



NOTICE OF MOTION

TO: Members of Council
FROM: Mayor Smith
MEETING DATE: August 22, 2024
RE: Wasaga Beach Provincial Park

WHEREAS the Park Management Plan (the 'Plan') for Wasaga Beach Provincial Park that was established on June, 1978, focused on supporting recreation, tourism and economic growth within the Town of Wasaga Beach;

AND WHEREAS Provincial landholdings in Wasaga Beach are largely under the control of the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP);

AND WHEREAS MECP has unilaterally shifted the mandate of Wasaga Beach Provincial Park to focus on environmental sustainability, while largely ignoring the other two pillars of sustainability – the social and economic pillars that has resulted in a loss of focus on supporting recreation, tourism and economic growth.

AND WHEREAS the shift in MECP focus has contributed to a significant loss of tourists;

AND WHEREAS MECP infrastructure – parking lots, washrooms, shade structures, picnic tables, playgrounds, etc., and Nancy Island Historic Site, have fallen into a state of disrepair with portions of Nancy Island currently closed to the public;

AND WHEREAS despite the Plan acknowledging that Wasaga Beach Provincial Park is unique as a result of it being the first urban provincial park in Ontario, located entirely within the boundary of the Town of Wasaga Beach, the town has been subjected to harmful broad-brush policies, regulations and management practices that are being applied across the province that are often times out of touch with the unique needs and context of Wasaga Beach;

AND WHEREAS the commitment outlined in the 1978 Plan to revisit the Plan every five (5) years to ensure that the vision of the municipality and the operating practices of the province remain in sync has not occurred;

AND WHEREAS the province owns significant landholdings, outside of Beach Areas and environmentally sensitive lands, that once were developed with homes and businesses, and that

have sat derelict for almost 50 years (contributing very little to nothing to the Town's assessment base);

AND WHEREAS MECP unilaterally created the Wasaga Beach Provincial Park Boundary in the mid-1990's that brought provincially-owned, municipally-owned and privately-owned lands inside the park boundary, and despite property acquisition being incomplete, MECP is asserting ownership over these lands without providing fair compensation;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Town of Wasaga Beach requests that a Task Force be immediately struck with representatives from the Town of Wasaga Beach, The Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP), The Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Gaming (MTCG) and the Ministry of Infrastructure (Infrastructure Ontario) to review all provincial landholdings within Wasaga Beach and determine which lands should be transferred out of the MECP portfolio and put into either the MTCG, IO or the Town's portfolios by Q1 2025. At minimum, the Town requests that Nancy Island, Beach Areas 1 and 2, a portion of Beach Area 4, and all of the remaining non-Beach Area and non-environmentally sensitive parcels of land be transferred out of the MECP portfolio;

AND FURTHER THAT the Province work with the Town of Wasaga Beach to create an updated master plan and funding strategy to re-invent Wasaga Beach Provincial Park and invest in new infrastructure that will assist the town in becoming a World Class community and tourist destination, worthy of being located along the World's Longest Freshwater Beach;

AND FURTHER THAT the Province (Infrastructure Ontario and MTCG) and the Town collaborate to unlock the value in underutilized and derelict provincial lands and pursue highest and best uses for these lands in line with Town and provincial objectives;

AND FURTHER THAT all non-provincially owned lands currently located within the Wasaga Beach Provincial Park Boundary be removed and that the Park Boundary be adjusted in other locations to facilitate new development at the main beachfront;

AND FURTHER THAT a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Honourable Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario, the Honourable Andrea Khanjin, Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks, the Honourable Stan Cho, Minister of Tourism, Culture and Gaming, the Honourable Kinga Surma, Minister of Infrastructure, MPP Brian Saunderson, and the County of Simcoe.

Mayor Brian Smith