

Council votes ?No? on vegetative buffer bylaw



By Nate Smelle

After investing a great deal of time and resources into improving shoreline protection throughout the municipality over the last nine months, Council voted not to approve the proposed amendments to the current vegetative buffer bylaw.

Last September Council passed a resolution to establish a committee comprised of members of local Lake Associations, Council and other agencies to review best practices on shoreline protection with the intention of creating a more effective strategy for maintaining water quality and the overall health of lake ecosystems.

While the current bylaw regulates land usage, as well as the height, bulk, location, spacing, character and use of buildings on waterfront properties, it has been criticized as unenforceable for not clearly defining a vegetative buffer, the shoreline activity area or an access corridor. Although the new zoning bylaw would have recognized each of these provisions, it was voted down by Council. Not all of Council was on board with the decision.

Councillor Greg Roberts made an attempt to defer the vote until the public and Council could be better informed. The public meeting held on May 23 to serve this purpose only added to the confusion, he said.

Let's be blunt about it, our public meeting was very poorly done at the fault of Council because ultimately we are the ones who are responsible for it. There should have been more information about it out there, said Roberts.

Without a second to back his motion Councillor Hald Robinson moved for Council to vote on the proposed bylaw. Not content with the idea of continuing to utilize the current bylaw, Councillor Tracy Hagar asked if she could still support Roberts's previous motion to defer the vote until the next meeting of Council. With Councillor Robinson's motion already on the table though, it was too late and the new bylaw was defeated.