

Selwyn council hears wild rice concerns from waterfront property owners

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"The federal government needs to see the repercussions associated with their legislation for all Canadians concerned, therefore, I whole-heartedly support this motion," Ballantyne said.

Before taking the position of Chair, Deputy Mayor Senis told the group of property owners that she was "very sorry that we're here again dealing with this issue after so many years of not being resolved."

"Many residents feel that our township should have the ability to affect change. If it is an issue under our jurisdiction, we do act quickly to find a solution. However, as Donna has said and as our motion states, this issue, with regards to wild rice growth and commercial harvesting and seeding is under the umbrella of the federal government," Senis said.

Deputy Mayor Senis said that, "both Parks Canada and our MP seemed to have dropped the ball quite badly because this has gone on for far too many years."

"I support the motion today as well and I believe each individual in this room should send an email to your MP and to Trent Severn Waterway to let them know how you're affected by this. We will send our motion and it'll come from our township. But I believe, in order for them to understand the magnitude of what's happening on Pigeon Lake, Chemong Lake and Buckhorn Lake will only be felt if they receive emails from you. I support this motion whole-heartedly," Senis commented.

Councillor Locke said she echoed what Sherry and Donna said and that, "it's a long-standing issue and it's really impacting

your enjoyment and value of your homes. I'm really hoping that our MP and Trent Severn Waterway and Parks Canada will seriously look at this issue because I'm sure that it's not just here. I hope we can get to the bottom of this."

Councillor Locke also said she supported the motion.

Mayor Smith said she thought that the point is a good one, "that your personal stories are important about how this affects you." She told the property owners that she thought the appropriate level of government that has any authority is the federal government.

Councillor Ballantyne called for a recorded vote which resulted in a unanimous vote in support of sending a letter requesting that MP Monsef advance the property owners concerns regarding wild

rice growth and mechanical harvesting on behalf of residents to the Working Committee and the federal government.

Mayor Smith opened the floor to questions and Pigeon Lake resident Gary White asked to have seeding added to the motion. He said "it is very important to get rid of it."

Mayor Smith replied that the immediate meeting was to discuss mechanical harvesting and the noise issue.

Another Pigeon Lake property owner, identified only as Mr. Wood, told Council that he had received a number of emails from people complaining that they were unable to attend the meeting and unable to speak their minds so an email/petition was crafted that basically said, "we need your help to save Pigeon Lake from becoming a permanent

commercial rice farm. The intentional seeding and commercial harvesting of rice in public waters is causing unbearable conditions [sic] which is impeding the waterway, affecting our quality of life and the value of our homes."

Mr. Wood told Council that within twenty-four hours he received over eighty signatures. He provided the Clerk with a copy of the petition for the public record.

Mr. Wood also requested that "in order to show the seriousness of this issue that the township should go out beyond their scope and say enough is enough and just show, you as

Mayor Senis seconded it. Councillor Ballantyne made the motion to support the recommended resolution and Deputy Mayor Senis seconded it.