

The Chandos Lake Property Owners' Association (CLPOA) is a very big fish in the small North Kawartha pond. It swings well above its weight in local affairs with a reach that extends far beyond the shores of Chandos Lake into Town Hall and beyond. Whether this is a 'good thing' may be a matter of opinion but in our experience, it simply isn't. An illustration of the way in which the Association is managed by its current Senior Executive, will show that the people of North Kawartha are not entirely well-served by either the CLPOA or the Township Council, which is currently dominated by former CLPOA executives and association endorsees.

Our family have been cottagers on Chandos Lake since 1960 and members of the Association ever since. Beyond the social aspects of its functions, in our view the most important part of the CLPOA's constitutional mandate is the protection and enhancement of the natural environment of Chandos Lake and its environs<sup>1</sup>, goals that we support without reservation. In recent years, however, the Association has begun paying far more attention to its self-appointed political and regulatory roles, including ensuring that anyone doing any work anywhere near the lake, and especially within the "water yard", has all the appropriate permits and approvals for whatever work is undertaken.

By way of an example: in 2011, while undertaking long overdue repairs to our waterfront retaining wall in front of our property (built in the mid-'50s), our workers were regularly harassed by people who drove right up in their boats and rudely demanded proof that we had all the required permits; which, of course, we had obtained before work began. One of those who pulled up in his boat and parked less than ten feet away from our work crew was a fellow who, when I asked if I could help him, initially refused to identify himself except to say, "I'm nobody, just like you." Still, he too demanded to know whether we had the appropriate paperwork. I told him we did and asked him again who he was, whereupon he finally confessed to being "King Baker, the Lake Steward", representing "the Lake Association", he said before he yanked his motor into life and sped off up the lake.

A short time later, Baker's claim was tested when I called Bill Rasberry, then president of the CLPOA, to complain about King Baker's less than friendly attitude. Rasberry assured me that Baker acted entirely on his own and did not represent the Association. In the meantime, the harassment and interruptions became so disruptive that our contractor threatened to walk off the job. It took a lot of sweet talking, but the repairs were eventually finished and we moved on, hoping that we were done with hostile neighbours.

Since then, we have had a few more run-ins with Association representatives and details will be disclosed in a future submission to the Apsley Voice. But when the current president of the CLPOA, David Cooper, stood up at this year's Annual General Meeting and confessed that he himself hadn't consulted with or obtained permits from the appropriate agencies before working on his shoreline (i.e.: he couldn't be bothered to abide by the same rules that the Association insists that everyone else obey when doing work on their waterfronts), I got mightily annoyed. Cooper's 'do as I say not as I do' attitude goes beyond simple hypocrisy and should alone be sufficient to warrant calling his judgement and fitness for office into question.

That said, Cooper's admission came only an hour or so after the exposure of his role in alleged voting irregularities surrounding the adoption following last year's AGM of an amendment to the Association's constitution that effectively arrogates *ex-officio* review and approval agency status to the Directors of the As-

sociation for virtually any and every waterfront planning proposal that comes before Council, whether on Chandos Lake or not. The CLPOA's constitution<sup>2</sup> now empowers the Directors of the association to use members' money to oppose at Council any member or non-member, and potentially any person from anywhere in North Kawartha who has the temerity to propose any change to their property that doesn't quite fit the parameters of the township's Comprehensive Zoning By-Law or suit the CLPOA Directors' tastes.

Although the occasion went largely unnoticed by most, this year's AGM was the last official day in office for many of the sitting Directors, including David Cooper, their two-year terms having expired. While I appreciate that it is often difficult to get volunteers to run as Directors, or to serve as committee chairs (the differences between an elected "Director" on the one hand and an appointed "Committee Chair" on the other have blurred over the last few years), that does not negate the fact that there should have been an actual election, complete with an open call for nominees from the floor. It was Cooper's duty to call an election, but it was barely noted as an agenda item, and there was no discussion when it came to confirming the unelected appointment of a new treasurer to the Senior Executive Board. The continuation in office of the present slate of directors, without even the pretence of an election, violates the Association's Constitution, and the blame for this must fall at David Cooper's feet.

Given all this, combined with the dismissive way that Bob Arbour's concerns over Cooper's unlicensed shoreline activities were simply passed over rather than allowing them to be openly, fully, and fairly discussed, I felt that I was well within my rights to seek the members' approval to demand Cooper's resignation. According to the official count, there were 58 eligible voters in attendance at the meeting. My motion was defeated by a vote of 25 to 10 (by your report, 20 to 12 by my count), and the remaining 23 or 28 active members presumably abstained. Given the circumstances, I believe that outcome is indicative of a significant lack of confidence in David Cooper's leadership, and possibly the whole Board's. But without an actual election, with voting by an informed membership, we may never be sure exactly how the members really feel.

Our family has quietly supported the Association since 1960, but we feel that the Board has lost its way over the last several years and overstepped its original purpose and mandate. The Board takes it as read that its job is "to help provide the best and most efficient municipal government and legislation for the benefit of all citizens;"<sup>3</sup> but that doesn't mean it should provide that government or legislation itself. Nevertheless, the Association has a habit of sending its former-directors to run for election to Town Council, and at every municipal election time, the Board can be counted on to name its preferred slate of candidates for Council. In fact, of the five sitting members of North Kawartha Council, two are former CLPOA directors, another is an active member of the Association, and a fourth was endorsed by the Board. Only one member of council, Carolyn Amyotte, is truly free of the influence of the CLPOA Executive.

From what I've seen, however, the CLPOA's directors seem incapable of faithfully serving their own members' needs or even abiding by the constitution and rules of their own organisation. How likely is it then that former association directors or those they endorse will be ready, willing or able to responsibly and responsively serve the needs of non-Chandos Lake cottagers and the permanent residents of the North Kawartha community?

Think about that in October.

2 - CLPOA Constitution, Article 2(04)i.

3 - CLPOA Constitution, Article 2.4(c).

Please see *Editor's Notes* on page 4.

1 - CLPOA Constitution, Article 2(04)f. and g.