

Helicopter Spotted at Anstruther Lake

FRET NOT MAYOR WOODCOCK ... I looked up in the sky the other day and saw a helicopter!

Mayor Woodcock ... even though a helicopter was seen at Anstruther Lake recently, there is no need to worry that an Anstruther Cottager has a dock with a helicopter pad awaiting this helicopter's landing. Nope. We can't do that. We can't because of the bylaw passed on June 21, 2016.

Mayor Woodcock, we very much recall the concern you raised during the dock bylaw meeting on June 21st, 2016. This meeting was so unforgettable; it's what I think of when I see a helicopter now.

It really is a good thing that Mayor Woodcock DID raise it - because it didn't occur to anybody else and, just imagine where we'd be if he hadn't. I don't think any observer in the room had considered that giving a resident the entitlement to build a dock the size they wanted was a risk that they would build one to serve as a helicopter pad. So, now we know why it's important to limit what a resident can build. ('cause they just might build the shape/size as they please ... on their own property ... imagine that).

Or did we misunderstand?

Here's how it all rolled out: There were three options proposed by the Planner. One option was not good at all; this is the opinion of many who have spoken out countless times to Council about that option's drawbacks. Another option was status quo. And finally, another that was what observers considered a compromise. Deep down we really wanted status quo but knew that wasn't going to happen so the compromise option seemed the path to just get it over with. Initially, Council seemed to like the compromise option ... but then Mayor Woodcock did some calculations and pointed out that if this option were passed, it could potentially lead to a dock that could hold a helicopter pad. Yup, a helicopter pad. Oh dear - we never thought of that. Other councillors hesitated and considered this dilemma.

Was Council concerned that North Kawartha could become a haven for helicopters?

Observers also hesitated and considered the helicopter pad dilemma. Wait - what just happened? We all looked at each other and were confused. Helicopter? Did Mayor Woodcock say helicopter?? Yup. Was there a dock with a helicopter pad somewhere in North Kawartha that was a problem? Wait - no - was there a helicopter pad on a dock AT ALL in North Kawartha? We must have misunderstood. A dock that large is ridiculous. ... But ... pretty sure he said helicopter pad!?!? As dock builders, we've never Built one so large ... and we have never Seen one so large. It's also really hard to imagine someone willing to pay the huge cost that it would take to build one.

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Above: A helicopter was spotted, hovering near Anstruther Lake in the early part of May.

It must have been a very big concern for Mayor Woodcock; he repeated the concern multiple times. So many times in fact that Council began to shift consideration to an alternative, and nope, it wasn't status quo, they began to focus on the worst option of the three proposed by the Planner. So, Council passed a bylaw that many feel was the worst option for residents, and also resulted in six appeals at the OMB - **six appeals that remain unsettled today.**

Mayor Woodcock, Deputy Mayor Hutton, Councillor O'Shea and Councillor Miszuk all passed the bylaw rather than embracing the compromise option. To observers, it appeared it was all because the compromise option included the risk of helicopter pads.

Yes, this story is what comes to mind every time I see a helicopter now. And the story deserves being repeated. It's important to be aware of the decisions your council makes (and why) as these decisions impact you.

Every time I see a helicopter I now think of Mayor Woodcock, Deputy Mayor Hutton, Councillor O'Shea and Councillor Miszuk. These are the folks who are concerned about helicopter pads. The new municipal fees and red tape involved when a resident wants to now build a dock is the legacy of this Council. Do you know how much you'll pay in fees to the township when you need a dock? Ask. *It's shocking.*

So why was a helicopter visiting Anstruther that day? It was very doubtful that it was searching out a dock to use as a landing spot. Nope ... there were still cottages without hydro after the severe wind storm on Friday May 4th and they were scouting the area for problems.

Lee is the co-owner/operator of the Anstruther Marina.