

Proposed Bala Falls Hydro-electric Power Station

Additional Study is Needed

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Purpose of an Environmental Assessment

- Why are we delegating tonight?
 - The Environmental Assessment process was created by the provincial government to ensure full stakeholder review and participation
 - Our role as affected stakeholders is to ensure that all environmental concerns are considered

Environmental Screening Report

- In response to the ESR, we will be addressing our concerns to the province as it is their project and their process
- The Municipality is, however, also a major stakeholder due to significant impacts on:
 - Tourism
 - Local economy
 - Public safety
 - And, District land is being used

Environmental Issues

- Comments in the Staff report address only:
 - That District, and not the Township, is responsible for the municipal water supply
 - The use and alternatives for the portage require clarification
- Environmental issues are, however, defined to include:
 - the social, economic and cultural conditions that influence the life of man or a community

More Environmental Issues

- We are in the 44-day comment period, and now is the time for all of us to respond to the province on the broader environmental issues
 - Tourism
 - Local economy
 - Public safety
- The project is using District Land
 - Its use should therefore conform with Muskoka's Official Plan

Official Plan

- District Municipality of Muskoka's Official Plan
 - Sets the overall direction for growth in Muskoka

Office Consolidation of the Official Plan of the Muskoka Planning Area

October 15, 2008

Prepared by
The District of Muskoka
Planning and Economic
Development Department



Muskoka Official Plan

- *B.1 c) Tourism and recreational opportunities will be enhanced*
 - Everyone knows and returns to the charm of Bala and the majesty of the falls
 - But what will happen when the falls are reduced to a trickle, most of the shoreline is inaccessible

Muskoka Official Plan

- *B.5 To manage land use and development in a way that maintains the quality of the **natural** and cultural heritage of Muskoka*
 - Proposal: Cut down all the trees on Burgess Island west of the road, replace them with immature landscaping built on a concrete building
 - Just like the gardens built on the underground parking garages at Toronto condominiums

Muskoka Official Plan

- ***B.6 To maintain the character and integrity of communities in Muskoka***
 - Issue: The quaint area outside Purk's Place and the Stone Church replaced with an 81'-wide concrete intake and safety fence
 - Issue: Proposed power station would be 14 times larger predecessor
 - Faster water intake
 - Larger building
 - Faster water exiting

Muskoka Official Plan

- *C.2 Growth necessary to continue to rejuvenate and take forward the **economy of Muskoka** must have respect for the environmental constraints, physical influences and ultimately the character of Muskoka*

Additional Study is Needed

- The proponent states there would be a net positive effect on Bala's economy because **one person** would need to periodically visit the power station
 - Given the anticipated negative impact on tourism an economic impact study is required

Additional Study is Needed

Muskoka Official Plan

- *C.13 It is envisioned that the **tourism and recreation industry will continue to form the basis of the economy in Muskoka***
 - The dangerous fast water (currently entering the south channel) would be brought 250' closer to the town docks
 - This where people from Lake Muskoka dock to patronize the businesses of Bala

Muskoka Official Plan

- *D.18 The **Waterfront** is a major recreation resource area that **should be made accessible to both public and private users***
 - **500'** of public waterfront would be fenced-off or restricted from public use

This is NOT an Incremental Process

- First a driveway...
 - Then a cofferdam...
 - Then road blasting...
 - Then a power station...
- We need to consider the full implications of the Environmental Screening Report
 - During this comment period
 - With the community supported by its elected officials at District Council

Comment Period Extension

- With less than two weeks remaining to the deadline for comments, the proponent continues to avoid responding whether they will provide an extension
 - They were asked three weeks ago in this very chamber for an extension and said they would if a good reason was provided
 - They continue to avoid responding to our requests for an extension

Elevation

- We are asking for support in requesting that the evaluation of the proposed hydro-electric generating station be elevated to an individual environmental assessment
 - This requests that additional study be performed

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