

Boathouses on the water an issue in N. Kawartha

BY DOUG HUTTON

North Kawartha Township CAO, Shannon Hunter reported to council's September 6 meeting that the solicitor had reviewed the issue of building boathouses over the water and determined that North Kawartha only has jurisdiction over the land.

Deputy Reeve, Barry Rand said that he is concerned about the implications, and asked if there was any way that the township could obtain some control over building in-water boathouses.

Building Inspector, Jim Sangster confirmed that the Ontario Building Code does not apply to these structures so, currently, a resident could build anything over the water even if the structure was unsafe.

Ms. Hunter stated that the township does not want the liability associated with approving or inspecting a structure built over the water.

Reeve Jim Whelan stated that he and councillor-at-large Arnie Brown will be meeting with the Kawartha Highlands park superintendent to work on a memorandum of understanding as to what will be allowed to be built over the water.

Although this would only be applicable to the park, he said that he would attempt to get agreement from MNR and Fisheries and Oceans for the lakes outside of the park. He did clarify that this would be a very long process.

Ambrose Moran, a resident interested in planning issues, gave a comprehensive presentation including the background to the problem.

He said that in his view, the MNR free-use policy is flawed to the extent that it theoretically would permit a 36,000 sq. ft. in-water boathouse on pilings on some of the lakes in North Kawartha in the absence of township zoning.

He stated that Peterborough County appears to be "far behind" Haliburton and Muskoka in the creation and enforcement of waterfront development controls.

He urged council to pass an interim bylaw to attempt to halt the building of in-water boathouses until a proper study can be completed.

He said that this recommendation was made to Havelock-Belmont-Methuen a year ago and nothing was done, resulting in a 2,500 sq. ft. floating boathouse on Jack lake "which is a monument to their inaction."

Mr. Moran added that he thought that the township has jurisdiction to zone the lakes based on a planning report www.highlandseast.ca/files/housekeeping.amendment.report_02.pdf prepared for the township of Highlands East. Council thanked him for his presentation.