

New zoning by-law changes are approaching

2016/08/29 by R.L.B.

Town of Brome-Lake is in the process of finalizing several new rules with regard to managing runoff water. These rules will be integrated into the new zoning bylaws. In most cases, these new wrinkles are good for the lake and the surrounding bodies of water. Renaissance Brome Lake (RBL) was able to provide its own recommendations in recent months.

Unfortunately, according to what we have learned, two important points have not been retained by the municipal administration:

The protection of smaller sized wetlands that are not directly linked to a water body or a lake. These smaller areas of less than 0.5 hectares receive no protection at all in the new legislation and therefore can be altered or even filled. RBL feels that this is simply not a desirable situation, even while recognizing that these smaller bodies have a smaller ecological value and that too restrictive rules can be an irritant for citizens. But some of these smaller wetlands are very important habitats for certain species, biodiversity and the quality of the water. And that is why RBL recommended that these smaller wetlands be protected, after a specialist confirmed their ecological value. In the case of non-ecological value, RBL is not opposed to some intervention in small wetlands as long as they are not related to the hydrological network.

The maintenance of environmental regulations. Since 2013, Town of Brome Lake has had a regulation (PIIA- environmental siting standards) that applies to soil handling situations along the shorelines of water courses or the lake itself. The town has decided to abolish this regulation by promoting the notion that all the protection measures have been integrated into the general zoning bylaws. RBL is convinced that several situations would be better off dealt with as separate or complementary issues by using the environmental regulation where the criteria of environmental gain dominates. In recent years, several situations have been settled in this way, to the benefit of the lake and its citizens. RBL is therefore opposed to the abolition of this regulation which, we feel, is an important tool in territory management. We feel that removing this part of the rules' playbook is a definite error.

Town of Brome Lake will be taking a preliminary decision about these two subjects on Wednesday, August 31. The final decision will be taken during the regular meeting of council on September 6, 2016.