

The Proposed Esten Lake Sub-Division and other Inner-City Lakes

To Mayor and Council,

I am writing as Chair of the Elliot Lake Residential Development Commission to correct some misinformation presented (inadvertently I'm sure) by members of Council concerning the status of Esten and the other Inner-City Lakes, the prospects for development of a new subdivision and why we recommended Esten as the first lake to be developed.

Reference was made to Blue-Green Algae on Esten, which I had not heard before. I therefore asked our staff to check and was reassured that in the over 20 years of testing the waters of Esten there was no Blue Green algae and in fact, the phosphorus levels remained relatively low even after heavy rains.

Esten East (the lagoon) does have overflow culverts into the boat launch area of Esten. They are designed to drain off water from the pond to make sure the dike does not get washed out during flood conditions. This has happened on only two occasions during extreme water levels in the spring. We sampled the water at the boat launch during one of these events and found no increase in phosphorus.

The landfill creek does empty into Esten but further to the west than where we are currently planning. It has also been part of our monitoring program. During near drought conditions the phosphorus values do rise significantly but there is hardly any flow of water. We have discussed this with our Water Scientist, and she says the amount of contaminant coming from here compared to the volume of water in Esten is negligible. We know that Daryl and his team monitor this quite close as well.

As for sulfur / sulphides in the water, the only place that this is happening is from drilled wells on Dunlop. There is a layer of rock that the deep wells go through that is releasing these compounds. The problem is how the wells were drilled and encased. It has nothing to do with any lake waters.

The only reason we have had some push back from MNRF for lots with septic systems on Esten were the oxygen levels. They are currently running less than 4% below a level where they would allow cottages. According to our Water Scientist, the calculations are +/- 10% and she believes we would eventually win over MNRF if we had the time and inclination. The phosphorus levels in Esten lake are currently within the same range as all of the other lakes in the area.

Why did we choose Esten Lake First?

When considering the expansion of the cottage lot program, Esten lake was one of the prime candidates. A full Natural Heritage Assessment (NHA) was completed as well as phase 1 archaeological work. Very little will be required to update the NHA to comply with the City Official Plan (OP).

Adding executive lots along the road leading to the lake makes the full services option even more viable.

To complete the NHA and archaeological work for the lead-in road should be minimal as it is away from the lake and follows established roads / trails as well as a gravel pit. By following the existing infrastructure there should be fewer surprises.

The proposed road for the lakefront lots has had preliminary engineering work done.

The proposal for 23 lake front lots should be considered stage 1 as an extension of the road to the border of City owned property could gain 16 more lots. The project was split into 2 stages to keep initial costs at a minimum.

Considerations of other Inner-City Lakes

Slipper Lake is considered a lake trout lake. When results from the water quality model were reviewed it was taken off the list of septic using homes due to the high loading of phosphorous from urban run off. Full services would allow homes on the lake.

However, the City only owns about 1/3 of the land around the lake and while approximately 36 lots have been identified as having potential to be developed and services are approximately 970 meters from the lake, the north side of the lead-in road is wetland and a section of the south side of the lead-in road is too steep to develop leaving only 8 to 10 lots that could be developed to offset the cost of running services to the lake.

Only preliminary viewing from the water has been completed so far and no work on suitability of roads, NHA or archaeological assessments have been done.

Angel (First) and Chrystal (Second) lakes were not considered for cottages with septic systems as the lakes did not meet the MNRF minimum lake size requirements.

Only 1/2 of Chrystal lake is within the City owned land.

All of Chrystal and about 2/3 of the southern shore of Angel has a crown land reserve attached to it. This land would have to be bought from the crown.

The north shore of Angel Lake is very steep and in close proximity to Axmith Ave. and Frame Crescent. Developing a road and lots within the area is going to be a challenge. Only preliminary viewing from the water has been completed. No work for suitability of roads, NHA or archaeological assessments have been done. Somewhere between 8 and 10 lots could be developed easily. Beyond that it is difficult to estimate the number of lots that could be developed until the crown reserve is dealt with and more ground proofing is completed.

Nordic Lake is designated a lake trout lake.

Previous leadership for the cottage lot project would not consider lots on the lake.

A cursory shoreline review from the water has been the only work completed.

While the closest services to the lake are only 200 m away the terrain is very steep. It is unlikely a road and cottages could be built unless the land area was widened.

The entire area that the City owns is very steep and will present a great deal of challenges for any future development.

A question was also raised concerning bears and a possible threat to the area. We are proposing residences about 1/2 kilometer from the landfill site. The south end of the built-up area of the City is about 1 kilometer away.

Bears do not follow roads and they travel many kilometers in a day foraging for food. As long as the residents follow bear wise practices the curious ones will not find anything and give up. They are creatures of habit and will continue to gather at the magnificent buffet offered at the landfill site.

In closing let me say that the Residential Development Commission considers the Esten subdivision to be very important for the future of the City and we look forward to working with staff and Council to ensure it's success.

Respectfully,

Ed Pearce

Chair

Elliot Lake Residential Development Commission



