

March 16, 2023

Dear Mayor Matrosov and Council members,

My name is Emma Sharp. My property is on [REDACTED] and is notched within and surrounded by the Cedar Run property, so I will be directly affected by the wakeboard park, on three sides as well as on Clark St.

The project plan includes two massive straight-line ponds 65ft from my lot line. Please imagine 65 ft; that's about the width of Hwy 26. My property is 3 acres in size. The ponds right beside my barn will be larger than my entire property. The plan, as currently proposed, does not offer any real solutions to address the proximity of the wakeboarding noise and activity.

At an earlier Town meeting, when the developer was asked what is being proposed as a buffer to our property, we were given a very vague answer, that there is an existing berm in place, and a few evergreens "pines or something" will be planted to absorb the sound. The proposed elevation of the ponds is a slight 3 foot incline away from my property, which will do nothing to buffer the sound. A proper berm to deflect any sound should be between 15 and 20ft in depth, like the one between Thornbury and Meaford, parallel to Hwy 26 near Lora Bay. Now that's a berm! The buffer should also include a solid wall sound barrier with a solid line of evergreens. I am not surprised, but I was disappointed that neighbours have not been taken into consideration regarding the proximity of the ponds, noise etc. as if we don't exist, or matter. To date, there has been no buffer, berm, line of evergreens, or wall shown on the plan submission to the Town. Its easy to believe it will be added later to the site-plan, but by not adding it now, indicates to me that there is no intention to do so at any point.

A pond of that scale should also be far enough away from all neighbours to mitigate the disturbance of peace and quiet. When I previously suggested that the parcel of land is large enough to move the ponds farther away, the answer, published in writing by the applicant was this, and I quote:

"It is my understanding that neighbors and the public have the right to voice their concerns related to a development project but do not have the right to have input into the details of a Site Plan."

Clearly, the applicant does not care to involve his neighbours in order to keep them happy. I know that to place the wakeboard pond within 65ft of my lot line would be convenient for the wakeboard park, but it would not be convenient to me. Yet the applicant doesn't see it as appropriate that neighbours have any input. The applicant has published statements claiming to have been working with us from the beginning to address our concerns, and the concerns of our other neighbours, but quite the contrary, he has not. It has been 7 years in the planning, and not once has the developer ever sat down with either ourselves or our other neighbours to discuss our concerns. I applaud Mayor Matrosov, for documenting a request that the applicant now engage in discussions with the affected neighbours in order to address our issues. I also applaud Mayor Matrosov for requesting the applicant to redraft a more suitable plan, potentially reducing the size of the ponds and moving them to another place on the available 88 acres, and making the 2/3 employment lands more accessible.

The planned wakeboard park would be operating 10 hours per day, seven days per week, spring, summer and fall. That means that throughout the entire summer there would be no chance of quiet enjoyment of my property. Never mind all the special events and competitions which will no doubt take place, as the applicant stated on March 14th. The wakeboard park will be marketing to gain more attendees and grow the business, not restrict their numbers, so over time, there will be more crowds and more noise.

There will be a lot of noise generated by the crowds, cars, by the slapping of the boards hitting the water after each jump, by the speakers to communicate with the participants, and with the crowds to make announcements or commentate on the events, and by the sea-do's which will be used to rescue those who have fallen off all of which was not covered in the noise study, and greatly downplayed. The noise study which was submitted by the applicant only covered the decibel level generated by the pulley system.

Another concern I believe is being downplayed is the water usage: Anyone who has a pool will know they require constant top up. In order to keep the ponds full of water, there would be water drawn from Indian Brook. The applicant claims it would be kept to a limit of 5% from the brook, but I can't see that being monitored by anyone, or maintained.

An additional concern for me is the size of the septic system that would be installed. If the applicant is downplaying the number of people in attendance, surely the septic would not be sufficient for the true number of people on any given day, especially during events. With thousands of people attending events similar to Wakestock, will the proposed plan include sufficient septic to handle the volume, and will I need to worry about septic leaching into my drinking well?

With all the people attending on a daily basis and at events, the increased traffic on Clark Street will require the re-construction of the intersection at Clark St and Hwy 2, to accommodate a turn lane. The cost of which will probably be borne by the resident tax-payers of the Town of Blue Mountains, but which instead should be financed by way of a development charge to the applicant. As well, the park is only projecting the employment of approximately 10 seasonal people, hardly a major employer. All the local businesses are suffering due to a shortage of labour. Apparently, these 10 will be well-paid employees, but I'm sure they won't be paid any more than ski instructors at Blue Mountain. Additionally, where would they live? Blue Mountain already has a hard enough time to accommodate all of their seasonal employees.

I know that there are those who believe this will bring business to the area, but I believe the type of clientele are not likely to go to the nice high-end boutiques, art galleries and restaurants in Clarksburg and Thornbury, or to bring business to any of the hotels or motels in the area. Perhaps there will be an uptick to the local trailer parks for tent sites.

At the last meeting on March 14th, I have to say, I was surprised and saddened to find that a Councillor seemed not to know much about the wake park proposal, stating that they had not even seen the site layout, and were unfamiliar with details of the proposal, even while supporting it. This project will have a huge impact on our beautiful towns of Clarksburg and Thornbury, and I encourage each council member to really get to know what is being decided. The local constituents have voted council in place, to look after their best interests, not the interests of out-of-towners. A petition of support was presented at the March 14th meeting, highlighting the number of signatures, but failing to mention that only 12% of the signatures on the petition were from people in the local community. All the rest were from out-of-town, or from the States.

I caution the Town council that this is like Pandora's Box; once it is approved, it cannot be un-done, and any of the headaches or complaints which result will need to be dealt with by the Town council, so hopefully the decision is made carefully. The Town Planning Department has been reviewing this application for the last 7 years. The Staff report resulting from this exhaustive review is recommending that the proposal be refused. Shouldn't Town council follow the recommendations of their own staff? The Town of Amaranth, who previously turned down Mr. Grange's application for a similar park, are finding that he is still operating a wake park on his property there, and hosting events, as he himself acknowledged during his deputation on March 14th. The Town of Amaranth are having to deal with noise complaints for the Planet Bayou Wake Park he operates there, even though his application was refused by council, and the OMB upheld the Town's decision. There was a recent, very interesting news article about the park on the Orangeville.com website, which is well worth the read. My hope is that it will not end up being the same for the Town of the Blue Mountains.

We bought in Clarksburg because we loved the quiet rural feel of the area, yet we could also enjoy the classy boutiques, galleries and restaurants nearby in Town. We had looked forward to building our dream home in this beautiful, quiet countryside, plans which are now on hold. I do hope the Town will carefully consider all the serious implications of allowing the wakeboard park to go ahead, and the permanent change it will bring to the area. We are opposed to the park.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Thank you for the opportunity to be heard.

