

**The Corporation of  
THE TOWNSHIP OF BONNECHERE VALLEY  
MINUTES  
PUBLIC MEETING**

**Thursday August 21, 2025 at 6:00 P.M.**

**Eagles Nest Hall – Eganville Arena**

**178 Jane Street – Eganville**

**PRESENT** Mayor Jennifer Murphy  
Deputy Mayor John Epps  
Councillor Merv Buckwald  
Councillor Tracey Sanderson  
CAO Annette Gilchrist  
Planning and Licensing Clerk Erica Rice  
CBO Darryl Wagner  
Chair of Development and Property Committee County of Renfrew  
Councillor James Brose  
County Manager of Planning Bruce Howarth  
County Senior Planner Anne McVean  
County Junior Planner Nicole Moore  
County Clerk and Manager of Legislative Services Gwen Dombroskie

**REGRETS** Councillor Brent Patrick

**GALLERY** A sign-in sheet was provided for public attendees

**1. Land Acknowledgements and Introductions**

Mayor Murphy commenced the meeting with a land acknowledgement, staff and council introductions and shared the expectations of the meeting.

**2. Call Public Meeting to Order**

The public meeting held by Council under Sections 17 and 22 of The Planning Act was called to order at 6:00pm

**3. Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest and the General Nature Thereof**

There were no Pecuniary Interests.

#### **4. Purpose of Meeting and Statutory Requirements**

Mayor Murphy explained that the purpose of the public meeting is to hear public comments on an application to amend the County of Renfrew Official Plan. The County of Renfrew is the approval authority and renders decisions for amendments to the County Official Plan.

#### **5. Overview**

Mayor Murphy provided a brief overview of the matter of Lake Clear and recreational vehicle use.

Lake Clear's at-capacity status has been in effect since the mid 1980's. The County of Renfrew's Official Plan restricts development to "permanent and seasonal single-family dwellings, home occupations, small scale convenience stores, institutional community use, non-intensive farming and forest management uses." It is noted that recreational vehicles (RVs) are not listed as a permitted use. The County Official Plan also provides policy direction to local councils regarding RVs. These policies encourage local councils to develop measures to address temporary uses and structures, including recreational vehicles, on lots adjacent to lakes.

There are several waterfront properties along Lake Clear that have RVs on them. The use of the RVs has raised concerns including impacts to lake water quality associated with septic systems and phosphorous, as well as setbacks and visual character.

The Township hired consulting services to better understand the health of the lake through an updated Lakeshore Capacity Assessment model and review the existing land use planning framework for RV's, which has informed this amendment to the proposed Official Plan and will inform a future amendment to the Township Zoning By-law to balance the desire to be on the lake with the health of the lake.

The changes will conform to the other policies in the County Official Plan (e.g. 300 metre distance, setbacks, etc).

#### **6. Purpose of Application and Confirmation of Public Notification**

County Senior Planner Anne McVean stated that The County of Renfrew received this Official Plan Amendment application from the Township of Bonnechere Valley on April 2, 2025. The purpose of the proposed amendment is to amend Section 9.4(3) of the Official Plan being the At Capacity Lakes-Exception Three policies that apply specifically to Lake Clear.

The amendment proposes to add wording to this Lake Clear policy to allow for RVs to be stored or used on existing vacant or residential lots of record. The RVs would be subject to any requirements of the provisions of the Township Zoning By-law and any future licensing requirements. The policy also includes requirements for water and wastewater servicing of trailers.

This Official Plan Amendment is the first of three components. A zoning by-law amendment and licensing by-law are separate components that would be considered by the Township in the future.

County planning staff provided notification in accordance with the requirements of the Ontario Planning Act.

The initial Notice of Application was issued on May 14, 2025:

- by mail service to all assessed property owners within 300 metres of Lake Clear
- by email to required public agencies
- by publication in the Eganville Leader
- by posting on both the Township of Bonnechere Valley's website, and the County's website with supporting documents.

The subsequent Notice of Public Meeting was issued on June 18, 2025, in the same manner, as just described. The Township's website and County's website were updated with the Notice of Public Meeting.

## **7. Public Comments**

Members of the public who wish to provide comment relating to the proposed application were asked to please come to the microphone and before beginning, please provide your name and address for the record. The following residents came forward to speak:

### Jean Davies

- Concerned/opposes OPA
- BV has difficulty enforcing the current RV provisions in the Zoning By-law, so how will they be able to enforce these new rules?
- Concerns with the money that was spent on the study, the contents of the report itself
- Why will RVs be allowed on Lake Clear and not other parts of the Township?
- Worried the OPA will be precedent-setting

### Robin Felhaber

- Opposed to OPA, believes the provisions on RVs are too strict
- Noise, aesthetics, etc. are not issues with RVs; the people moving in just aren't used to seeing RVs
- RVs create few environmental impacts and provide a low-cost housing option
- At-Capacity Lake status isn't caused by only RVs, other development and old cottages are also to blame

### Herb Weckwerth

- People should be able to have RVs on properties around the lake
- Up to 4 RVs per lot used to be permitted as one point
- Not able to get a building permit for his landlocked property
  - RVs should be permitted on vacant land so that the properties like his can still be used
- What does 7 consecutive days mean?
- Why is lot size and frontage not taken into consideration?
- Why can't RV's be allowed with leeching beds or outhouses?
  - Argues that these sewage options are better than pit toilets that campsites around the lake allegedly use

### David McCann

- What is the official position of MECP?
- Questions the methodology and contents of the report
- Generally against permitting RVs on the lake

### Judy Bates

- Commented on a comment from another member of the public regarding the private and public islands and their ownership. Mayor Murphy clarified that the Islands being referred to on Lake Clear which are used for camping are owned by the crown and maintained under an agreement between the township and the Lake Clear Conservancy.

### Dan Felhaber

- Claims RVs are permitted elsewhere in the region
- People should be allowed to live in RVs
- Old cottages with old or no septic systems have more impacts on the lake than RVs
- There shouldn't be restrictions on RV use.

## **8. Correspondence/Comments Received**

County Planner Anne McVean stated that as of this evening's public meeting 60 written submissions have been received by the County of Renfrew. The Township has received copies of all correspondence. The following is a summary of the comments and concerns received from the general public, based on common themes:

### Opposition

- Several submissions were received that simply and strongly object to the proposed Official Plan Amendment.
- Other letters of objection also included specific concerns.

### Balanced Approach

- A few comments expressed support for RV use s/t the lake being protected, and RVs having the same rules including servicing requirements as required for dwellings, and with shorter use timeframes.

### Protection of Lake Clear

- Many of the comments have raised concerns that this proposal would be contrary to Provincial policy, the Official Plan and local municipal regulations, and expert Provincial ministry advice that would undermine the At Capacity designation that has protected the lake, and will result in irreparable degradation of lake water quality.
- Many comments have been received that stress the value of Lake Clear as a Lake Trout lake that needs to be protected to ensure its longevity.
- Also, that this proposed amendment will increase development on the lake that will have negative impacts to the lake water quality.
- Lake Clear is a priceless and rare gem that will be lost forever if poorly thought-out resource management is implemented.
- Comments stressed that it is not just Lake Clear but the surrounding ecosystem that needs to be protected and if degraded could have negative impacts downstream in other municipalities.

### Enforcement

- One of the main concerns raised was regarding the implementation and enforcement of the various measures required to successfully protect lake water quality.
- Comments identified that there are too many loopholes in the requirements.
- Concerns were raised about the ability to effectively track the length and number of stays as permitted by the rules.
- Concerns were raised with the Township's ability, with a small staff, to administer, license, monitor and enforce compliance through inspections, fines, etc. It was noted that this will be an onerous task and without government funding would be unfeasible.

- Many comments express concern about how the Township would fund additional staff-time required for administration, as well as enforcement.
- Concerns were raised about the Township's record of past enforcement of rules that don't permit RVs on the Lake and would these RVs be required to meet new rules, if implemented.
- Questions were raised about what would prevent RVs from being be rented out on weekly basis where dwellings are Airbnbs.

#### Financial Impacts/Responsibility

- several comments received identified financial concerns for the following:
  - the amount of taxpayers' funds spent on this project;
  - potential burdens and related costs for increase usage of roads, the waste disposal site, etc. on taxpayers
  - taxation for RVs to pay their share of costs
  - Again, how the cost of staff administration and enforcement of this proposal would be funded

#### OPA Exceptions

- Concerns were raised regarding the ambiguity in the wording in the proposed exceptions 2 and 3 of the OP amendment that could undermine the efforts to protect the lake.
- Several comments raised concern that an RV occupied for 7 days could leave for a day and return for 7 more days, repeatedly and not have to meet setbacks, licensing or waste disposal requirements. Where hunters, fishers and special gatherings are permitted, special gatherings is not defined.
- Requests were made to find a better solution for hunters and fishers, particularly on vacant lots and in terms of timelines, for example where hunting season lasts two weeks.
- Beyond the exceptions, concern was raised that the OPA does not include the details of the number of RVs and occupancy restrictions that were recommended by the consultants leaving the policy open to interpretation. These details must be included to avoid loopholes and misuse of requirements.

#### Number of RVs/Lot Sizes

- A few comments questioned the number of RVs on the lake that were considered for analysis. For example if air photography taken during July and August was used in that determination, when there may be more RVs present on lots.
- Some comments offered different numbers of existing RVs on the lake.
- Concern was raised that there is no definition of lot size in determining number of trailers per lot. Most lots are small. It would be fair to allow larger properties to have a maximum of four RVs. Suggests a ratio of number of RVs to lot size would be a fair approach.
- Several comments offered another option that RVs be allowed on vacant lots subject to all the same requirements as a dwelling; no RVs permitted on lots with an existing dwelling.
- A suggestion was made that RVs be permitted on weekends, only.

- A question was raised if bunkies are not permitted, why should RVs be permitted?
- No concerns were raised with the storage of RVs.

#### Large Vacant Properties

- Concerns were raised regarding existing large, vacant properties that are landlocked and cannot get building, well or septic permits, so a trailer is the only option. Under the OPA, these parcels cannot even be used for hunting, fishing or special gatherings but could, if they were residential lots. A request was made for consideration to exempt landlocked properties or grandfather them.

#### Time Restrictions

- A concern was raised with the limited time one could spend on their own property; a 7 day limit is not reasonable, when MNR allows 21 days of camping on Crown land.
- A request was made for consideration to modify the proposed amendment to allow seasonal RV's on vacant lots and having no time limit usage during May to November.

#### Servicing

- Many of the comments suggested that all RVs should be subject to the same servicing requirements as a dwelling.
- Regarding servicing options, it was identified that other options such as bottled water, an outhouse, and leaching pit for grey water were not mentioned.
- Many comments raised concern about the impact increased RV usage, including waste disposal would have with regards to phosphorous impacts on the lake water quality.
- A comment was submitted that an RV is less polluting than a permanent residence. Allowing a seasonal RV on a vacant lot would do less harm than issuing a building permit for a home on a vacant lot.
- Class 1 systems (i.e. outhouses) as a servicing option can negatively impact water quality

#### Precedent

- Many comments received raised concern about the precedent this amendment could have for other At Capacity lakes in the County and what the cumulative impact of that could be.

#### Why just Lake Clear?

- Several comments questioned impetus behind applying this amendment to only Lake Clear and not the other lakes and the Bonnechere River within the Township? Or for that matter, even on other rural properties?

#### Other Concerns

- One comment noted how the supporting information does not address matters identified by JL Richards, such as tax assessment, environmental and neighbourhood compatibility.

- A concern was raised about potential adverse impacts on neighbourhoods where properties could face having two RVs on either side of a residential lot.
- RVs should be required to hook into hydro. Generators are noisy impacting enjoyment of abutting properties, and are disruptive to wildlife.
- HESL's use of the phosphorous retention factor in determining there is still capacity for the proposed RV use on the lake.

AND LASTLY...

#### Support

- One submission complimented council and staff for proposing action on this long existing, divisive issue and supports the amendment as presented subject to information presented at the public meeting containing new information. Urges adoption and implementation of the proposed amendment.

Public Agency Comments received included:

- Enbridge (May 24, 2025) – does not object to proposed application
- MECP (August 6, 2025) – brief summary

### **9. Staff Comments**

There were no comments from staff members that were present.

### **10. Council Comments**

Councillor Sanderson commented “she would like it resolved.”

### **11. Next Steps**

Written submissions regarding the OPA application may be submitted any time before a decision on the application is made.

If you want to be notified of a decision, that request must be made in writing, or for those present, you can select that option on the sign-in sheet at the door.

Written submissions and requests for notice are to be submitted to me, Anne McVean. My email and mailing addresses are included on the notices posted on the Township and County websites.

The Township of Bonnechere Valley is to consider any comments received through the public consultation process and provide the County of Renfrew with direction as to whether they wish to proceed with the proposal as is, make changes to the proposal, or withdraw the proposal.

County Planning Staff will be preparing a Planning Report that will consider the application submission, all comments made at this meeting and submitted in writing. The report will include responses to public comments and it will provide a

recommendation for the decision. The Planning Report will be made available to the public.

The Planning Report will be tabled at a future meeting of the County's Development and Property Committee. The Committee will consider the application and Planning Report and will forward its recommendation to a subsequent meeting of County Council for a decision on the application.

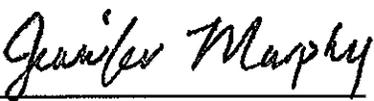
Within 15 days of County Council's decision, a notice of the decision will be issued.

The notice of decision will provide for a 20 day appeal period starting the day after the notice is given. Within the 20 day appeal period any person or public body who made oral submissions at the public meeting or written submissions before the amendment was adopted, the Minister, the appropriate approval authority, or the person or public body that made the request to amend the Plan can appeal the decision of County Council to the Ontario Land Tribunal (OLT) by filing a notice appeal with the Clerk of the County of Renfrew. The appeal options will be set out in the notice of decision.

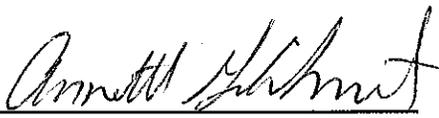
There is no specific timeline set. The County will update its website for this project as the file progresses. The Public Meeting notice contains a QR code and weblink to the project on the County's website where the public can sign up for notifications on the application progress when the site is updated.

## **12. Adjournment**

This therefore completes the Public meeting process. Mayor Murphy declared the Public Meeting closed at 6:52 p.m.



Jennifer Murphy, Mayor



Annette Gilchrist, CAO/Clerk