally, the summer youth program could be reinstated in 2022 (i.e., hiring summers students to do campsite and portage maintenance, public education for Lake visitors, etc.). It's a program well worth pursuing.
- "ONE Temagami" (developed in 2020) is a policy and guidepost for current and future decision-making. A copy was shared on the screen.

Question-and-Answer Session and Board-Led Discussion:

No questions were submitted in advance by TLA members for the 2021 Q & A segment. The following questions were asked through the "Chat" option. Unanswered questions will be researched, with answers provided at a later date.

Q. Is the Directory to be printed each year? Members tell me this is important. (from Peter Healy, Island 981)

A. Linda indicated that the Directory will be printed every other year. In the "off" years, there will be a digital version. So, 2022 will have a digital version.

Brit added that this is our current plan, and that we are open to surveying members to explain costs and trade-offs and seek input. He also said that we're trying new ideas, learning, and observing our fiduciary responsibility.

Q. Any more information concerning houseboat regulation? (from Mary Soper, Island 588)

A. Paul said that Three Buoys and Leisure Island attended a “Town Hall” hosted by the TLA on May 17th. The biggest concern raised was campsite usage and multiple houseboats consistently docking together at the same sites. Attendees wondered if the houseboat companies were directing them to do so. The companies said that this was not the case, but they do provide maps to houseboat renters, which list the campsites.

Greg indicated that there is little regulation for houseboats at the Municipal level, although they have to adhere to Provincial environmental requirements (e.g., regarding disposal of waste). As with anyone else, houseboat renters are free to use the campsites. The houseboat operators are proactive about being good stewards, and will respond to complaints which are reported to them. Noise and other concerns are law-enforcement issues that must be directed to the Municipality.

It is important to maintain positive communications with the operators. They want to rent to “good” customers and have refused to rent to people based on previous negative experiences. [N.B., For those who missed the session, they can contact the TLA for a copy of the recording.]

Paul said that to regulate campsites and houseboats on Lake Temagami, there has to be a higher level of collaboration between the different stakeholders, such as the TLA, First Nations, and the Municipality (e.g., through a Lake-management plan). Among other things, this plan would help to obtain knowledge about user groups who enjoy Lake amenities, but may not contribute to the long-term viability of the Lake.

Q. What is the status of the TLA Headquarters offices? (from Peter Healy, Island 981)

A. Paul said that the TLA doesn’t own the property, but has a land-use permit that expires on December 31, 2022. Yearly operational and staffing expenses have been ~ \$10,000 to \$12,000 (including the lease) over the last three years. There is quite a bit of deferred maintenance. Staffing for the past couple of years has been ~ \$2,500.00/month (July and August), and it’s sometimes difficult to find staff other than Peter Healy. Visits have declined recently (perhaps due to the pandemic), and the building currently averages only about 6 to 7 visitors a day. It’s reasonable to start considering whether or not a permanent HQ is needed. If we do leave the current HQ site, we must return it to its natural state (which would be tens of thousands of dollars).

Q. While Daniel Buckles (Island 899) is open to not continuing with the building, he asked if there is a more modest way in which the TLA could have a physical presence on the Lake (e.g., summer students providing information at the landings or in other high-profile locations).

A. Rob Corcoran said that we've been investigating other options (e.g., storing TLA maps and merchandise at Loon Lodge). We could consider having summer students again when the pandemic is not such a concern. We should think about what we want to do regarding the hosting of TLA events (e.g., Welcome Back BBQs, Flea Markets). A physical link to the membership is important, and we would have to consider how this would evolve without a building.

Comment: Andrew Healy (Island 981) indicated that without a full-time administrator, having a staffed Headquarters building is not feasible.

Comment: Ursula Stock (Island 820) said that a physical location is a valuable asset to community building. How can that be replaced? Although she's not opposed to releasing the building, she'd want to know more.

Comment: Tom Lee (Island 758) expressed that the TLA should explore the cost of returning the site to the required state, so we can evaluate the cost of our options.

Comment: Mary Soper (Island 588) wondered if there might be an economic benefit to having the TLA headquarters in the town of Temagami.

POLL:

1. Does the TLA need a physical headquarters building in the future? RESPONSES: YES (72%); NO (28%)
2. If you believe the TLA continues to require a headquarters, would you favour moving to an alternative, easily-accessible, less-costly location? RESPONSES: YES (87%); NO (13%)

Comment: Paul said that the poll results provided useful information for the Board of Directors. Members think there is value to a physical presence (e.g., for community building purposes). In the next several months, options will be explored and communicated with the TLA membership.

Q. What examples do we have of feedback from those [groups] besides the Municipality? (from Daniel Buckles, Island 899).

A. Paul recently spoke with Gerry Gooderham from LaTemPRA (Lake Temagami Permanent Residents' Association). Gerry said that they had three issues of concern: (i) the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the TFN and the Municipality; (ii) waste management; and, (iii) parking at the landing.

Q. What is the status of Economic Development Corporation (EDC)? (from Jim Grout, Island 943)

A. Tarik Muzaffar said that more applications have been received since the meeting with Dan O'Mara, Cathy Dwyer, and Barret Leudke. Hopefully, in the coming weeks, they will have enough to move forward with this Board. The EDC will be charged with developing a plan to drive economic stimulus in the Municipality. The extent of direction and oversight from the Town is unclear, so we need strong representation from the TLA and Lake. Several great candidates from the TLA membership have already applied.

Q. Could we create a sign to show TLA values and post it at the landing? (from Susan Shane, Island 1123)

A. Paul said that we might be able to rent a billboard along the Access Road that has this information.

Comment: Nicole Brooker (Island 663) indicated that a billboard is a great idea. It could be the first step toward a new stewardship program for the Lake, and could be supported by an ambassador program with students handing out "good-practice" ideas to visitors to the lake.

Comment: Valerie Hostetler (Island 49) indicated that not everyone uses the Access Road.

Comment: Peter Healy (Island 981) indicated "What We Do" pamphlets are available at the HQ building

Q. Any progress on broadband improvement? (from Mary Soper, Island 588)

A: Rob Corcoran said that Leepfrog Telecom is moving forward with their efforts. Loon Lodge has been approached about providing a gateway on the lake, as they have a high-speed internet connection. We will provide an update in the *Times* and/or via the TLA website of the schedule planned for lake-based Wi-Fi support. There will likely be a two-step rollout – first in Town, and then on the Lake. The TLA will speak with Leepfrog about the approach and timing, and then provide information and recommendations to members.

Comment: Peter Healy spoke with the Leepfrog representative. They're building a tower this fall to service the Lake. Members can request a "consult" via the website (www.leepfrogtelecom.com/temagami-ontario).

Leepfrog will meet with them to determine if high-speed will be available at their respective locations.

Comment: Daniel Buckles (Island 899) suggested that as part of “ONE Temagami”, a committee of the TLA could take a proactive approach to identifying economic-development opportunities and present them to the new EDC. This could help to resolve the dilemma with respect to the environment versus the economy.

Q: Has there been any thought to possibly putting together a book in regards to folklore from Temagami First Nations elders? Maybe the proceeds from the book can be directed toward Bear Island educational programs. Why not have a book sponsored by the TLA. (from Arnis Bredovskis, Island 1071)

A. Paul says that several books already exist regarding folklore and the TAA/TFN. This type of project should, however, be directed by the First Nations themselves.

The TLA has tried to engage with the TAA and TFN leaders on other issues, but so far there has been no face-to-face contact. He hopes that there will be progress in this regard in 2022.

Q. Please update us on the status of the Town's Strategic Plan. When is the next meeting that TLA Members should attend? What does the TLA Board want members to do next? (from David Shardelow, Island 1127)

A. Brit Hyde indicated that not much has been done by Council with respect to the “Strategic Plan” (e.g., voting to pursue it). By-law amendments (i.e., “Home Industry and “Home Occupation” + “Secondary-Dwelling Units”) have been passed by Council. There is a good relationship between the TLA and Town Planners, so TLA input about what is in the best interest of the Town and Lake was incorporated into these amendments.

The first draft of the “Official Plan” (OP) should be unveiled at the November 18, 2021 Municipal Council meeting. TLA members who are available are encouraged to attend by Zoom and participate in the “Questions from the Public” section. Everyone should watch for information from the TLA about the OP drafts and opportunities to provide further input – including engaging with Councillors and the Municipality. We intend to work constructively with the Town to produce an OP that works for everyone.

Comment: Nicole Brooker (Island 663) said that the agenda for the October 21st Council meeting indicates that an ad hoc committee of Municipal Councillors will review the 10 applications for EDC Board members. Paul added that at least four of these applicants are TLA members.

Q. Do you have information about the progress of “Big Canoe” project? (from Tim Richardson, Island 795)

A. The “Big Canoe” project plans to build the world’s largest wood-canvas canoe (a functioning work of art), which will be displayed at the Temagami Train station for community-building, redevelopment of the Town as a tourist attraction, and as a symbol of Temagami’s heritage as a world-class canoeing destination. Paul is involved as a fundraiser. Construction of the form that the canoe will be built around has begun. Hopefully, more information will be available in next couple of months.

Comment: Arnis Bredovskis (Island 1071) said, “The CANOE is a GREAT idea”!!!

Comment: Rob revealed that significant investment is going into cobalt production and milling facilities in the Town of Cobalt (to the tune of hundreds of millions of dollars). There will be some ripple effects from that in terms of potential spending in Temagami and potential employment for Temagami residents in Cobalt, along with potential demand for additional housing and cottages in the Temagami area.

In 2009, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNR) agreed to offer 200 to 300 lots on warm-water lakes (e.g., Brophy, Marian) in the area, to compensate for the “freeze” on Lake Temagami Crown-land sales, which occurred after its [naturally-reproducing] Lake-Trout fishery designation. Assisting the Municipality in moving forward with such opportunities, and considering the demand for road-access waterfront properties over the past few years in Ontario, certainly appears to be of significant relevance.

Q. Is TLA Planner still Alan McNair? (from Claire Rannie, Island 813)

A. Paul said that Alan McNair retired (and sadly passed away recently). Tony Usher is now the TLA Planner.

Q. David Shardelow (Island 1127) thanked the Board for their service. He asked for direction to members on how to appropriately communicate with Municipal Councillors (without overburdening them) when addressing issues from recent Municipal meetings and the presentation of the first draft of the OP on November 18th.

A. Paul said that Council is aware of the TLA’s concerns, and it was suggested that we continue to make our opinions known. The TLA Board will provide some guidance in this regard going forward. It’s difficult to do much now regarding the OP, since the first draft has yet to be revealed. Brit added that individual responses to Council from many TLA members are sometimes needed. When it’s appropriate, though, the Board should communicate on behalf of the membership, so that we speak with one voice.

Comment: Sean Murray (Island 820) said, “Sensitive topic. Perhaps TLA members can state that they are speaking from the point of view of a member of the public – when that is appropriate in a public meeting when public comment is open. This would leave official TLA communications to come from our TLA Board.”

Comment: David Shardelow is happy to have the Board speak to Council on his behalf, because Board members are more familiar with the issues and topics of concern.

Comment: Tarik says that there needs to be a shift in who the Town thinks we are. Currently the TLA is thought by some to be inflexible and unbudging. In reality, the TLA is there to help, not to hinder. The only way forward is understanding that the Town and Lake have separate interests, but these don’t need to be in conflict with one another. We are all in this together (see “ONE Temagami” vision). The TLA wants to work with Town and other groups, and not say “No” to everything.

Paul indicated that Council wanted the TLA to know that the “Tenets” will not be “in danger” in the new “Official Plan”.

The Board of Directors wants Council to see the TLA Board and members as partners (not a nuisance), since we are seasonal residents with a large stake in the community (e.g., regarding economic development, waste-management planning, etc.).

Comment: Arnis Bredovskis (Island 1071) voiced that island people pay taxes.

Comment: Andrew Healy (Island 981) said that the TLA has been marginalized and dismissed by certain members of Council. Speaking as individual property owners is essential to showing the magnitude of the concerns we share. Participating in a public process should not be seen as burdensome by those soliciting comments of their constituents.

FOCA Slide Presentation:

Terry Rees provided a slide presentation which highlighted FOCA’s activities and services for member organizations (e.g., liability insurance; legal Helpline; educational resources; “Cottage First” insurance; emergency response in remote areas; promotion of healthy lands, lakes, and rivers; advocating for responsible government; municipal engagement; implementing the “Lake Partner Program”; invasive-species initiatives).

Wrap-Up:

Paul suggested that if AGM participants like what they've heard at the AGM, and think they're getting their money's worth with a TLA membership, they are invited to reach out to Lake neighbours who are not members. Only about half of the Lake cottagers are TLA currently members.

Motion to Adjourn:

Paul thanked members for attending, and welcomed feedback about the AGM. A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Rob Corcoran. This was seconded by Michael Bloomfield, and passed at 9:02 p.m.

(100% approval)