

## Summary of the Issue and Call for Support

Since mid-July of last year, the MBC, has been working with “Our Grandchildren Matter Too...” (OGMT), a group of concerned residents which includes many MBC members and, wherever possible, with the Township of Algonquin Highlands (AH) on a matter which gravely affects local residents and which has implications for all in our township and throughout the Province.

Local resident members contacted the MBC to let us know that a septic hauler had purchased a piece of land at the corner of Hwy. 118 and 25<sup>th</sup> Line Rd. in Stanhope and had applied for an Environmental Compliance Approval (ECA) from the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change (MOECC) to operate a surface disposal site for septic waste. These members formed OGMT and asked if the MBC could assist in researching options for opposing a raw sewage disposal operation proposed, quite literally, in their backyards.

The MBC membership voted, at our AGM in July of last year, to dedicate up to \$1,000.00 to researching, opposing and, after the ECA was granted, monitoring the operation. The MBC has funded a Freedom of Information request and is supporting OGMT and helping protect the area by carrying out twice weekly sampling and analysis for coliform and e-coli bacteria in a creek that runs by the site and drains through a highly populated area into Maple Lake. The MBC has also purchased weather monitoring equipment which is being monitored by OGMT / MBC members to check that the conditions for the operator are being respected.

Since our neighbours found out – entirely by accident - about the existence of the ECA application we have been constantly surprised and appalled by a system and processes that shut out landowners and Municipal Authorities; It was only through the efforts of local residents and the MBC that our municipality was even made aware of the plan to open a septage disposal site within its’ boundaries because the MOECC application and approvals process does not require that Municipalities or neighbouring landowners be consulted or even notified.

Even though Municipalities are given authority, by way of the Planning Act and the Municipal Act, to control the siting of waste disposal sites and other commercial operations through Official Plans and Comprehensive Zoning Bylaws, and in spite of conditions and provisions within the MOECC’s own mandate and approvals recognizing the need for an operation to conform to Municipal regulation, no system exists to ensure that this happens. This is exactly how we have arrived at the situation we are in.

The MBC and OGMT have strongly encouraged AH to make all efforts to cease the operation of the site through enforcement of the restrictive Bylaws on their books and the Council has spent much time and effort – and some money, as well – investigating the legal options available. Unfortunately the opinions received have indicated that any efforts along these lines would be very costly and, because of the way some laws are interpreted, a positive outcome far less than certain. AH has determined not to pursue legal action at this point; While we are disappointed that council did not feel able to move ahead more aggressively, we recognize that a process with unknown costs and outcome is difficult to justify to hard-pressed rate-payers.

With frequent input from the MBC and OGMT, the Township has made and continues to make considerable efforts to try to change the way the MOECC process works and to urge greater change in

the future; efforts that we should all support as strongly as we can. The MBC has committed to continue working with AH in any way we can to effect change.

The outcome of this issue is of importance to everyone: if it can happen in one backyard, it can happen in *your* backyard.

**Please see the attached letter sent by the MBC to the Premier and the Ministers of MOECC and Municipal Affairs and Housing and consider using it as a template for a letter from your Association!**