

March 12, 2025

The Town of the Blue Mountains
Thornbury, ON

FOR COUNCIL'S CONSIDERATION

Re: Staff Report CFS.25.015 Resort Condominium Property Tax Class

Attn: Mayor Matrosovs, Deputy Bordignon and Councillors

Madam Mayor and Councillors, I must first apologize for bringing forward this troublesome and obviously politically sensitive issue and for seemingly putting you in a very awkward position.

Over a year ago, the Ministry of Finance confirmed the Town's full authority to revoke. This Council could have simply contacted the Ministry to reconfirm but chose to embark an expensive, wasteful and unwarranted process involving the County and MTE Consulting. In reading MTE's disclaimer, it readily admits, they are providing a non-legal opinion. So here we are back at square one and this Council needs to finalize this issue.

What I find so infuriating, so insulting is the fact that staff consulted MPAC, BMVA, County staff and the County's tax consultant but conveniently excluded the Ministry of Education and the residents, the two groups that would benefit financially. I'm sure the Ministry, if asked, would have refuse the increase revenue. Madam Mayor, you were a teacher, I'm sure, if anyone can, you understand the financial strains and challenges our educational system. I'm sure you agree, we have a responsibility to ensure that all children are provided with the finest educational system possible.

Communication and Engagement - We will enhance communications and engagement between Town Staff, Town residents and stakeholders. This rings hollow and I question staff's commitment or dedication to serving the community.

I do take exception and I question the direction and integrity of staff's report when I read, "*Resort condominium owners will face substantial tax increases—what are the potential political and economic consequences*". Finance is responsible for providing factual data only. This statement suggests the possibility of outside influence or lobby. This is not a political decision, it is a financial decision.

Again I question the accuracy of staff's financial estimates if they are based on the 2016 property assessments. I would expect with the 2026 assessments, these numbers will dramatically increase. This needs to be clarified for Council and residents. Even though a \$40 dollar savings in residential maybe inconsequential to some, it does demonstrate how unfair this tax class is. The staff seemed to down-play the estimated loss of \$2,000,000 to the Ministry as it would provide no direct benefits to our local school boards. This seems to a very parochial or narrow-minded view point. This seems to be once again an opinion rather than factual.

For Council, for staff and more importantly the community, I'm going to distill this entire issue down to a very simple question. Does this Council support protecting the financial interests of these few affluent investors or does this Council support the funding of our education system and the future of all our children? Please consider, this is not a political decision but a moral one. Your decision should be obvious.

Organizational Excellence - We will continually seek out ways to improve at the internal organization of town Staff and the management of Town assets. This rings hollow and I question staff's commitment or dedication to serving the community.

"AXE THE TAX"

Rick Tipping
cc: Town Clerk- Ms Corrina Giles

