

December, 2009

Eighth 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 eighth Public Meeting hosted by the Planning Board regarding preparation of a proposed Official Plan was held Tuesday November 17th, 2009 in Spring Valley Community Hall.

The main purpose of the meeting was to bring residents up to date on the status of the project and to focus discussion on actions that may be taken to implement the plan's objectives and policies. The meeting was hosted by the Planning Board that was established by Council (Members of the Planning Board are: Jeremy Stiles; Jimmy Carruthers; Stephane Senechal, and Bob Beairsto. Their planning consultant is Hal Mills). The following is a summary of what took place at the meeting:

- 1. Welcome and Introductions:** Stephane Senechal (who chaired the meeting as Chairperson Jeremy Stiles was out of Province on business) welcomed approximately 30 participants to the meeting and introduced other members of the Planning Board. Everyone was given a handout with: a revised map of the Proposed Designated Area; a map of Proposed Viewscapes; and a draft document on "Possible Actions for Plan Implementation."
- 2. Status Report on Progress To Date.** Stephane gave a brief overview of background to this planning project, and progress to date. At the previous public meeting (August 25th) we reviewed the mailed-out document "*Proposed Official Plan for Malpeque Bay*" and began a discussion on possible actions to implement our draft vision, objectives and policies through an Official Plan. The mandate of the Planning Board is to submit a proposed Official Plan to Council, for their consideration, by March, 2010.

Hal introduced a revision to the proposed 'Designated Area' resulting from public feedback during/after the previous public meeting, and led participants through a comparison of the map in the mailed-out document to the revised map in the handout. Future 'major' developments would be restricted to the proposed Designated Area, while development primarily for use by residents, business and industry within the Municipality shall not be defined as 'major.' The intent was to keep future 'major' development away from the coastal zone, but some residents had expressed the opinion that the original proposal was unnecessarily restrictive. The Planning Board agreed and believes that the expanded Designated Area still meets the intended purpose satisfactorily. The new map generated considerable discussion, but appears to be an acceptable solution for those present

as it offers a balance between accommodation of future development proposals and protection of the coastal zone.

3. Land Use and Viewscapes. It was noted that a scheduled speaker on the value of viewscapes was not available. The report of the Citizen's Committee was reviewed again, in conjunction with the new map of Proposed Viewscapes showing 6 'favourite' and 6 'runner-up' viewscape points. It was explained that there is no expectation that government will ever come up with funds to compensate viewscape landowners properly. Therefore the Planning Board has no intention of prohibiting development on viewscape lands. Instead, the intention is to use public recognition, education, promotion, persuasion, and possibly tax concessions/covenants to support continued stewardship of priority viewscape lands. The possibility of accessing Island Nature Trust or Lucy Maud Montgomery Trust funds for compensation was discussed. It was agreed to be more focused on specific viewscapes and the need to secure infrastructure dollars to develop safe parking areas by them, similar to the one in French River.
4. Possible Actions for Plan Implementation. The draft handout document "*Possible Actions for Plan Implementation*" was reviewed section by section:
 - a) Land Use and Scenic Viewscapes. The Planning Board agreed to focus on a smaller number of viewscape points, and to identify the need for associated parking areas.
 - b) Agriculture. It was contended that the proposed Land Use Advisory Committee would duplicate the role of IRAC. The Planning Board responded that the Committee (mainly composed of farmers-landowners, but including other interests) would only be there to advise Council on land use matters, and would have zero effect on the mandate of IRAC or on deliberations between landowners and IRAC. It was noted that the correct name for a program listed in the handout should be the *Kensington North Watersheds Association Watershed Management Planning Initiative*.
 - c) Tourism, Recreation & Heritage. It was agreed to add actions on collaboration with regional and provincial tourism associations and agencies, and to recognize and welcome recreational fishing, hunting and trapping.
 - d) Residential – Cottage Development and Subdivisions. Encouragement of new housing close to the center of our seven traditional communities was questioned. The Planning Board responded that there is no intent to force anyone to do so, the intention merely is to support maintaining traditional community values.
 - e) Major Commercial, Industrial and Green Development. It was noted that the Planning Board still needs to consider how possible coastal zone developments, such as golf courses and resorts, would be dealt with.
 - f) Coastal Management. The action should be to promote, rather than to enable, continued public access.

- g)** Environmental Management. It was agreed to add the Island Nature Trust as an environmental non-government organization to work with regarding environmentally sensitive areas.
- h)** Special Planning Area (SPA). There was considerable discussion on the difference between the motion passed at the April public meeting in Sea View and these proposed actions. It was explained that, as requested, the motion has been recommended to Council, to the Commission on Land and Local Governance, and to Government. But, in addition, different opinions have been expressed at subsequent meetings which the Planning Board must also take into consideration. The Commission's report, due by the end of December may have significant influence with Government regarding the future of SPAs, and our challenge now is come up with wording suitable for whatever that future is. We anticipate that the Commission's report will be made public before the proposed Official Plan is finalized, putting us in a better position to review proposed actions. It was agreed to insert reference to the motion in revisions to this section.

- 5. Next Steps:** A report on this meeting will be published in the County Line Courier, emailed to everyone on our email list, and posted to the website at www.malpequebay.ca. The Planning Board will distribute revised information on proposed action items for plan implementation prior to the next public meeting which is scheduled for February 2nd, 2010.