



February 27, 2017

Ontario Parks, Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry
1350 High Falls Road
Bracebridge ON
P1L 1W9

Attention: Ms. Meghan Pomeroy, Park Planner

Dear Ms. Pomeroy:

**Re: Wasaga Beach Provincial Park Beach Management Secondary Plan
Comments**

Further to the invitation to comment attached please find a staff report that was approved by Council along with a subsequent motion which provided additional comments from Council.

Should you have any questions with respect to this information please feel free to contact the undersigned at extension 2223.

Yours very truly,

THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF WASAGA BEACH

Andrea D. Fay
Director of Legislative Services/Clerk

Attachments

cc. G. Vadeboncoeur, CAO

STAFF REPORT



TO: General Government Section of Coordinated Committee

FROM: Andrea D. Fay, Director of Legislative Services Clerk

SUBJECT: Wasaga Beach - Beach Management Proposed Secondary Plan

DATE: February 9, 2017

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the General Government Committee recommend to Council that staff provide the comments as highlighted within this report to the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF) in response to their invitation to comment regarding their Wasaga Beach - Beach Management Proposed Secondary Plan.

BACKGROUND

Ontario Parks is preparing a secondary plan to guide beach management in Wasaga Beach Provincial Park over the coming years. The plan aims to provide clear direction and actions for managing the beach in the Wasaga Beach Provincial Park while a broader park management planning process is completed.

The Town received an invitation to comment on the Wasaga Beach – Beach Management Proposed Secondary Plan. Council reviewed the invitation and passed the following resolution during their January 24, 2017, Council meeting:

That Council receive the Wasaga Beach Provincial Park Beach Management Proposed Secondary Plan and Invitation to comment for information;

And further that Council refer the Wasaga Beach Provincial Park Beach Management Proposed Secondary Plan to Staff for review and comment.

The Wasaga Beach - Beach Management Proposed Secondary Plan has been attached for your reference.

ANALYSIS:

The following is a summary of the comments prepared and compiled by the Planning Department in relation to the draft Plan:

- **Overview**

The draft Beach Management Plan focuses on the topic of Environmental Protection and fails to adequately address the primary and historic public access and recreation function of the beach.

Although Section 1 “Introduction” mentions that Wasaga Beach Provincial Park hosts over 1 million visitors each year, and that the park abounds with recreational activities such as swimming, water sports, bird watching, et.al., this important aspect of beach usage deserves a stronger mention in the remainder of the Beach Management Secondary Plan. These park visitor activities should be woven into each of the Beach Management Actions sections and into the conclusions to describe a stronger relationship between public access/recreational activities and the Beach Management Plan.

- **Section 2 – Goals of Beach Management**

This section fails to recognize the primary function of facilitating public access to the beach. The stated goals in the draft Beach Management Plan are solely focused on environmental protection and natural heritage issues. The goals should be revised to clearly indicate that a primary goal of the Beach Management Plan is to balance the environmental and natural heritage issues with the primary function of unfettered public access to recreation activities on the beach. It could be argued that this point is better placed into the Parks Master Plan, but the matter of public access deserves credit of mention in the Beach Management Plan to secure the importance of the issue. This is true in terms of economic benefit to the town and the tourism region, and in terms of the cultural heritage of the beach itself.

- **Section 3.9 - Education and Outreach Initiatives**

This is a proven method of both promoting visitation by highlighting the natural heritage qualities of the beach and the parklands as a whole. The “Proposed Actions” of Section 3.9 could be enhanced to provide for education booths and workshops put on by Parks Staff for the benefit of the public. The programming for such education sessions can be borrowed from programming already performed at other Provincial Parks including Killbear and Awenda, where dedicated outdoor education areas and/or buildings are installed for morning, afternoon, and evening public education sessions. The Wasaga Beach Provincial Park hosts ANSI, parabolic dune structures, rare and endangered flora and fauna, marl lakes, and significant geologic formations (the creation of the beach, the Nottawasaga River formation), and an important Canadian Historic site, all of which is sufficient education content to lead to the creation of an Interpretation Centre similar to Killbear Provincial Park, French River, and to the Fathom Five National Park Interpretation Centre in Tobermory.

The following is a summary of comments prepared and compiled by the Public Works, Operations and Engineering staff:

- **Overview**

At the outset, it is important to note that the beach was originally expropriated by the Province from private property owners to create a beach / Provincial Park / “Ontario’s playground”. Therefore, the main designation of the area should be regarded as a recreational beach with a focus on maintaining public access and use of the beaches, in balance with natural features. This note is similar to comments shown above by the Planning Department.

- **Section 1 – Introduction**

- a. Knowing that Wasaga Beach is a relict beach and the sand is non-renewable, a program should be put in place that will permit the blow sand captured and collected from parking

areas, picnic areas, vacant right-of-ways leading to the beach, storm outlet corridors, beach accesses and adjacent non-travelled portions of the roadway, back onto the beach. This captured sand can be raked and screened to remove any collected debris and tested to ensure it meets environmental standards. The sand in the areas described needs to be re-deposited onto the beach as part of a good stewardship program.

- **Section 3 – Beach Management Actions**

- a. It is suggested that the description of Beach Area 1 limits should be amended to include from the mouth of the Nottawasaga River to 6th Street, and Beach Area 2 should be from 6th Street to 16th Street. This would allow for a wider area for maintenance activities to commence for Beach Area 1 to occur in the spring and will line up with the new Parks entrance located at 6th Street. The designated nesting area for the Piping Plovers would be excluded from this area for maintenance activities.
- b. This section refers to dates and seasons for specific park operations and notes that these dates are for information only, and that revised dates “would not be subject to consultation”. It is noted however that with the intention of the Town taking over responsibilities of managing Beach Area 1 and 2, the Town should have the right to have further say on the dates for operations / maintenance activities to ensure that it fits with the Town’s Beach management and events strategies. (For example, should a major event be planned in the “shoulder” or “off” seasons, enhanced maintenance operations may be required at those times.) This is also applicable to operation of washroom, parking areas and other associated facilities, which should be open when activities take place.
- c. It is recommended that the wording “designated swimming area” be revised to “delineated swimming area” (this is because the entire length / all Beach Areas are intended as acceptable swimming areas).

- **Section 3.1 – Beach Raking (mechanical beach grooming)**

- a. With regard to the destabilization and migration of sand leading to the exposure of water table and wetter beaches, these are the areas that can be rectified through the redeposit of blow sand captured and collected from the various areas noted above (Section 1 a).
- b. Recognizing that not all private land owners backing onto the beach wish to have a natural vegetation buffer between their property and the beach is essential. In order to satisfy the private land owners, the creation of the meandering walkways and maintenance of those through a third party agreement, as stated within the report should be enhanced and supported. The signing of private property adjacent to the beach needs to be done by the private land owner.
- c. Within the Proposed Actions section, it needs to be clarified that some sand dunes, which may be naturally occurring, do create storm water quality and control issues. These areas need to be monitored, groomed and repaired. The Town and the Ontario Parks have begun in recent years to form a partnership to address the storm outlet corridors, and these outlets could be enhanced further through partnership discussions between the Town and Ontario Parks.
- d. The provision of an access agreement, to/at all of the storm water outlets, should be created to permit the Town of Wasaga Beach to monitor and maintain the storm outlets. It

is understood that any and all operations must conform to meet or exceed the requirements of the Ontario Parks guideline for such access with equipment.

- e. The Proposed Actions section indicates that areas of phragmites should not be raked in order “to prevent disturbance and spread of the invasive species”. It is noted that the MNRF do not simply omit invasive species to reduce spread, they actually have a program to remove phragmites and other invasive species as outlined in Section 3.6 of the report. As such, Section 3.1 should reference Section 3.6 regarding how invasive species will be managed in lieu of raking.
- f. Raking in a certain direction can promote storm drainage to prevent further erosion or the creation of standing water due to wind rows that may be created by the direction of raking, particularly at the storm outlets. As such, further maintenance operations/attention should be given at the outlets after longitudinal beach raking.

- **Section 3.2 - Sand Management**

- a. The dune sediment cycle is important to ensure that the sand remains on the beach, not piled up against the private properties. To ensure the dune sediment cycle is not interrupted, it is key that only some, and not all dunes are vegetated. The dune sediment cycle must continue to ensure that the sand is given the opportunity to return to the beach. Additionally, it is recommended that when new dunes are forming in close proximity to the beach, the sand should be relocated back on to the beach. (This ties to the first comment above that the primary focus should be towards maintaining public access and use of the beaches.)
- b. Additional captured sand that is collected up from the roadways and parking areas within the Beach Areas should be cleaned and screened as appropriate and returned to the beach to assist in addressing the various areas of concern. The sand collected is from the beach and should be returned from whence it came.
- c. In addition to sand blown onto streets being collected and returned to the beach, it is further recommended that the piles of blow sand historically collected and currently stockpiled at the Town’s Zoo Park Road storage yard could / should also be screened, cleaned, tested for contaminants and returned to the beach in areas agreeable by the Town and Province to replenish the relict beach.
- d. Within the Proposed Actions section there is reference to planting native vegetation on dunes. Full vegetation of all dunes actually disturbs the dune sediment cycle. Plantings should only be placed on certain existing older dunes (pending location and proximity to the beaches) that are established, but need assistance to remain healthy. Any new dunes created should be raked, transported or assistance provided to return to the beach as part of the dune sediment cycle.

- **Section 3.3 – Storm Water Drainage Outflow and Erosion Management**

- a. The provision of a map that identifies the 19 storm water outlets would be beneficial as reference for future outlet improvement projects, raking concerns and capital budget. The Town can assist with the production of the map.

- b. Within the Proposed Actions section, reference to funding programs and partnerships should be made.
 - c. Similar to the above comment in Section 3.1 regarding phragmites treatment, Section 3.3 should also refer to Section 3.6 in order to explain that the invasive species are not simply ignored / avoided during storm outlet maintenance.
- **Natural Flora, Fauna and Objects on the Beach**
 - Section 3.5.1 - Vegetation**
 - a. Reference should be made to vegetating specific sand dunes.
 - Section 3.5.2 – Species at Risk and Significant Species, and Vegetation Communities**
 - a. Butterfly gardens are becoming a popular tourist destination and could fit well with the plan and should be considered within the park lands (but not directly on the beach).
 - Section 3.5.3 – Detritus**
 - a. This section should outline the method to collect the detritus from the water's edge for loading and then drying it at the beach before removal (i.e. strictly hand racking or is mechanical methods permitted?).
 - b. Further to above, it is recommended that the detritus should not be spread on the beach to dry, as this allows for the organic materials to penetrate the sand and promote unwanted vegetation growth on the beach. It is recommended that the detritus be removed and loaded into trucks for hauling off-site under one operation.
 - **Section 3.6 – Invasive Species Management**
 - a. Clarification is required regarding reference to the Invasive Species Act “coming into force on November 3, 2016” – it is noted that the current Act was brought into force November 3, 2015; so clarification is required regarding if the Secondary Plan is referring to the current Act, or is an amendment to the Act forthcoming?
 - **Companion Background Information Document**
 - Section VII – Natural Heritage Values**
 - a. The Point in Beach Area 1 – Area of Natural and Scientific Interest (ANSI) is predominantly made of silt and sand sediment that has come from upstream areas that have eroded or scoured downstream and been deposited to create, extend and expand the point. The plant growth in the point area has, for the most part, been transferred from the various areas upstream as well. A map that identifies the year by year lateral drift that has formed the point would provide a great reference so that the reader of the report could begin to understand the volume and effect that an erosion prevention and good land use plan and stewardship program can assist to prevent further impact.

CONCLUSION

The comments listed above were provided by the various Departments in response to the resolution of Council to provide comment on the Wasaga Beach - Beach Management Proposed Secondary

Plan. Staff are of the view that there should be a consistent approach to beach maintenance across all beaches in accordance with the approved beach maintenance plan. To that end, Wasaga Beach Provincial Park should be provided with sufficient human and capital resources to implement the plan on an on-going basis.

Staff recommends to Council that direction be provided to compile the above noted comments and provide same to the MNRF in response to their invitation to comment.


Respectively Submitted,

Andrea D. Fay
Director of Legislative Services/Clerk

Attachment

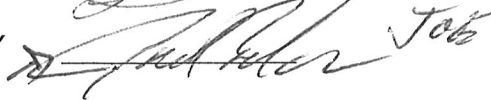
8 b) Coordinated Committee – February 9, 2017

MOVED BY

 Bonnie Smith

DATE: FEBRUARY 21, 2017

SECONDED BY

 Job

RESOLUTION NO. 2017-02-

RESOLVED THAT the motion before Council be amended by adding the following after the original motion:

Be it resolved that Council amends the comments contained within the related Staff Report reviewed during the February 9, 2017, General Government Section of Coordinated Committee regarding the proposed Beach Management Secondary Plan by adding the following:

1. That the reference to “coastal shoreline” in the Plan be changed to freshwater beach in recognition of Wasaga Beach as the longest fresh water beach in the world.
2. That reference to the world’s longest fresh water beach be included in the plan in the appropriate locations.
3. That the word ‘tourism’ be inserted in the appropriate locations alongside the word ‘recreation’ so as to reflect the historical purpose of creating the Provincial Park and one of its main functions today.
4. That the Scope of the Secondary Plan be expanded to included maintenance of park infrastructure as follows:
 - the maintenance of the Park’s public washrooms to a standard that is appropriate
 - the maintenance of the picnic tables, picnic shelters and playgrounds
 - the maintenance of parking areas
 - the maintenance of equipment
5. That the entire shoreline be maintained as a pristine beach recreational area reflective of the original intention of the park when it was created.
6. That a balance be struck between the provision of a beach recreational area and the need to preserve natural habitat.
7. That the Province undertake a comprehensive review of the habitat requirements of the nesting Piping Plover given the experiences in Wasaga Beach and other beaches in Ontario and to implement changes to current practices to better reflect the habits of the bird. In particular, Council would like to see a review of the requirement that nesting areas are to be undisturbed for a period of ten years resulting in huge sections of the beach becoming grassy shoreline vs. beach.
8. That once the Park Secondary Plan is approved by government, it provide adequate resources to maintain the park in accordance with the plan. The park is an integral part of Wasaga Beach and maintaining the park to a level that meets or exceeds resident and tourist expectations is important to the local economy.
9. That the Province develop key indicators that are to be measured to ensure that the goals and objectives in the plan are being achieved and maintained over time. Examples of indicators that could be included are as follows:
 - Annual drone or aircraft video imaging to ensure that the shoreline is being maintained as a pristine sand beach and that beach access points are also being maintained.
 - Measurement of tourist visits.
 - Measurement of endangered species & vegetation populations.
 - Lake water quality.
 - Annual or bi-annual visitor surveys.

- Visitor comment process & monthly review.
- Pre, mid & end season audits to identify improvement opportunities/requirements.
- Weekly inspection reports related to basic maintenance of beach sand quality (main beaches), garbage pick-up, washroom maintenance, safety requirements, etc.
- Annual safety, fire & police incidents.

ABSTAIN	YEA	VOTING	NAY
	✓	CLLR J. BELANGER	
	✓	DEPUTY MAYOR N. BIFOLCHI	
	✓	CLLR. S. BRAY	
	✓	CLLR. R. EGO	
	✓	CLLR. B. SMITH	
	✓	CLLR. B. STOCKWELL	
	✓	MAYOR B. F. SMITH	

CARRIED ✓ Bf DEFEATED _____

8 b) Coordinated Committee – February 9, 2017

MOVED BY *Bob Stockwell* DATE: FEBRUARY 21, 2017

SECONDED BY *Joe Belanger* JOE RESOLUTION NO. 2017-02-

RESOLVED THAT Council recommend that staff provide the comments as highlighted within this report to the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNR) in response to their invitation to comment regarding their Wasaga Beach - Beach Management Proposed Secondary Plan. *AS AMENDED.*

ABSTAIN	YEA	VOTING	NAY
	✓	CLLR J. BELANGER	
	✓	DEPUTY MAYOR N. BIFOLCHI	
	✓	CLLR. S. BRAY	
	✓	CLLR. R. EGO	
	✓	CLLR. B. SMITH	
	✓	CLLR. B. STOCKWELL	
	✓	MAYOR B. F. SMITH	

CARRIED *BS* DEFEATED _____