



**Oral Remarks - Peninsula Lake Association
Planning Advisory Committee – Town of Huntsville
Proposed Lakeside Lodge at Deerhurst Resort**

Introduction of the PLA's Deerhurst Working Group:

Robert Hurst, John Brenciaglia, Paul Hutchison, Paul Singleton and Wendy Rotenberg.

Skyline Corporation

There are many things to commend Skyline Corporation in its application for the Lakeside Lodge. We support Skyline Corporation's goal of making Deerhurst a truly world class resort. We salute Skyline Corporation's plan to invest tens of millions of dollars in this venture. Such a facility would give Peninsula Lake and Huntsville more jobs, more commerce, and greater tax revenue.

Background:

On Monday August 27th 2012, the Peninsula Lake Association (PLA) filed a submission to the Planning Advisory Committee that identified several issues about the proposed development.

On Friday August 31st, 2012, Skyline Corporation responded in writing to the PLA.

September 4th, yesterday, PLA met with senior Executives of Skyline Corporation on site at Deerhurst.

The PLA appreciates Skyline Corporation's quick response both in writing and in person, in advance of the public meeting before your Committee.

The PLA's Concerns:

We have two fundamental problems with the proposed Lakeside Lodge: the height and linear mass of the proposed building.

Context: Good Muskoka Planning + Lake Plans:

Your Planning Department has given you the precise context for the questions of height and size. It's in the Zoning Bylaws Section 8.3.2.f:

“A prominent building may be considered for resort commercial development only if it is designed as a landmark and is in keeping with the building style and environment of the surrounding area.”

The Peninsula Lake Plan:

As we said in our written submission, our Lake Plan was developed more than a decade ago in partnership with many stakeholders, including the Town of Huntsville and Deerhurst Resort. Our Lake Plan specifically states that the tree line should be respected and members of the Peninsula Lake community:

“will maintain a natural vista and prevent the appearance of buildings and other structures above and below the tree line.”

When one thinks about classic Muskoka landmarks that fit into the landscape, and respect the tree line, one thinks about the Marriot Red Leaves resort at Minet, which is 4 stories high – or Windermere House which is 3 stories.

Height of proposed Lakeside Lodge:

Skyline Corporation's application proposes a 4-story building as viewed from the parking lot. But from the Lake, it's a far different view.

We suggested to Skyline Corporation yesterday that the 'front door' to any resort or cottage is always from the lakeside. That's where people gather because that's the million-dollar view.

So if you study architect Richard Wengle's Lakeside View and count the floors as viewed from Peninsula Lake, we count 6 stories.

Skyline Corporation speaks about enhancing the beautiful vistas of Peninsula Lake. But visas go both ways ... beautiful views from the shore TO the Lake, and beautiful views of the shore FROM the Lake.

The Tree Line:

It is our view that the proposed Lakeside Lodge will rise high above the tree line, thus violating one of your a key planning guidelines and our Lake Plan. If you were paddling on Peninsula Lake, the top of the proposed Lodge is more than 100 feet into the sky.

Legacy Lane Building:

We hope your Committee is as concerned about this height issue as we are. And we hope your Committee, in reviewing this proposal, considers what an earlier Huntsville Council did, when it approved that building on Legacy Lane. I'm sure you all know the infamous

eyesore on top of Home Depot hill, a building that can be seen from Highway 11 and from Lake Vernon, because Huntsville Council approved an extra floor on top.

Mass, Size and Clusters:

Your Official Plan calls for development to be built in clusters, so enormous structures with long linear facades are not dropped onto the landscape. Yet the Official Plan does not specifically define a “cluster.”

In our view, the concept of a “cluster” is simple. The dictionary defines it as: “a small group, or a bunch of something.”

The Deerhurst Resort has, with its existing buildings, already defined a “cluster” right there at the resort. The so-called Sport Villas around the Lakeside Golf Course are built in “clusters”. The condominium buildings on the eastern edge of the resort, up on the cliffs, are built in “clusters.”

We look to the Committee to consider the important concept of “clusters” as a way to breakup the long linear wall that is proposed for the Lakeside Lodge.

Our Discussions with Skyline Corporation:

Skyline Corporation told us yesterday that height and mass will not be a concern. They said the landscaping will do much to hide the proposed Lakeside Lodge.

Skyline Corporation said they will prepare for us, and for your Committee, perspective drawings and architectural mockups showing how the Lakeside Lodge would fit into the Peninsula Lake landscape from several viewpoints, including from the Lake.

Mr. Blutrigh also told us yesterday that he needs the 171 units to be commercially viable. That is an issue for you, the Planning Department and Town Council to discuss and reach with Skyline Corporation, a compromise.

Summary:

Our motivation in coming before your Committee this morning arises directly from the Peninsula Lake Association's bylaws and Lake Plan. We look to your Committee to respect and honour our Lake Plan – because if you don't – what's a Lake Plan for?

We also understand that the 'site plan' for Lakeside Lodge is ready. We ask the Town to ensure the PLA is fully briefed when the 'site plan' is available.

We have stated we support redevelopment of the old Deerhurst Lodge, not just because its good for Penlake and Huntsville, but simply because Deerhurst is our neighbour.

But sometimes, the neighbour wants to build something too big. That is why we look to your Committee, your planners and to Town Council to solve with Skyline Corporation, the key problems of height and size that we have addressed here this morning.

We thank the Planning Advisory Committee for allowing the PLA to appear and we are ready to answer any questions you may have.