

April, 2009

***Fifth Public Meeting: Proposed Official Plan,
Malpeque Bay Planning Board***

By Hal Mills

The Municipality of Malpeque Bay includes the communities of Indian River, Hamilton, Malpeque, Baltic, Spring Valley, Darnley, and Sea View. The fifth Public Meeting hosted by the Planning Board regarding preparation of a proposed Official Plan was held April 17th in the Sea View Community Hall.

The main purpose of the meeting was to receive feedback from residents about the draft document on vision, objectives and policies for the proposed Official Plan. The meeting was hosted by the Planning Board established by Council (Members of the Planning Board are: Jeremy Stiles; Jimmy Carruthers; and Stephane Senechal. Their planning consultant is Hal Mills). The following is a summary of what took place at the meeting:

1. Welcome and Introductions: Chairperson Jeremy Stiles welcomed the approximately 35 participants to the meeting and introduced members of the Planning Board.
2. Status Report on Progress to Date: Jeremy gave an overview of background including approval of funding for a two-year project to develop a proposed Official Plan by March 2010, and appointment of a Planning Board by Council. He stressed that the plan will be the peoples plan, not the Planning Board's plan. Hal & Jimmy summarized progress made at each of the 4 previous public meetings.

There were strenuous objections from the floor regarding the distribution of information. Reports and other planning documents are published in newspapers, emailed to a distribution list, and posted to the www.malpequebay.ca website. But it was asserted that information about the project needs to be mailed to residents, in line with a motion passed at the last Council AGM. It was agreed that a detailed package of relevant information will be mailed to residents prior to the next public meeting.

3. Commission on Land and Local Governance. PEI has appointed a Commission on Land and Local Governance, chaired by Ralph Thompson, to *“identify concerns and recommend changes in the areas of the provincial approach to land use planning, municipal structures, and municipal governance, in order to better protect our land and water resources, promote strong and vibrant local governments, and enable the province to respond to issues such as climate change, viewscape protection, and urban-rural conflicts.”*

The land use planning component of the Commission's work has many implications for an Official Plan, and it will be important for residents and the Planning Board to pay attention and participate. The Planning Board has already met with the Commissioner. Residents are encouraged to attend the Commission's June 15th public meeting at Three Oaks Senior High School starting at 7:00pm. For more information go to www.gov.pe.ca/landandlocalgovernance, call 621-3040, or visit the Commission's office at the intersection of highways 2 and 13 in Hunter River.

4. Draft Vision, Objectives and Policies for the Proposed Official Plan. The Planning Board then presented its draft *Vision, Objectives & Policies* for the proposed Official Plan, as previously published in three County Line Courier articles, emailed to a distribution list, posted to the www.malpequebay.ca website, and consolidated in a handout for the meeting. The vision, objectives and policies, after revision and approval, will guide subsequent actions taken to implement the proposed Official Plan. The Planning Board expects most implementation actions will be carried out through education and cooperative measures. New bylaws are only envisioned to address exceptional plan implementation-enforcement situations.

Attached to the handout was a map of a proposed large 'designated area' for major commercial, industrial and green development projects. If approved, this would keep future 'major' development projects away from the coastal zone.

5. Discussion on Draft Vision, Objectives and Policies. It was stated that the regulations pertaining to the special planning area Malpeque to Stanley Bridge amounts to discrimination to the residents and land owners of the area, that many people feel this is a denial of human rights, and that many people also greatly appreciate the social and economic benefits derived from summer residents. The following motion was then moved, seconded, and unanimously approved:
"We therefore move that this meeting recommend to the CIC, Department of Community Services, and the Commission on Land and Local Governance that special planning area regulations be discontinued and one set of planning regulations be established to guide development in all rural areas of the province."

A number of comments were made regarding suggested revisions to the vision, objectives and policies document. It was agreed that people could have until the end of April to submit their suggested revisions, following which the Planning Board will produce a revised draft document for review at the next public meeting.

One person commented that he did not want any part of development of an Official Plan because it could drive a wedge into the community. Future

subdivision applications will come down to us against them, land owners vs summer cottagers.

Another person questioned whether an Official Plan would lead to increased liabilities. Hal responded that there are liability considerations; Council's actions and decisions regarding implementation of its Official Plan very well could be subject to legal challenges.

6. Next Steps: A report on this public meeting will be published in the County Line Courier, emailed to everyone on our email list, and posted on the website at www.malpequebay.ca. A package of relevant material, including a revised draft document on vision, objectives and policies, will be mailed to residents. The next public meeting, expected in early July, will begin to discuss options for actions to implement the proposed Official Plan.