

**PRESENTATION  
WEST NIPISSING COUNCIL  
CLEAR LAKE COTTAGE ASSOCIATION**

**Good Evening you're Worship. I would like to thank you and council for providing the opportunity for our group to address you this evening.**

**My name is Bob Jolley. My wife Joyce and I are summer residents of Bain or Clear Lake. I am also a member of the Clear Lake Cottage Association.**

**We are joined this evening by members of my association Executive and supporters from our Association and other neighboring Associations.**

**We share council's concern for public safety and are here to advocate for Progressive change in the municipal oversight of lakefront septic systems.**

**Our petition is based on the belief that building permit inspections and re-inspection of septic systems on complaint alone DO NOT ensure that all area septic systems will be properly maintained. We believe this puts our lakes at risk and could eventually affect public health.**

**At the onset, we acknowledge that lake quality can not be maintained by re-inspection programs alone. To that end, our group has:**

- participated in the Ontario Lake Partnership Program for 10yrs**

  - Annually testing our lake water and reporting results**

- educated our residents through meetings and newsletters**

  - encouraging them to use “green products” and employ**

  - “environmentally friendly” design and practices**

- met with Mr. Guy Ethier and Paul Findley to discuss our issues**

  - and the proposed “official plan” for West Nipissing**

- met with Dennis Aultman, Program manager North Bay**

  - Mattawa Conservation Authority to discuss related issues, and**

- more recently shared our plans with other Lake Associations in the area.**

**Before I present our Proposal, I would also note that the research we have conducted in other jurisdictions has convinced us that Septic Re-Inspection programs need not be seen as Labour Intensive or Cost Prohibitive. On the Contrary, other communities continue to manage programs at minimal cost to taxpayers and the municipality. I shall allude to these models in our presentation as they provide an excellent guide for us to follow.**

## **Background Information**

**On-site sewage systems are different than centralized waste disposal systems used in most urban areas. In rural settings the property owner is entrusted with on-site maintenance and the operation of the system. If such a system operates poorly or is improperly maintained public health and the natural environment could be affected. In turn this can affect property values and tourism potential.**

**The Building Code Act, 1992, (BCA) regulates the construction, operation and maintenance of on-site septic systems. The Act also provides regulatory powers that can be used by enforcement agencies for the inspection of existing systems. The overall administrative structure and authority for the enforcement of the septic regulations is provided by the BCA. It is within this framework that a municipality, health unit, or conservation authority may set-up septic re-inspection programs. The details and steps are clearly outlined in the 2001 document Septic Systems Re-Inspections, Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing.**

## **Statement of Issues**

**In our opinion, both the transfer of responsibility for septic system inspection from the Ministry of the Environment to the Ontario Building Code in 1997 plus the subsequent amalgamation of our area into the Municipality of West Nipissing have contributed to delays in the issue of septic re-inspections.**

**We are able to document a long history of the efforts of lake front property owners to ensure that septic systems were not a threat to water quality. Clear Lake (Bain Lake) is one such association that has lobbied for a re-inspection process for some time. The attached draft by-law (2001), modeled on a North Bay West Ferris by-law, is an example of one such lobbying effort. Cache Lake received such an inspection in 2001. (Report attached).**

**For many years now various organizations have taken up the environmental issues related to the watershed in their areas. These concerns include management of the shoreline, fishing stock, and overall water quality. It is heartening to know that the Municipality of West Nipissing has prepared a draft official plan (File P-1400) that deals with these very issues.**

**We share the Municipality's view that stewardship of water resources is dependant on a cooperative approach and suggest that our proposal is consistent with the initiatives outlined in the official plan.**

**Responding to environmental issues is a win-win situation for a community. Property values and the tax bases are maintained, stimulating the local economy. We are also seeing an increase in cottagers becoming permanent residents in the area when they retire. This is a phenomenon that will likely increase with the aging population. It would be very beneficial for all to view the Municipality of West Nipissing as an excellent retirement location. Our proposal should be viewed as a good investment in the future of our community and a benefit to all.**

## **Proposal**

**We are recommending the following:**

- 1. The Municipality and the Conservation Authority ensure that new systems are installed within the framework of the BCA (as outlined in the official plan File P-1400)**
- 2. The North Bay Mattawa Conservation Authority track all septic system permits by Roll and Lot number rather than owner's name. This type of system is more user friendly and effective than the "owner based" data base presently employed. It may seem daunting, but Lake of Bays managed to change over to a new system over a three year period using part-time summer employees whose primary role was to conduct septic re-inspections.**
- 3. The Municipality agree in principal to the need for a pro-active re-inspection /regular pumping program in relation to all lakefront septic systems (as recommended in the 2001 Cache Lake Inspection Report).**
- 4. Members of local cottager's associations be invited to partner with the Municipality of West Nipissing to deal with septic system issues and other environmental issues related to waterfront property.**

**5. The Municipality prepare a report on costs associated with re-inspection / pumping including recommendations that could lessen the financial burden on the taxpayers involved. (Grant money, deferred payments, etc.)**

**Other communities have done this in a cost efficient manner**

**Mike Gooch, Chief Building Officer for Huntsville reports his community:**

- managed program over 5 yrs**
- 2 students as “Property Standards Officers”**
- one week in-house training**
- \$12/per hour...20-30 inspections per day**
- non evasive / visual inspections. dye testing as required**
- call in Inspector as required**
- distribute educational pamphlets**
- Cost.... \$40.00 per inspection**
- 500 inspections break even//generally 1000 per year**

**Stephen Watson**, Chief Building Officer **Lake of Bays** reports his community:

- has program over **5 yrs**
- initially used **two retired MOE Inspectors**
- completed change to **address based data system**
- cost \$10.00 per household over 5 yrs... (**Total \$50.00**)
- **moving to Huntsville mode.** ..more cost effective

6. The **Municipality implement a by-law** providing for re-inspection and regular proof of maintenance of water front property septic systems reflecting the goals and procedures employed by the North Bay Mattawa Conservation Authority in the 2001 re-inspection of Cache Lake and Proof of Maintenance provisions of the East Ferris By-Law No. 1756 (see attached reports).

**Documents to be included in the presentation portfolio**

- **Septic System Re-Inspections, Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing June 2001**
- **Report on the Cache Lake Re-Inspection 2001**
- **The Corporation of the City of North Bay By-Law No. 203-92 1992**
- **The proposed by-law for the Municipality of West Nipissing 2001**
- **Windsor Star Article November 23 2006**
- **Township of East Ferris By-Law No 156**

We have **provided some supporting documentation** with our proposal.



I will also leave you copies of a recent newspaper article by Professor Pearson of Laurentian University. He explains how easily lakes can be damaged, and how scientific /professional studies indicate that at least 1/3 of all septic systems do not work properly.

I would like to thank Mr. Ethier, Mr. Findley and Mr. Aultman for the advice and insight they have provided.

I also extend thanks to those who attended to support us this evening.

To date the municipality has delegated full responsibility for septic inspections to the North Bay Mattawa Conservation Authority.

Notwithstanding, the municipality remains accountable for any identified shortcomings. In our opinion the inspection program cannot be effective until the multitude of septic systems that are presently overlooked are addressed through re-inspection. Such a re-inspection program could be developed and managed by the municipality alone with minimal affect on the existing West Nipissing / Conservation Authority agreement.

We as a group look forward to working progressively and cooperatively with municipal officials to achieve a fiscally responsible program that will more adequately protect our community and our environment.

Thank you