

## **Minutes of the Virtual TLA “Annual General Meeting” 2023**

The 92<sup>nd</sup> TLA AGM was held via Zoom on Tuesday, November 14, 2023.

### **EXPLANATION OF ZOOM FEATURES:**

Zoom features (e.g., chat, voting) were explained at the beginning of the meeting.

### **GREETINGS AND REMARKS:**

President Nicole Brooker welcomed TLA members to the AGM. She shared some details about herself and provided a First Nation acknowledgement.

### **INTRODUCTION OF BOARD OF DIRECTORS:**

Nicole introduced Board Members (most of whom were in attendance): Rob Corcoran, Greg Goodman, Diane Green, Carol Lowery, Terry Males, Alec Morley, Tarik Muzaffar, and Paul Tamburro.

First VP, Terry Males, summarized TLA activities in 2023: planning for decommissioning of the Headquarters building; modernizing and digitizing communications; investigation options for a boat-washing station to help address the spread of invasive species; monitoring the new “Official Plan”; implementing the first “Lake Temagami Shoreline Clean-Up Challenge”; reviving the “Adopt-a-Campsite” program (including the distribution of thunderboxes made by the Friends of Temagami); hosting the annual TLA summer BBQ; assisting members with the Underused Housing Tax; and, the study of lake-bottom sediment by TERAS.

### **QUORUM AND CALL TO ORDER:**

65 voting members (and others) were in attendance, and 16 voting members were represented by proxies. After quorum was confirmed, Nicole called the meeting to order at 7:41 p.m.

### **MOTIONS:**

- A motion to approve the “Agenda” for the 2023 TLA Annual General Meeting was moved by Peter Healy, seconded by Will Goodman, and carried at 7:43 p.m. (100% approval).
- A motion to approve the “Minutes of the TLA Virtual Annual General Meeting 2022” was moved by Peter Healy, seconded by Paul Tamburro, and carried at 7:44 p.m. (100% approval). There was no business arising from these minutes.

## **RESOLUTIONS:**

**Resolution 1:** Greg Goodman presented the 2022 financial statement with an overview of the TLA’s revenue and expenses. We’ve done an excellent job of keeping expenses under control, with a less than 1% increase compared to 2021. Going into 2023, the TLA has planned for some large expenses (e.g., TLA building decommissioning; paying our planner for consultation on the new OP). Copies of the finances are available to TLA members, upon request. Peter Healy inquired about the status of the investment account, which Greg will address offline. The motion to adopt “the Resolution respecting approval of the 2022 TLA Financial Statement” was made by Terry Males, seconded by Tarik Muzaffar, and carried at 7:47 p.m. (98% approval).

**Resolution 2:** The motion to adopt “the Resolution respecting approval of actions of the Directors and Officers since commencement of the 2022 TLA Annual General Meeting” was made by Marty Martelle, seconded by Andrew Zyp, and carried at 7:48 p.m. (98% approval).

## **RECOGNITION OF TLA MEMBERS:**

Nicole congratulated Daniel Buckles and Brit Hyde for being selected as the 2022 “Members-of-the-Year”. Both will receive complimentary, one-year, TLA memberships. Brit has diligently monitored the Municipal “Official Plan” process and provided regular updates to TLA members, while Daniel has spent considerable time and effort in providing recommendations to Council about the Lake Temagami Waste-Transfer Station. Nicole also thanked Paul Tamburro for his Presidential leadership over the past three years, and for the considerable time and effort that he devoted to this position. Paul received a special “President” mug to recognize this achievement (as did all other active, living, Past-Presidents of the TLA).

Carol Lowery spoke of the unfortunate loss this past year of TLA members and supporters who have assisted the Association as Board members (and family of Board members), committee members, flea-market organizers, Editor of the *Temagami Times*, and many other roles. They include: Adele Eustis, Richard Evans, Gloria Sorley, Nancy MacInnes Davis, Christine Hindson, A. Murray Dickson, Marianne Buck, Claire Rannie, Sara Richardson, Steve Hyde, Bill Plumstead, Barry McCarthy, Virginia Pride, and Oillie Rose Matchett. All are fondly remembered.

## **TEMAGAMI “OFFICIAL PLAN” PROGRESS AND TIMELINE:**

Paul Tamburro (Chair of the “Planning and Municipal Affairs Committee”) provided an update on the new Official Plan (OP) for the Municipality of Temagami. It is reviewed every five years and updated every 10 years, and serves as the guiding document for all development occurring in the Municipality. TLA members have provided comments during information sessions, delegations to Municipal Council, a TLA “Town Hall”, and through individual letters. Our comments have been acknowledged by the Municipality, but have not yet been addressed. The first draft of the OP references the “Tenets” (including no mainland development), but there are some contradictions (e.g., a map of several areas on the Lake, including the north shore of the NE Arm, that are listed as “residential waterfront properties”). The Town’s planner, MHBC, has assured the TLA that our comments will be taken into account and represented in the next draft.

MHBC’s work is behind schedule, but the second draft should be released shortly. At least one more public comment period is required before the new OP can be approved by Council. It will then guide Municipal development over the next 10 years, and it may be difficult to reverse its content. Thus, the long-term ramifications are of concern. The TLA’s planner and “Planning Committee” will review the second draft thoroughly and may ask TLA members to submit additional comments.

Jack Goodman had questions about preserving the skyline reserve and the number of lots made available on the Lake per year for development. Paul assured him that the skyline reserve is the signature issue of the TLA. Although the first draft of the new OP doesn’t address annual lot creation, the TLA has asked the Municipality to retain language from the current OP – which indicates that up to five new, island-only lots may be created per year. The TLA has also suggested that the new OP solicit advice in this respect from a Lake lot-creation committee. New lot creation has not occurred recently due to the provincial policy of no new Crown land development on a self-reproducing, Lake-Trout lake, such as Lake Temagami.

Daniel Buckles asked about the provincial review of the first draft and subsequent comments. The Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) reviewed the first draft of the OP (submitted in early 2022) and sent it back to the Council in the early summer of 2023. MMAH provided few recommendations,

and directed Council to continue with the OP development process. Daniel believes it's good news that the province has not issued it's own list of requirements. Thus, we can focus on working with the Municipality on a finalized OP that benefits all taxpayers.

### **LAKE TEMAGAMI WASTE-TRANSFER STATION:**

Daniel Buckles provided an overview of the problems experienced with the Lake Temagami waste-transfer station during the 2023 season. Most people who used the transfer station (Lake residents and numerous visitors) were negatively affected by the highly-limited operating hours. Some of the more significant impacts included: higher taxes for less service (a three-fold increase in the waste-disposal charge); high levels of congestion at the landing during the limited operating hours; disruption of camp and lodge operations that coordinate client pick-ups and drop-offs with waste removal (resulting in more frequent trips to the landing and associated costs); pressure on individual property owners to travel to the transfer station during limited operating hours, when weather and other considerations should dictate movement on the Lake; increased risk of inappropriate dumping of waste due to perceived inconvenience; and, increased risk of bear and other wildlife encounters when waste is disposed of inappropriately at the landing or elsewhere. Many extra costs and wasted hours were collectively experienced by users. Consequently, 600+ people signed a petition asking the Municipality to reinstate the 24/7 service, as the reduced hours don't meet basic needs.

In 2016, the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks approved 24/7 operation of the Lake Temagami waste-transfer station (with an attendant on site during peak hours). This approval has not been rescinded and no new orders have been placed on the site. Although operation of the site could be improved, the changes made by Council in the spring of 2023 were not required by the Ministry. In addition, Council's consultation with the community on this issue (including listening to taxpayer concerns) has been flawed.

Council will strike an ad hoc committee – including terms of reference (TOR), a timeline, and a reporting mechanism – to address issues at the Lake Temagami waste-transfer station. TOR should be forthcoming. This committee will try to develop a solution that meets people's needs and is cost effective. One option is to return to the previous 24/7 service plan, while implementing improvements when needed.

## **QUESTION-AND-ANSWER SESSION:**

**Q.** What is the status of the TLA building? (Tim Richardson, Island 795)

**A.** The TLA's land-use permit (LUP) ends on December 31, 2024. Nickie said that she and Carol Lowery recently met with representatives of Temagami First Nation (TFN), as they are interested in taking over the LUP. If successful, they will offer the TLA use of a room in the building for three years to carry out our summer services. The TLA requires an answer from TFN by March 31, 2024. If they will not be taking over the LUP, we can then continue with decommissioning the building.

**Q.** Where is the most recent version of the plan [OP] found? In particular, where is the map found?

(Christopher Brooks, Island 27)

**A.** Paul indicated that it's on the TLA (<https://tla-temagami.ca/tla-business/temagami-official-plan>) and Municipal websites. The map is "Schedule A".

**Q.** Concerning the official plan, what leverage do we have besides persuasion? (Scot Paltrow, Island 378)

**A.** Paul said that the MNRF policy re: natural-reproducing, Lake-Trout lakes, and the unsettled land claim by First Nation groups, will affect land-use planning and may come into play if the Municipality considers mainland development in the future. The TLA also has a "Tenets" defence fund that could potentially be used as a last resort for litigation. Daniel added that we could try to influence the vote of individual Council members, as they will ultimately make the final decision on the OP. Relationships with Council members are a good form of leverage, as Councillors can make amendments during the OP-development process, and the majority of Council must approve the OP. Thus, TLA members should review the next OP draft and lobby Council members to make changes regarding our concerns (e.g., regarding mainland development).

**Q.** Will there be also a review of the extremely-limited garbage service for NE Arm residents? If not, please add. (John Kirby, Island 79)

**A.** Daniel indicated that the TOR for the ad hoc committee have yet to be determined. Carol said that, at this point, the committee will address issues only for the Lake Temagami Access Point waste-transfer station. It isn't currently tasked with reviewing waste services for the Temagami Welcome Centre (or other locations) –

although she sees no reason that another committee could not be established to review this. Carol added that she and Brian Koski were named as the Municipal Councillors to sit on the committee.

**Q.** Has there been any serious thought given to de-amalgamation? We pay more in taxes each year, but lose services, despite being the largest source of tax revenue. Serious discussion of this also could be leverage in terms of the official plan. (Scot Paltrow, Island 378)

**Comment:** I echo Scott Paltrow's sentiment. We are being treated as a special interest group. The current situation is untenable. (Will Goodman)

**A.** Nicole said that this hasn't yet been considered seriously by the TLA. If de-amalgamation did occur, we would likely be annexed into another Municipality (e.g., West Nipissing or Temiskaming Shores). Nicole added that she wasn't sure what benefits we would get from de-amalgamation.

**Comment:** Jack Goodman (Island 352) indicated that he was on the original committee regarding amalgamation and voted in favour of it. One condition of amalgamation was that taxes were not to increase more than 15%. Taxes have instead increased many times more than this. He said that the merger with the Town has been a failure and Lake residents receive few services. He added that if de-amalgamation did occur, we would pay substantially less in the way of taxes than we do now – even if we must pay directly for educational services, policing, etc. The Town has simply taken advantage of us, and the TLA is now considered to be merely an advisory group. Jack suggested that we should at least explore the possibility of the Lake becoming an entity unto itself or merging with another Municipality, and that those in attendance should be able to vote on this topic. He also said that an in-person AGM is preferable.

**A.** Nicole agreed that an in-person AGM is the better option (but that the change to the format of the AGM occurred in 2020 because of the pandemic). She recently asked Board member, Tarik Muzaffar, to head a working group to review services that Lake residents are receiving and to determine exactly what we're getting for our taxes. She indicated that there are many services available to Lake residents – whether we use them or not. We also support a library, community centre, Caribou Mountain, the Train Station, and police, medical, and other services. She hopes that the review will be completed before the 2025 tax year (when a

new MPAC assessment will occur), and wants it to reveal exactly what our taxes are paying for, whether or not we're paying too much, and if we're paying for things that we shouldn't be.

**Comment:** Jack said that he was happy to hear this.

**Comment:** Tarik indicated that Lake Temagami residents are paying a disproportionate share of Municipal taxes (compared to other Municipalities), but it will take time to gather information about taxation. There are currently a lot of assumptions, and he wants to accurately determine how much Lake residents contribute to the overall budget. He also wants to understand if spending occurs at the Municipal end without assessing where the money has come from. We're paying taxes, so we want something back. After this fact-finding mission, he envisions explaining how the process works to the membership. He added that we are far from being able to determine options (e.g., de-amalgamation) at this point, and that a review is necessary to determine what actions are feasible. He sees this as an opportunity for leverage with the Municipality in discussions about how tax money is spent. Greg Goodman will assist Tarik with this assessment.

**Comment:** Jack says that Tarik's thoughts are helpful, but that we've been down this road with the Municipality for over 20 years and there have been multiple tax increases. He wants to suggest that the AGM participants vote to enable the TLA Board to investigate de-amalgamation thoroughly, including discussions with other Municipalities to "cut a better deal" and pay only for services that they provide to us. He believes that amalgamation was a bad idea, and that de-amalgamation should be investigated.

**Comment:** Carol said that since amalgamation took place, a lot of expenses have been downloaded from the Province to the Municipalities (e.g., social services, health unit, Au Chateau home for the aged, the O.P.P.). Much of the tax money collected is used to pay for these services before it reaches the Municipality. Thus, there isn't a lot of money left over.

**Comment:** Jack said that there has to be a balance between what Lake residents consume in services and what they pay in taxes. Most items that are supported are not used by Lake residents. He wanted to make a motion to set up a committee to investigate de-amalgamating from the Town (and either annexing to another community or becoming a separate municipality ourselves).

**Comment:** Nicole indicated that the Board was already looking into Municipal taxation. Although a vote on the issue couldn't occur at the current virtual AGM, Jack's recommendation would be included in the minutes. Nicole asked Jack to defer his motion until a possible in-person AGM in 2024.

**Comment:** Tarik thinks investigation of the tax situation must come first – before considering de-amalgamation (although Jack maintained that de-amalgamation might be leverage when approaching the Town). Tarik believes, however, that it would be antagonistic to initially approach the Town with a de-amalgamation proposal, without taking these other steps first.

**Comment:** Nicole said that she thinks that Tarik's group should be given the chance to do what they been tasked to do re: reviewing taxation, and that we can take up this conversation again in the summer (possibly at an in-person AGM). She also indicated that our representation on Council could be changed (e.g., through a ward system).

**Comment:** Carol said that de-amalgamation (if it occurred) would be determined at the provincial, not municipal, level. If allowed, de-amalgamation would bankrupt the Town, and they wouldn't be able to pay the levies for such things as policing and social services. Everyone should keep in mind that we do receive some services (e.g., Family Health Team, public library). Thus, it would be a good idea to first gather tax information, prior to approaching the province about de-amalgamation (if determined to be appropriate).

**Comment:** Rob Corcoran said that only a few de-amalgamations have occurred, but that we must first look into the taxation issue. Lake residents have stepped up to keep the keep the Town alive, even if Council doesn't always recognize these historical considerations. The TLA must, however, complete our own investigation to determine what we are permitted (or not permitted) to do.

**Comment:** Will Goodman thinks that investigating taxation is an excellent idea. It's good to know that the membership is being listened to and that it is a high priority for the Municipality to understand that we are not just a special-interest group. We must show that we are looking at this carefully and intelligently, and that we want to work with the Town. He said that he is much more positive that the Board's committee [working group] will conduct this review and come back to the TLA membership with appropriate recommendations.



## **OTHERS QUESTIONS/COMMENTS FROM THE WEBINAR “CHAT” FEATURE:**

**Comment from Rob Corcoran:** A key area of concern is also the Ford government's openness to overriding existing balanced planning. On the upside, the Greenbelt scandal and other land allocations are ideally curbing such initiatives going forward.

**Comments from Rob:** The Lake-Trout fishery designation of 2009 has frozen future Crown land releases on the Lake, and the MNRF has indicated they have no intent to retract this designation. That said, ensuring that we maintain the previous constraints is certainly a sensible mitigation step. MNRF input is also essential for the OP approval. TLUP [Temagami Land-Use Plan] will matter more to the MNRF than MMAH.

**Comment from Andrew Zyp:** I looked into de-amalgamation years ago. It's a pipe dream. Let's deal with what we've got. You want change, we need seasonal residents on Council, and we need seasonal residents to vote.

**A. Will Goodman wrote:** I'd like to respond to Andrew Zyp's comment about representation on Council. I would argue that the by-laws of the Municipality need to be re-written so that at least 2 members come from the Lake. The current structure makes it inevitable that we get taxed without representation.

**A. Daniel Buckles wrote:** Andrew suggests, getting seasonal residents on council, and getting seasonal residents to actually vote, is critical. How about some thought by the board on how to do better with turn out in the future?

**Comment from Andrew:** Taxes driving prices down is rational, but if you think the average buyer pays the net present value of the future benefit of ownership less the cost, you believe people are much more rational than I do.

**Comment from Tim Richardson:** If the lake residents stop / greatly reduce taxes, the Town will fold. Is that what we want? The TLA has urged us to support the Town forever! De-amalgamation won't happen.

**Link from Andrew:** [www.fraserinstitute.org/sites/default/files/de-amalgamation-in-canada.pdf](http://www.fraserinstitute.org/sites/default/files/de-amalgamation-in-canada.pdf).

**Comment from Daniel:** The tax research by Tarik feeds into the arguments about being taxed without representation, which is critical to changing the politics of the municipality. This should be our priority.

**Comment from Andrew:** [I have] an e-mail I sent to the board 5 years ago. I've looked into de-amalgamation. In theory it is possible, but only if the interests of one group are diametrically opposed to the others. It has happened twice in Canada, I believe. I consulted a lawyer versed in municipal law and could dig out the correspondence (what little there was).

**Q.** What is the rationale for the mainland "waterfront residential" development (blue shading on the OP map) on the NE Arm near the town? (Lorie Jocius, Island 150)

**A. Rob Corcoran wrote:** This was something Council slipped in to meet some of their own objectives, and which we have been strongly objecting to.

**Comment from Lorie Jocius:** When Council "slips in" something like that, then it is the beginning of the flood gates opening.

**A. Rob Corcoran wrote:** There was an effort to enable development on one of these sites circa 2008/9 timeframe, which the TLA opposed, and which was rejected. These are shoreline developments and would bypass the Skyline reserve [requirement].

**A. Andrew Healy wrote:** I believe the map data came from MPAC, and it wasn't refined before being included in the Appendix. Essentially a mapping area, as those properties are private land, they appear as private land in the MPAC data. The map needs to be manually updated to label those parcels differently.

**A. Paul Tamburro wrote:** These sites are by and large former and current mining claims.

**Q.** I understand O.P.P. police is a huge chunk of the budget. (Peter McGuire, Island 159)

**A.** This was not addressed at the AGM (due to time constraints). A follow-up message was sent to Peter indicating that, according to the Municipal tax breakdown, policing costs constitute 6% of the budget.

**Comment from Walter Ross:** It is a strange AGM that a member cannot make a motion and have it voted on. That said I would like to vote against Jack's motion.

**Comment from Andrew:** I could be wrong, but I believe [at] an AGM where motions are voted on by members, the motions must be disclosed in advance.

**A.** Linda Bangay indicated that Andrew was correct.

## **FINAL POLL:**

*Regarding the format of the Temagami Lakes Association's next "Annual General Meeting", do you prefer:*

*(a) an in-person AGM in the summer of 2024 (53% of responses);*

*(b) a virtual AGM via Zoom in the fall of 2024 (21% of responses); or,*

*(c) either option (26% of responses).*

**Comment from Will:** Love the idea of TLA in-person meeting at Bear Island.

**Comment from Paul:** He indicated that if the AGM was held at Bear Island, we might be able to take advantage of better technology (which might enable a hybrid meeting in the summer of 2024).

**Comment from Nicole:** She said that this would be investigated to allow more people to participate in the 2024 AGM.

**Comment from Christopher Brooks:** Hybrid meetings are very difficult because of the audio. It is difficult for remote participants to hear unless there is quite a bit of infrastructure.

## **MOTION TO ADJOURN:**

Nicole thanked TLA members for attending, and welcomed feedback about the AGM. A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Peter Healy, seconded by Kelly Bancroft, and passed at 9:05 p.m. (98% approval). She invited members to call or e-mail her at any time.