
TIARA Newsletter

Spring 2012

U.S.A. Entry Fee

Last fall, news of a **proposed \$5.50 tariff** for travellers to the USA “by air or water” had local boaters worried. Our federal Member of Parliament, Gord Brown, was on the case quickly and effectively. It was resolved that this fee would not apply to pleasure craft, only to “commercial aircraft and large cruise ships”. It’s something we’ll keep an eye on, however.

Input 2012 Survey

TIARA conducted an on-line survey during January and February and we were pleased to receive so many replies, not only from TIARA members, but from many who were not. From a total of **384 completed responses**, here are the highlights;

54% Canadian citizens
41% American citizens
91% Own property in Canada
67% Male, 33% Female
72% have owned property here for 30 years or more
12% own a business in the region
44% live in the region 12 months of the year
57% live in the region 6 months/yr or less
48% are members of TIARA
61% respondents were greater than age 60
27% were between the ages of 45 & 59
11% were between the ages of 19 & 44

Most valued aspects of region: The River (94%), Natural scenery (92%), Natural shoreline (77%).

Biggest concerns about the future: River pollution (68%), Personal drinking water supply (38%), An increase in Boat traffic (25%).

Most important features to conserve: River water quality (91%), Marshes and wetlands (77%), Natural shoreline (66%).

More development desired: Hiking trails (66%), Restaurants (53%), Government Parks (52%), Public access to the river (50%).

Less or no development desired: Amusement Parks (65%), Casino (63%), Heavy Industry (57%), Multi-unit Condos or “cottageiniums” between Brockville and Gananoque (48%).

Strict or some government control: Commercial & private development (94%), Boat noise (92%), Boat speed (90%), Docks on undersized islands (82%), Boat wake (57%).

Perhaps our **most interesting findings** came from questions that **we did not ask**. Numerous anecdotal comments tell an interesting story. In fact, there is a recurring theme. Well over 1/3 of respondents stated that their biggest fear for the region is **the influx of big money leading to big developments** which will forever impact the natural landscape negatively.

Not surprisingly, a few respondents included in **business owners in the region** clearly stated that there should be **little or no control over development** and further, that groups like TIARA impede growth of the local economy.

TIARA members gave us good marks. 88% of members said that our work was appropriate, 8% said somewhat appropriate while 4% said our work was inappropriate.

There were also some very valuable suggestions by TIARA members in the comments section which the Board will seriously consider.

Full results of the survey and all non-identifying anecdotal comments and suggestions by respondents are available on our website, www.tiara.on.ca

Wallace Island Shoreline - OMB Hearing

One clear result of our Input 2012 Survey is that residents of the Thousand Islands prize the unspoiled atmosphere that this area is famous for. **TIARA is a staunch defender of Township zoning that controls shoreline overdevelopment.**

As we reported in the fall, we were stunned last year when the TLTI Committee of Adjustment approved a so-called “Minor Variance” permitting the building of a boathouse on a stretch of Wallace Island shoreline which already had nearly four times the permitted dock space – flying right in the face of the Zoning By-Laws and recommendations from both the Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority and the Township’s own contract Planner. When **TIARA appealed** this extraordinary decision, the property owner decided to file for a Zoning By-Law amendment and TIARA is challenging this as well. A three day hearing before the **Ontario Municipal Board** has been scheduled for 20 June at the TLTI Municipal Building in Lansdowne. Who will be there to defend the Township's own Official Plan? TIARA certainly will and we hope the Township will too.

This Is What We Do

TIARA tries resolutely to **defend the Township’s Zoning By-Laws**, which reflect the community’s desire to preserve the unspoiled nature of the Thousand Islands. This is often a lonely position as individuals try to take a little – or a lot – more than the bylaws allow. Our position gets even lonelier – and more expensive – when our Township makes a planning decision which weakens or ignores its own regulations and we find we have to challenge it, too. However, we are **proud of our reputation in defence of good planning** in this area.

All this takes money, however, as hearings require a lawyer and a planner to give us advice and present our case for us. For this purpose, it has been our policy to maintain a Contingency Fund of around \$15 - \$20,000, a fund which we expect will be **seriously depleted** by the Wallace Island hearing.

You will see on your Membership Renewal Form a line asking you to **consider an extra donation** to TIARA, and we earnestly hope you will decide to do so, in order that we may replenish this Contingency Fund for the future.

We anticipate that TIARA will become more and more involved in the defence of good planning as **pressure to develop in the Thousand Islands grows** ever stronger, and our voice becomes ever more necessary. We hope you will continue to support us in our efforts to carry out our goal to “preserve and improve the present character of the Thousand Islands area with emphasis on the environment”.

Watercourse/Waterfront Development Legislation Changes

The Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority (CRCA) is revising its policies for implementing Regulation 148/06, which bears the daunting name of the *Development, Interference with Wetlands and Alterations to Shorelines and Watercourses Regulation*. The Regulation will remain consistent with provincial directions and its objectives will still be the same, basically to “maintain natural features and ecological functions and protect water quality and quantity”.

As it looks at each individual application, the CRCA will also consider the long-term impacts within the watershed. Some of the proposed new policy sections **will allow staff more flexibility in dealing with more difficult proposals**, but they will still be guided by provincial government policies.

You can review the draft “*Policies for Implementing Regulation 148/06*” at the CRCA website www.cataraqueiregion.on.ca. If you wish to submit written comments, the CRCA will welcome them through June. Write to them at P.O. Box 160, Glenburnie K0H 1S0 or e-mail crca@cataraquiregion.on.ca.

The CRCA has **changed the fees** for various kinds of permit applications under this Regulation 148/06. It advises those who are planning to build near a wetland or along a shoreline to visit its website and consult staff members. For residents of TLTI, property owners should call Jason Messenger at 613-546-4228, ext 286. (Toll free 1-877-956-2722.)

TIARA Fundraising Raffle

A beautiful coffee table, hand crafted and generously donated to TIARA by local business owner and TIARA Director **John Le Blancq** (www.historicbuilding.ca), will be raffled at TIARA’s Annual General Meeting on 11 August at Landon Bay Centre. (See AGM notice)



The table embodies respect for the environment, since it is all made from **reclaimed material**. The oval top is an oblique cut from a fallen pine, and the base is from scrap steel, but with techniques handed down through his family’s heritage woodworking business, Mr. LeBlancq has transformed them into this beautifully finished table.

Tickets for this raffle are \$5 and are available from **The Socialist Pig Coffee House** at 21 King Street East in Gananoque, where the table is on display, or from any TIARA Board member. (**While you’re there**, stay for coffee, or a meal at the adjoining Pig Iron BBQ and look through the clothes at the Steel Style Garage. All three are owned by the same foursome and you can read about them in May’s online issue of **Thousand Islands Life**, www.thousandislandslife.com)

2012 Annual General Meeting

Mark your calendar for **Saturday, August 11** for TIARA’s AGM, taking place at the meeting house at the Landon Bay Camp Ground at 302 Thousand Islands Parkway, about 5 km east of Gananoque.

Our speaker will be **Tony Usher of Anthony Usher Planning Consultants** in Toronto, who for some years has been TIARA’s planning consultant, giving us advice and perspective on planning issues as they arise here in the Thousand Islands.

Tony has come to know this area well, but has also worked with clients in other cottage destinations and has seen the changes that take place when money pours into a predominantly cottage area.

He’ll be taking a long-range view of development and planning, and especially the notion of “cumulative impact over time” when many small changes build up. Some are transitory, some are irreversible.

What about us? Are developments taking the Thousand Islands in directions that you and your descendants are going to be happy with? We know you will be stimulated and fascinated in what Tony has to say and we want your input as well. There will be ample time allotted to questions and discussion.

Official Plan Review

In February, TLTI hired a new full-time planner, **Philip Costa**. Originally from Toronto, Mr. Costa had been working in the United Kingdom in private sector planning for just over seven years. The first main job he will be tackling will be overseeing the mandatory 5 year review of the Township’s Official Plan which is already under way.

TIARA sees this as a **favourable window of opportunity**. Many members have already made suggestions for improvements to the plan ranging from blasting regulations to strengthening protection of natural shoreline.

Add your ideas by **attending our AGM** in August where the experts will be on hand!



Thousand Islands Area Residents' Association

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Please consider joining our Board.
Send a message in confidence to
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