



March 13, 2023

Town of the Blue Mountains  
32, Mill Street, P.O. Box 310  
Thornbury, ON N0H 2P0  
Attention: Corina Giles, Town Clerk

Request for distribution to:

- Andrea Matrosovs, Mayor
- Peter Bordignon, Deputy Mayor
- Town of the Blue Mountains Council
- Adam Smith, Director of Planning & Development Services

**RE: Bayou Wakeboard and Waterski Cable Park Development Proposal**

As Council and Staff are aware, the Blue Mountains Chamber of Commerce has expressed its strong support for the above-referenced proposal in the past (see enclosed letter of August 19, 2020). With the matter now returning to Council for consideration, we wish to take the opportunity to again express our support for this project on behalf of our growing membership. As the leading business organization in the Town of the Blue Mountains, the Chamber of Commerce strives to advocate for public policies that foster a strong, competitive economic environment to the benefit of businesses, families, and the community. On behalf of our members, our aim is to create a thriving and sustainable business community. We seek to achieve this goal, in part, through advocacy, based on member input and relevant research.

In keeping with the above mandate, we have reviewed Staff Report PDS.23.003, which is scheduled to be presented to the Committee of the Whole on March 14, 2023, before ultimately being considered by Council. With great respect to the Planning Staff responsible for its comprehensive analysis of the planning merits, the Chamber does not agree with the recommendation to outright refuse the applications brought forward by the applicant. While the Chamber is not able to offer qualified planning opinions of our own in response, we support the Planning Justification Report and other submissions made by the applicant as cited in the Staff Report. We wish to also offer our own understanding of the matter, briefly set out below.

From our review of Staff Report PDS.23.003, it appears that the recommendation to refuse the applications is centered around the analysis applicable to the conversion of employment lands to non-employment uses and related criteria. Among other areas of analysis, the core analysis in support of Staff's recommendation appears to be based on opinions that the approval of the applications would cause an unjustifiable depletion of employment land stock currently available in the Town. With respect, and on behalf of our membership, we do not agree that the approval would impede the long-term employment growth projections as cited in the report. Frankly, we believe this viewpoint to be overly technical and not reflective of the current market reality. In any event, we note that a comprehensive review of employment lands within the municipality is currently underway, thereby presenting an opportunity to possibly designate such lands elsewhere to increase inventory. While Town Staff may have an obligation to view the matter on the longer-term, the Chamber is focused on the "here and now", confident of the short-term benefits this proposal would bring to our community and in full recognition of the commitment and significant investment put forward by the applicant to date.



Ultimately, the Chamber does not believe that the subject property will ever, realistically, serve as a site for manufacturing, warehousing, offices, or other associated or similar uses in the near future. Rather, we believe that the best use of the property is the option currently proposed by the application, which would itself be a generator of employment. Furthermore, we disagree that the proposed commercial recreation use constitutes a "more of the same" approach and point to the meaningful economic impacts this proposal will have in the short-term. On behalf of our membership, and as we lend our voice in support of the proposal, the Chamber wishes to highlight just a few of the reasons we believe that this project will contribute towards creating a thriving and sustainable business community. These reasons include:

- Creation of a permanent jobs
- Increased consumer traffic for local businesses, including in retail and hospitality sectors
- Partnership opportunities with local businesses
- Increased tax base and improved infrastructure to the Town
- Consistency with our existing recreation tourism positioning (Section A3.8.2 of the OP)

In addition to the above, we again point to the report generated by the Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport – TREIM Model – dated January 17, 2019, which further details the projected economic impact of the proposal in Grey County based on an estimated 14,400 visitors annually.

The Staff Report points to the Town's Official Plan as being strongly supportive of this proposal, *conceptually*, while identifying the location of the subject lands as constituting the main obstacle based on overly technical planning grounds. With respect, the Chamber views this position as excessively rigid and narrow-sighted. The resulting recommendation to deny the applications risks thwarting the real opportunity for an otherwise viable and economically impactful project *today*. We also commend the applicant on its significant efforts to work with the Town at every stage of the process. On behalf of our members, we therefore urge Council to approve the applications and reject the recommendation set out under Staff Report PDS.23.003. In the alternative, we would support Council's decision to defer the applications to allow Staff to work with the applicant to further explore the minimum requirements of Traffic Impact and Archeological Assessment, as identified in the report.

We thank you for the opportunity of adding our collective voice in favour of the Bayou Wakeboard and Waterski Cable Park Development Proposal. The Chamber stands ready and willing to assist Council and Town Staff as a partner in ensuring that the proposal's positive economic and social impacts on the community are realized.

Yours truly,

Gavin H. Leitch  
President

Encl.



August 19, 2020

Town of the Blue Mountains  
32, Mill Street, P.O. Box 310  
Thornbury, ON N0H 2P0  
Attention: Corina Giles, Town Clerk

Request for distribution to:  
Alar Soever, Mayor  
Rob Potter, Deputy Mayor  
Town of the Blue Mountains Council  
Nathan Westendorp, Director of Planning & Development Services

**RE: Bayou Cable Park Development Proposal**

As the leading business organization in the Town of the Blue Mountains, the Chamber of Commerce strives to advocate for public policies that foster a strong, competitive economic environment to the benefit of businesses, families and the community as a whole. On behalf of our members, our aim is to create a thriving and sustainable business community. We seek to achieve this goal, in part, through advocacy, based on member input and relevant research. Since the date of the Public Meeting in November of 2019 regarding the Bayou Cable Park, the Chamber has turned its attention to the development proposal and its social and economic impacts on the community. On behalf of our members, we now wish to communicate our firm support for the proposal and offer Council and Town Staff our assistance in ensuring that its positive economic impact on the community is realized.

On January 29<sup>th</sup>, 2020, the Chamber organized an event allowing our members to hear directly from the developer, Brennan Grange, and his team regarding the proposal. Held at the Corner Café and Grill in Thornbury, the event was also a unique opportunity for our members to exchange with the developer on all aspects of the proposal, with a focus on the economic and business impacts that the proposal might have on the community. Mr. Grange and his team provided Chamber members with an overview of the proposal and the estimates of the impact it is expected to have on the local economy. As the Councilor designated as the external member of the Chamber Board might attest, the event was a success as Chamber members present reacted very favourably to the opportunities presented by the proposal.

On behalf of our membership, and as we lend our voice in support of the Bayou Cable Park Development Proposal, the Chamber wishes to highlight just a few of the reasons we believe that this project will contribute towards creating a thriving and sustainable business community.



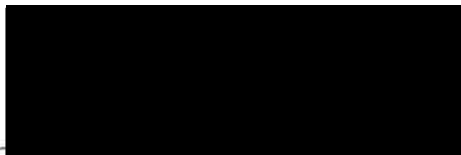
These reasons include:

- Creation of a permanent jobs
- Increased consumer traffic for local retail and hospitality businesses
- Partnership opportunities with local businesses
- Increased taxes
- Consistency with our existing recreation tourism positioning

In addition to the above, we enclose a report generated by the Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport – TREIM Model – dated January 17, 2019, which further details the projected economic impact of the proposal in Grey County based on an estimated 14,400 visitors annually.

On behalf of our members, we thank you for the opportunity of adding our collective voice in favour of the Bayou Cable Park project. The Chamber stands ready and willing to assist Council and Town Staff as a partner in ensuring the success of this project for the benefit of the entire community.

Yours truly,



Steve Simon

President