



September 1, 2024

Dear Member,

This newsletter is to keep you informed as to what the Association has been working on over the past months. It is our hope that you will continue to support the PDWPA so that waterfront access will be protected and enhanced for everyone's enjoyment.

### **Nominating Committee**

We are looking for new Board members. If you are interested in learning about what would be involved, if you know of someone who may be interested in helping out our Association in any way, or if you would like to help out on a nominating committee, please contact our Secretary, Marg Creighton, at [margcr8on@gmail.com](mailto:margcr8on@gmail.com).

### **Port Dover Harbour Marina**

At the February 13, 2024 Council-in-Committee meeting the following motion was passed:

*"That Staff Report CAO-24-020 "Governance Options for the Port Dover Harbour Marina and Port Rowan Marina" be referred back to staff to clearly identify options respecting the ownership, operating and management of each of the marinas, and to provide a business case for each option; and  
That staff be directed to obtain appraisals for both marinas."*

According to Councillor Adam Veri, the follow-up Report regarding the Port Dover Harbour Marina and the Port Rowan Harbour Marina will be presented and discussed at the September 10, 2024 Council-in-Committee meeting at the County building in Simcoe. This will be a critical time for our Association because the sale of the marinas would mean the loss of public waterfront that can never be replaced.

Our Secretary has sent background information to both MP Leslyn Lewis and MPP Bobbi Ann Brady and asked them for any assistance and advice. A copy of this letter is attached at the end of this Newsletter.

We have met with MPP Bobbi Ann Brady and are awaiting a response from MP Leslyn Lewis.

### **By-law Review**

The Association's By-law No. 1 has been completely updated to comply with the new Not-for-Profit Corporations Act. Copies of the revised By-Law are available by contacting our Secretary at [margcr8on@gmail.com](mailto:margcr8on@gmail.com).

### **Annual Meeting**

The Association's Annual Meeting will be held at 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday, October 23, 2024 at Walt's Kitchen in the Silver Lake Market. This year our guest speaker will be Lisa Marr from the PDYC Sailing School. Since Port Dover has a strong marine heritage, it is important that sailing skills are taught to people of all ages and abilities so that enjoyment and appreciation of the water will continue to flourish.

### **Fundraising**

Member Judy Malpass has been instrumental in organizing our next fundraising event. It will be held on Friday, September 13, 2024. Dr. Jeffery Clapp has very kindly permitted our Association to set up in front of his facility. Katrina Ferguson, owner of Dover Paint and Paper, has graciously allowed us to store our supplies in her store the night before the event. It is wonderful to receive such great community support.

At this event, the Association will be displaying our main storyboard which outlines who we are. We will also have PDWPA key lanyards, PDWPA tote bags and cold bottled water on hand to thank those who provide donations.

If you are able to help at this event, even if it is just for an hour, please contact our Secretary.

### **Norfolk County Master Recreation Plan - Recreation Without Borders**

Norfolk County has hired two consultants to develop a Master Recreation Plan. It is a visionary road map designed to enhance the quality of life for all residents. The County's goal is to enrich our community's fabric and create abundant opportunities for leisure, growth and connection.

Our directors are planning on making a submission that will focus on the public's physical and visual access to the waterfront. Since this plan will impact all of us, you should be aware that the County is asking for your input. Please visit this link:

<https://www.norfolkcounty.ca/news/norfolk-asking-community-for-input-on-master-recreation-plan/>

## **Letter to MP Leslyn Lewis**

July 26, 2024

Dear Ms. Lewis,

*The Port Dover Waterfront Preservation Association is concerned that Norfolk County is considering the sale of the Port Dover Harbour Marina.*

*In 2007, the federal government transferred ownership of the Port Dover Harbour Marina to Norfolk County as part of the Recreational Harbour Divestiture Program. On April 3, 2007 the government of Canada provided the following news release:*

*The Honourable Diane Finley, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration and Member of Parliament for the constituency of Haldimand--Norfolk, announced today that the federal government has transferred ownership of the recreational Small Craft Harbours' Port Dover facility to the Corporation of Norfolk County. Minister Finley made the announcement on behalf of the Honourable Loyola Hearn, Minister of Fisheries and Oceans.*

*"Port Dover is a community that cares a great deal about its harbour facilities and has taken a lead role in managing them," said Minister Finley. "That's why today's announcement is so important. It means local ownership and development for an asset that will now benefit everyone in Norfolk County."*

*As stated by Minister Finley, it was the federal government's intention for Norfolk County, as the new owner, to continue to operate the Port Dover Harbour Marina for the benefit of the Norfolk County community.*

*In this same news release Mayor Dennis Travale stated:*

*"I am extremely pleased that Norfolk is assuming ownership of the Port Dover recreational harbour facility. We appreciate the assistance of Minister Finley and Minister Hearn to bring this deal to a successful conclusion; the citizens of Norfolk have gained a tremendously valuable asset."*

*Norfolk County paid \$1.00 for the Marina and received a one-time federal grant of \$200,000.00 for capital upgrades. In addition, the County received \$1,320,000.00 from*

*the revenue accrued by the former Port Dover Harbour Marina Advisory Board. This volunteer board had managed the marina for the federal government.*

*One year after the transfer of ownership, Norfolk County received an unsolicited offer from Alliance Homes to lease, expand and operate the Port Dover Harbour Marina with the option to purchase. Strong support for this offer was outlined in a Norfolk County Staff report, even though federal covenants preventing the sale of the property for four more years were still in place and no Request for Proposals had been issued.*

*This situation prompted a group of seven Port Dover residents to meet regularly to develop a plan of action to encourage the County to keep the marina as a publicly owned and operated facility. After seeking legal advice, the group decided to formally organize and develop an available business plan to counter the developer's plan. To do this, the group founded the Port Dover Waterfront Preservation Association, a not-for-profit corporation. The Association received its Letters Patent on December 15, 2008.*

*The Association encouraged other community organizations, local politicians, and the public to support the Port Dover Harbour Marina remaining as a publicly owned and operated facility. On December 12, 2008 Minister Finley met with the former members of the Port Dover Harbour Marina Advisory Board along with members of the public at Silver Lake Market. She addressed the public's concerns regarding the Alliance Homes proposal to take over the marina. Minister Finley was quoted in the Simcoe Reformer on December 15, 2008 as follows:*

*"If the terms and conditions aren't being respected, that problem ends up in my lap. We want to make sure the terms of the transfer are met. When the marina was handed over to the community, it was celebrated as a good thing. I want us to continue celebrating a good thing."*

*As a result of growing public pressure, initiated by the Association, Norfolk County decided to reject the unsolicited offer from the developer. The Port Dover Harbour Marina was to remain as a publicly owned and operated facility.*

*Over the years, two marina studies have been initiated by Norfolk County. Both of these studies pointed out that the PDHM is indeed an asset but a sound business plan should be in place to ensure its integrity and profitability.*

*Ever since 2007, the County has taken more than half of the profit of the Marina to offset the tax levy. Historically, each year approximately \$210,000.00 was placed in the Marina reserve fund. However, in 2019, Council supported a staff recommendation and voted to reduce the annual contribution to the reserve fund by \$63,000 to pay for additional staff. Since that decision, only \$147,000.00 has been going to the Marina reserve.*

*On September 12, 2023, staff recommended to Council that the reserve funds from both the Port Dover Harbour Marina and the Port Rowan Harbour Marina should be merged into one marina fund. This was certainly detrimental to the Port Dover Harbour Marina as the Port Rowan Harbour Marina has had a deficit for many years.*

*On February 13, 2024, a report came before Council outlining governance options for the two marinas. In this report, prepared by two summer students, a bleak future for the marinas was described due to the “necessary” upgrades documented in the 10 Year Capital Plan for the two marinas. The combined total for expenditures was over \$20,000,000.00. After reviewing the capital plan with representatives of several organizations and key stakeholders familiar with the operation of the Marina, our Association realized that the majority of so called “necessary” upgrades and repairs are part of a wish list of items that are not needed or could be done less expensively or could be safely postponed for several years.*

*In the Association’s view, County Staff have created a scenario to justify the potential sale of both marinas. They have exaggerated future capital costs and there has been little effort made to increase revenue over the years. There has also been little effort made to understand the impact of the sale of the marinas on the community and the community at large.*

*At the February 13, 2024 Council-in-Committee meeting, staff advocated for Council to approve seeking real estate appraisals for both marinas and developing a business plan. Our Association requested that any appraisals be done by a third party experienced in the sale of marinas and that a second appraisal be done which would be based on the assumption of continued public access to the PDHM. We also asked that the business plan options be prepared by an independent third party knowledgeable about the operation of marinas rather than by Staff.*

*Port Dover is a vibrant waterfront community with a commercial fishing fleet, beach. Yacht Clubs, Sailing School, great theatre, restaurants and shops. All of these draw in local and tourist dollars and drive our economy.*

*There are 458 slips in the PDHM along with transient slips. If this marina is sold, not only will part of our marine heritage be lost, but a large portion of public waterfront access to Long Point Bay will be permanently removed and the County would no longer have any say in the development of the land. In addition, the PDYC Sailing School, which has operated at the marina for more than 15 years, would lose its access to Lake Erie and most likely end up having to close.*

*Since Port Dover is known as one of the few safe harbours on Lake Erie, of great concern is the issue of where boaters will be able to seek protection if the Marina is sold.*

*Ms. Lewis, as our federal representative, the Association is seeking your support for Norfolk County retaining ownership of the Port Dover Harbour Marina and are asking for any advice or guidance that you can provide.*

*Sincerely,*

*Marg Creighton  
PDWPA Secretary*