

DRAFT

CLPOA General Meeting

January 9, 2021 by ZOOM

--To Update Members about Torrance Barrens and MOECP Management--

ATTENDANCE: CLPOA quorum of 15 was reached including 8 members of the Board and 11 members at large. Also present was Karen Dalton (on Gull Wing) of Safe Quiet Lakes.

OPENING REMARKS: Ian McClennan, President, outlined progress made in having procured a place at the table to revise the management plan of Torrance Barrens. It was through the efforts of Mike Silver, several Board members and local elected officials that a working committee has been formed by Wade Murrant of Ontario Parks (under Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks). Prior to the committee being formed, it might have been necessary to resort to litigation to try to force a fire ban at the Barrens.

Question - Lyle Schwartz - Considering the Association and the Camp are involved, what are the next steps?

Ian explained the first meeting of the working committee has been called for late January. In preparation for this meeting, all participants are invited to suggest edits to the Draft Charter. It will be the beginning of negotiations with MOECP.

Question - Suzanne McClennan - with so much trash at the Barrens, are signs needed to instruct people how to discard or take it away.

Ian and others agreed it is a good suggestion to bring to the MOECP working committee.

Comment - Mike Silver - Wade seems positive and said to Mike that he looks forward to the success of this committee as a high point in his (Murrant's) career.

Question from Floor - so many problems derived from camping, perhaps they could be managed if there were a designated area?

Mike - this is another idea to bring to Committee. Our priority will be a fire ban. Many letters (at our urging) have been written to Wade by Muskoka town mayors. They ask for an immediate fire ban. This is a good beginning. There are problems with the draft Charter *[Draft Charter of operations of Barrens presented by Wade Murrant to all committee members first week of January, 2021]* but it is our intention to work on this as a member of the committee.

Coel - If there were to be a designated area for camping, it would entail fees, regulations, permits, controlled parking and it would be a lot to ask of the government to initiate and maintain the necessary building, staff. Perhaps the current situation calls for either Designated Camping or No Camping.

Mike - one problem with the Charter is that it emphasizes recreational activities over natural, environmental value of the Barrens. It was designated as a nature reserve.

Ian - thinks many on the committee will be in favor of making changes.

Paul Regan had a question concerning Hardy Lake

MAKEUP OF THE WORKING COMMITTEE:

YMCA Camp Pine Crest (Coel Balmer); Muskoka Lakes Association (Dayle Hogg); CLPOA (Ian McClennan); Guardians of Muskoka Dark Sky (Mike Silver); District Council (John Gordon); Muskoka Ratepayers' Association (Liz Danyar); TML Council and Muskoka Trails Committee (Ruth Nishikawa); Muskoka Conservancy (Scott Young); Aboriginal Legal Services Muskoka (Shirley Hay); Ontario Parks (Wade Murrant)]

Question from Seth Silver: Is hunting allowed in the barrens?

Yes, although shells were not noticed during the clean-up this past summer. However, cigarette butts and broken glass were the biggest concern.

There are garbage bins in the main parking area of the TB right now. They might be mitigating some of the trash dumped all around. There is also a port-a-potty.

The uptick in visitation this past summer has really stressed the limits of the measures in place. We anticipate further increase in visitation in the coming season which will undoubtedly push it past the breaking point if not addressed.

This past summer (2020) saw more people using the Barrens than ever before. We need to preserve the Barrens' original designation in order to have its benefits, e.g. dark sky.

Ron Algate - what about Sobeys Mall? are the lights in compliance with dark sky concerns?

Mike - Mike had a meeting arranged with the management of the shopping centre but it was cancelled because of the onset of COVID restrictions last March. Meetings will resume.

Suzanne - Parking is another concern around the Barrens on both sides of the road makes for a dangerous situation

Ian - Parking will be addressed by the committee.

Lisa - I am positive about the outcome of committee meetings. Thank you all for your support - thanks especially to Mike Silver for his dedication to the health of Torrance Barrens and making sure attention is given to the risk of fire in the Barrens.

Conversation broke off into where members were Zooming from and wishes for a Happy New Year.

Meeting adjourned at 3:50PM