

January 15, 2026

Rick Tipping, Thornbury

Re: Resort Condominium Property Class

Good morning, Madam Mayor and Councillors. When I first brought this property class to Council's attention, I, along with other community members, expected Council to exercise its fiduciary responsibilities and move decisively to eliminate this property class. Now, I question why Council is considering an extension of the punitive tax class.

Council's position now raises serious concerns as it questions motivation and what appears to be serious conflicts with the Municipal Act¹ sec. 224, role of Council. *"To determine which services the municipality provides and to ensure the accountability and transparency of the operations of the municipality, and to maintain the financial integrity of the municipality"* and from the Municipal Conflict of Interest Act², *"The importance of integrity, independence and accountability in local government decision-making and members are expected to perform their duties of office with integrity and impartiality in a manner that will bear the closest scrutiny"* and from Town policy POL.COR.24.05³, *the principles of accountability and transparency shall apply to the political process and decision-making."* All the above must be considered in unison to effectively guide Council's decision. At this point, the red flags are waving.

Council refused to assume responsibility and authority to revoke the tax. This was made most evident when Council chose to reject its authority as described in the O.Reg 211/05⁴. It refused to accept further confirmation of its authority from the Ministry of Finance in January 2024. Then it took the unprecedented step of accepting a Grey County consultant's report offering a second opinion that seemed to contradict the Ministry's position. One has to question the validity of this report when it begins with a disclaimer.

What are residents to believe? Staff reports estimated that with the class elimination, there would be an estimated \$2.3 million shift in taxes that will benefit the taxpayers and

¹ <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/01m25>

² <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90m50>

³ <https://www.thebluemountains.ca/sites/default/files/2024-09/POL-COR-24-05-Accountability-and-Transparency-of-Town-Actions-to-the-Public-Policy.pdf>

⁴ <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/r05211>

our educational system. To put this in perspective, these condo properties, inarguably commercial, have enjoyed over the past twenty years an estimated \$40M tax subsidy. Where is Council's financial integrity? Where is the accountability? Where is Council's impartiality?

In another report, staff freely admitted that discussions had occurred behind closed doors. How does Council justify receiving numerous deputations from the BMVA/Resort supporting a continuation but avoiding any public consultation process, especially in an open and informative public forum? From the Municipal Act again, role of council, (a) to represent the public and to consider the well-being and interests of the municipality. We are the municipality. Where is the accountability and transparency?

Although the Resort/BMVA is important to our local economy and its continued success is supported by all levels of government. Legislation limits municipal responsibilities to being service providers, refuse pickup, road maintenance etc., which certainly doesn't include supplementing the annual profits of commercial rental properties. The BMVA predicts our local economy will suffer significantly if the class is eliminated, but provides no factual evidence to support its claim. Even if true, it reveals that the BMVA has, over the past twenty years, failed to develop either a competitive marketing strategy or a sustainable business model independent of municipal support. What Council seems to have dismissed is the fact that this is a private sector business and the financial well-being of Resort/BMVA operations is the sole responsibility of their respective management teams, not the municipality and not the taxpayer.

This process had unequivocally confirmed that the financial well-being of its membership doesn't extend to the general public. Its continual demands for financial support question its positive relationship with the municipality.

As a result, every Council decision must be considered suspect when it favours any financial support for the Resort or the BMVA, as it freely admits lobbying all levels of government to promote only the self-interests of its membership.

At this point, it's impossible to reconcile Council's position when comparing it to legislation and policy. It surmountable trust and credibility issues within the community that will follow all members into the next election.

Respectfully

Rick Tipping and the community <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/r05211>