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# TIARA Newsletter

## Autumn 2011

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### **\$5.50 Fee to enter the U.S.A.?**

Very recently a previously rejected tariff on visitors to the U.S. “**by air or water**” was slipped into a U.S. Free Trade Bill with Colombia and passed into law, becoming effective on 5 November. Our area’s **Federal MP Gord Brown**, who was recently re-elected House of Commons Chairman of the Canada-United States Inter-Parliamentary Group, is actively pursuing this issue with his American colleagues.

The local press reports that upstate New York **Congressman Bill Owens** has already informed the White House that he has concerns about the tariff. We will report further on this issue in our Winter Newsletter.

### **Protecting Wallace Island shoreline**

TIARA has long been alarmed about the rate at which natural shoreline has been decreasing in the Islands, particularly in the region between Ivy Lea and Rockport.

Last April, a Wallace Island property owner applied to the TLTI Committee of Adjustment (CoA) for a Minor Variance to build a boat house. Although the shoreline involved is **already overdeveloped** (with almost four times the permitted dock space), with virtually no natural shoreline remaining, the CoA approved it - against the recommendations of both the Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority and the Township’s own Contract Planner. Needless to say, we were stunned.

We appealed the decision to the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB), holding that the application was in no way “minor” and that the **Committee had failed to uphold the Official Plan** which calls for overdeveloped and unnaturally hardened shorelines to be **reduced, not aggravated**.

With TIARA’s appeal underway, the property owner then switched and filed for a Zoning By-Law Amendment. This actually requires **higher standards** and would be dealt with by TLTI Council and its Professional Planner, rather than the committee of citizens which comprises the Committee of Adjustment.

TIARA agreed with this approach and has had its appeal of the CoA decision put into abeyance until this Zoning By-law Amendment application is dealt with.

The Municipality has yet to hire a full time Professional Planner. However, its Contract Planner is at present waiting for reports and comments from area agencies and the property owner’s biologist before preparing a recommendation for Council.

If Council should reject the Zoning By-law application, the property owner could appeal the decision to the Ontario Municipal Board. However, if Council approves it, **TIARA may appeal**. We’ll keep you posted.

### **A new Island? Or still part of the old?**

Here’s another curious situation, also on Wallace Island. On the south-east side, a sizeable house was situated on a peninsula. A new owner turned the peninsula into a new island by **blasting and dredging a navigable canal**, (varying widths from 26’ to 40’), thus separating

it from the rest of his lot. With the appropriate authorizations, he has also built a new boat house straddling the canal.

TIARA has concerns. The house was within the regulations for the original lot, but this new island is too small to be built on. And now the owner wants to expand the house.

This is a new kind of situation, totally unanticipated, which could potentially be repeated or even grotesquely exploited. We wonder, are island-owners (or any waterfront owners, for that matter) free to dredge or blast canals to carve up their property into further small islands? It should be noted that from a Surveyor’s perspective, the dredged channel **does not constitute a lot severance**. This property is still considered all one lot and the new river bottom is not Crown land. However, the fact remains that on a small island there is now a big house which might get even bigger, going against the **Official Plan’s policy to control overdevelopment of precious natural shoreline**.

The Official Plan, while allowing pre-existing buildings on small islands, does not anticipate buildings pre-dating islands! And here’s another question. This new island is not gazetted. We wonder...who tells MPAC about this additional shoreline, which would add to the lot value.

The whole question needs to be addressed during the Official Plan review (please see below). TIARA feels that in order to prevent this kind of large-scale re-arrangement of natural features, the revised Official Plan should include clear regulations, similar to those already in place in other jurisdictions, which seek to preserve the landscape’s natural characteristics.

### **Review of the Official Plan**

An Official Land Use Plan is meant to be reviewed every five years. TLTI’S OP dates back to 2006, so the long process has already begun. **TIARA is contributing** to the review and helping Council to identify measures in the current OP that need clarification, correction or deletion, especially when new policies are required.

In advance of the review, the municipality’s Contract Planner has done a terrific job of correcting numerous syntactical errors and conflicting phraseology, a process during which he consulted TIARA and others.

One area of concern to TIARA, for example, is the definition of **permitted dock dimensions on islands**, relative to natural shoreline. In the development of the current OP, the allowable dock space on islands (vs. the mainland) was increased, based on the fact that island homes won’t have cars parked at them, so instead they need space to park boats. This makes sense. However, with the current wording, it also applies to Hill Island, which can be reached by car.

### **Olive Watts Miller 1934 – 2011**

We note with regret the recent passing of Olive Watts Miller, a dedicated TIARA Board member from 1989 to 1997. Generous with her time in so many ways, Olive will always be remembered for her sensible and wise opinions and her total dependability as a hard-working volunteer – and not just for TIARA. We offer our sincere condolences to Olive’s family.

## Heritage River status for the St. Lawrence

In May, TIARA presented its completed nomination paper to the Canadian Heritage Rivers Board at its annual general meeting in Killarney. The nomination paper can be viewed at [www.slhr.ca](http://www.slhr.ca)

Delivered in memory of former TIARA President Peter Macklem, the presentation was extremely well received.

Our next step is to develop and deliver awareness campaigns at communities along the St. Lawrence between Kingston and the Quebec border. We will re-visit municipal councils to provide them with updates and promote the initiative in various communities by hosting local receptions.

If you live locally and would like to help us, please get in touch by calling David (613) 659-4824 or by e-mail at [info@tiara.on.ca](mailto:info@tiara.on.ca)

## New, new CAO for TLTI

It has taken a while for the new Council at TLTI to settle the question of a CAO. In our April 2011 Newsletter we reported the dismissal of Malcolm Morris. There followed a period during which Council deliberated about whether or not a corporation with an \$18 million budget even needed a full-time administrator.

We are happy to report that in September, **Rodney Burkard** was hired as the Township's new CAO, albeit on a part-time basis. He and his wife have recently moved to this area from Alberta where he had been CAO for Fort McMurray. We welcome them to our community and wish Rodney well.

## Recruiting new Directors

We are actively seeking new recruits for our Board of Directors, to spread the responsibilities among more members, and lighten the load presently on the shoulders of our Executive Director.

We would particularly like to hear from those with experience and expertise in such fields as website development, environmental issues, publications and communications, land-use planning and municipal law. If you would like to suggest either yourself or someone you know, please let us know by e-mailing [info@tiara.on.ca](mailto:info@tiara.on.ca)

We have had success in including Board Members who are not in the Thousand Islands year-round, communicating by e-mail and (in the case of monthly board meetings) by conference call.

## Online survey

TIARA is possibly unique among community organizations in that we seek opinions about visions for the area's future not just from our members, but from the whole local population.

How do we want the Thousand Islands area to look twenty or even fifty years in the future? What characteristics of this area do we prize, and how can they best be preserved? What kind of policies can we support that encourage a thriving economy in an ecologically sustainable way? Starting back in 1977, and subsequently in 1984, 1994 and 2000, we have run surveys and questionnaires, successfully reaching far beyond our membership and achieving high rates of

return. We draw on these broad-based opinions to make recommendations about land-use planning.

Our website [www.tiara.on.ca](http://www.tiara.on.ca) is currently being reconstructed, and a new version will soon be launched. This will include a new **on-line survey**, which we will publicize widely, to encourage the widest possible participation. The results will guide TIARA's policies towards planning in the Thousand Islands, especially now that the Official Plan is under review.

## TIARA's 2011 Annual General Meeting



Charlie Donevan delivering an informative talk on the origins of the Barbara Heck Foundation and the Landon Bay Environmental Education Centre.

We met at the Barbara Heck Hall at the Landon Bay Centre on 13 August. The setting was spectacular and the attendance good. We were treated to a fascinating talk by **Don Ross**, "**Amazing Facts About the Thousand Islands**", as well as a preamble by **Charlie Donevan** about the history of **Barbara Heck**, for whom the hall where we were meeting was named. Don's presentation can be viewed at the TIARA website, [www.tiara.on.ca](http://www.tiara.on.ca)



### Thousand Islands Area Residents' Association

RR 1 Lansdowne ON K0E 1L0  
[www.tiara.on.ca](http://www.tiara.on.ca) [info@tiara.on.ca](mailto:info@tiara.on.ca) (613) 546-2734

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