

June 4, 2012

Dear Mayor Murphy,

The Muskoka Ratepayers Association believes it is time to move forward. Our organization does not often take a stand on a particular project, usually focussing its efforts on “good governance” and ensuring that the “process” has been followed. By this we mean that responsible proposals are considered, that the public has an ample opportunity to be heard, that expert opinion is brought forward, and then the council makes an informed decision.

In the case of the North Bala Small Hydro project, we feel that the Muskoka Ratepayers’ Association must make a stand.

We believe that proper process was followed for Bala Falls, and that this was largely achieved several years ago. However, we have all witnessed strong opposition to prior decisions since the election of 2010. No matter what our personal views are on the project, the decision on whether to go forward has always been with the Ontario government, and they have once again spoken in clear terms for all. They have given approval for Option 2, and so, the project in some form WILL go ahead.

We believe that the public would prefer the so-called Option 2 development should the project be built. Having studied this issue for almost five years, the MRA also believes that the Option 2 solution is better overall than the initial (Option 1) proposal, now preferred by the developer because no township land would be needed.

Given the fact that the project is going to be built, it is time for our council to enter into serious negotiations with the developer to see if there is a possibility to do what is best for Muskoka – switch to Option 2. But this will require Council to make the land available. This must be done in a very short time, with clarity, and with no hidden agenda. Swift River has filed an addendum to modify its proposal for the Option 1 site, and the review period is short.

If the township wants the best outcome for all Muskoka, it is time for Council to consolidate its best proposal, to sit down with Swift River and have a serious conversation about the outcome.

No one wants the legacy of a poor development on this majestic site.

Sincerely,

Susan DGLISH

Cc: Township Councillors, Walt Schmid, Cheryl Mortimer