

September, 2009

## ***Seventh 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 seventh Public Meeting hosted by the Planning Board regarding preparation of a proposed Official Plan was held Tuesday August 25<sup>th</sup>, 2009 in the Hamilton Community Hall.

The main purpose of the meeting was to bring residents up to date on the status of the project and to begin discussing possible actions to implement our draft vision, objectives and policies through an Official Plan. 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 Beirsto. 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 40 participants to the meeting and introduced members of the Planning Board.
- 2. Status Report on Progress To Date.** Jeremy gave a brief overview of background to this planning project, and progress to date. At the previous public meeting (July 7<sup>th</sup>) we reviewed the mailed out document “*Proposed Official Plan for Malpeque Bay*” with respect to the draft vision, objectives and policies. While those will remain ‘draft’ throughout the planning process, we now want to shift the discussion to possible actions that may be taken to implement an Official Plan, and this afternoon a small group of residents participated in a workshop to begin that work. A recent letter from the responsible Deputy Minister commends us on work to date and encourages Council and planning Board to continue this initiative. The mandate of the Planning Board is to submit a proposed Official Plan to Council by March, 2010.

A debate followed on how the proposed plan would be ratified or voted upon, and options such as a public vote, a mail-out ballot, or community consensus were discussed. The requirements of the *Planning Act* were reviewed: the Planning Board must provide an opportunity for residents and other interested persons to make representations regarding provisions of the proposed plan; hold at least one public meeting to review the proposed plan; and maintain a detailed record of objections and representations before recommending it to Council for adoption. Council, not the Planning Board, holds decision-making authority over the proposed plan. The *Planning Act* says that Council may adopt an official plan by resolution, but leaves it up to Council to determine how that resolution is to be

considered. If Council adopts the official plan by resolution it then would be submitted to the Minister for final approval.

3. Reconsideration of Special Planning Area (SPA) Objectives and Policies. The Board has agreed to a request to put reconsideration of the draft objectives and policies for the SPA on the agenda. Those draft objectives and policies for the SPA were based in part on a motion and discussions coming from our 5<sup>th</sup> public meeting, recommending that all SPA regulations be discontinued. Both the Planning Board and the Commission on Land and Local Governance have received objections to the motion and to our draft objectives and policies.

Earle Lockerby identified himself as the person who raised the objections, and gave a detailed explanation of his reasons. Although there may be flaws in *Planning Act* provisions for SPAs, he feels that it does contain some worthwhile provisions not found elsewhere and provides tools for managing things such as viewscapes and development within special places. There was discussion about which items might best be scrapped, retained or revised. Earle agreed to provide written details on his proposed revisions, and the Planning Board agreed to reconsider all comments received before redrafting SPA objectives and policies prior to the next public meeting.

4. Report from Citizen's Committee on Viewplanes. A Citizen's Committee (consisting of Katherine Dewar, John Cousins, Clair Sudsbury, Sally Blake Hoof, Wayne Cousins and Earle Lockerby) has been hard at work on the identification of priority landscapes and viewplanes. They provided a report, illustrated with pictures, of 5 favoured and 5 runners-up priority 'viewscapes' (the term used in *Planning Act* regulations).
5. Action Items for Plan Implementation. Afternoon workshop participants urged the Board to take a close look at the proposal for wind development in the eastern portion of the municipality and provisions of the PEI wind energy policy. The concept of a Land Use Advisory Council was supported, but requires definition of membership and terms of reference. Beach access signage comes with a responsibility for managing it properly. The number of cottage lots available within the municipality was discussed along with the trend towards larger lots of land with a single cottage was mentioned, and the Board was asked to consider the type of development, rather than no development, as put forward by Randall Arendt in his book Rural By Design. There is general agreement that bylaws and regulations inherent in most urban planning may not be appropriate for this rural municipality.
6. Next Steps: The Planning Board will distribute information on options for proposed action items for plan implementation prior to the next public meeting. A report on this 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](http://www.malpequebay.ca).

Scheduled dates for the next two public meetings were set for November 17<sup>th</sup> and February 2<sup>nd</sup>.