

# Port Carling boundary expansion moves ahead

by Karen Longwell

Accusations of unlawful decisions regarding the Port Carling boundary expansion were raised and quashed at the Sept. 1 township council meeting.

A 104.5-acre boundary expansion on Port Carling's east side has been debated for more than a year and now opponents of the expansion say the process is unlawful.

The expansion would mean a proposed 250-unit residential development called Hanna's Landing at the former Glenwood Trailer Park on Mirror Lake would be on town services.

After a lengthy debate, Township of Muskoka Lakes council approved a district recommendation to reduce the size of the boundary expansion. The official plan amendment will now go to District Municipality of Muskoka council for final approval.

The decision was not enough, according to Friends of Port Carling president Rick Spence, who continues to oppose the east-side expansion. The organization hired a lawyer and planner to fight the issue and submitted their statement to council.

"Our lawyer and planner spent a lot of time and effort trying to explain in a clear and simple fashion why this proposed boundary expansion is wrong-headed, unjustifiable and by all accounts unlawful," Spence said at the Sept. 1 meeting.

The official plan amendment represents "unbridled development" contrary to growth requirements of the Provincial Policy Statement and the district official plan, said Stephen J. D'Agostino, lawyer for the Friends of Port Carling.

"Under the circumstances, it would be unlawful and bad planning to approve the official plan amendment in its current form," said D'Agostino in a letter to council.

A lawyer for Hanna's Landing Inc. said the Friends of Port Carling was not correct in its assessment.

"The analysis contained in the letter (D'Agostino's letter) purporting to conclude that there was a lack of the required consistency and conformity is flawed, incomplete and, at times, speculative and selective. The letter's content is not supported with any professional planning opinion," said Leo Longo, lawyer for Hanna's Landing Inc.

Derrick Hammond, director of planning services for the

district, said he wasn't sure if he agreed that the process is unlawful, but added he would speak to the district solicitor to confirm.

There were some claims that the growth study had to be approved before the Port Carling boundary expansion could be implemented, but Hammond said Muskoka district council did approve the study.

The township has gone through the proper process with public meetings, said Stephen Fahner, director of planning.

"There is nothing in the Planning Act that indicates that a growth strategy is to be done first, prior to (a boundary expansion)," said Fahner.

Spence is confident the Provincial Policy Statement will support their claims, and plans to meet with district planners in the coming weeks. He hopes the issue won't have to go before the Ontario Municipal Board, but said that could be a last resort.

The Silver Lake Association and Muskoka Lakes Association also sent letters opposing the boundary expansion.

Despite the hearty protests, council had already made a decision on the expansion, and at the Sept. 1 meeting council was only deciding on the district's recommendations for the official plan amendment.

District staff recommended reducing the area of the expansion by approximately 10 acres and including an open space area, while township staff wanted to reduce the number of units per acre on the land.

In the end, council decided to go with the district suggestion, which would remove part of the land slated for Hanna's Landing and mean split zoning for the property.

The increased density in a smaller space is more in line with the Provincial Policy Statement, said Hammond.

Councillor Brian Hare wanted to reduce the density and include the entire Hanna's Landing property, which would mean more green space and not too many units built per acre.

But councillor Karen Ellis suggested there has to be a compromise if the plan is to pass through the district level. She wants to see construction start on Hanna's Landing.

"We have sat around this table on this topic for over a year and nothing has happened," said Ellis.

Margaret Walton, planner for Hanna's Landing, requested council not include the district's suggestion for open space to control the visual impact of the development. An open space designation would reduce development rights on the property. She felt steep slope policies and others would restrict development.

Council voted in favour of the district's suggestion for a reduced boundary expansion, but did not agree with the open space specification.

Council suggested the township could revisit the remaining 10 acres in the boundary expansion in five years.



**ON HER WAY.** Bracebridge School of Ballet student Kendra Karst, 17 (left), was successful in her audition for the school of Alberta Ballet Theatre this summer. Karst, a native of Gravenhurst, studied for years at the National Ballet School in Toronto. She is excited to be completing her graduating year, commencing this fall, at ABT with some of the world's finest teachers. Pictured here with Karst is Evelyn Finlayson-Kelly. (Submitted photo)

## Huntsville to seek public input on G8 Centre addition

HUNTSVILLE – Garnering input from those 55 years of age and older will be important as the Town of Huntsville moves forward with an area to be designated for older adult activities, once the G8 Summit has come and gone.

Huntsville councillor Mike Greaves, who chairs the town's sports and recreation committee, said an addition will be built at the back of the G8 Centre, facing the river.

Because the addition, which will also house children's programs, is not

required for the actual summit next June, all related construction has been put on hold.

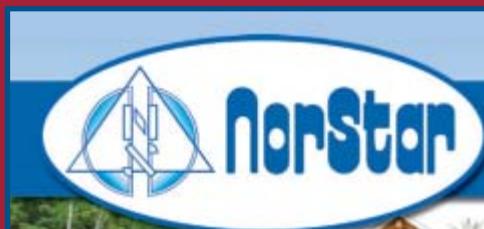
Huntsville mayor Claude Doughty said the G8-related construction budget is being tweaked and a revised budget will be presented to the town's finance committee before it goes to council. That budget will determine the size and amount to be spent on the actual addition.

"We will be looking at our budgeting and finalizing some of the extra cost

for money spent on the summit centre. My plan is that we will get all that put together, tweak the G8 budget, and then plan over the winter for that building," said Doughty. He expects shovels in the ground by early spring, he explained.

Greaves said that, in the meantime, input will be sought from the appropriate user groups to get a better handle on the type of infrastructure they'd like to see.

The public meeting will be advertised and a report is expected to be finalized in the fall.

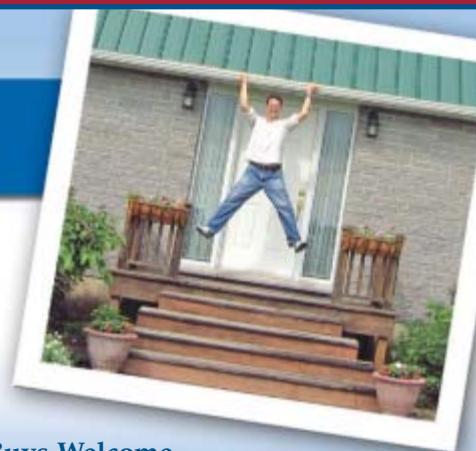


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