



Port Dover Waterfront PRESERVATION ASSOCIATION



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Since the Annual Meeting last October, the Port Dover Waterfront Preservation Association (PDWPA) has been active on a number of high-profile issues relating to public access to our beautiful waterfront, to ensure that it remains a vital part of the local community and a draw for the economically important tourist industry of our town.

PORT DOVER HARBOUR MARINA (PDHM) AND WATERFRONT PARK

Marina Fees

Following the 25 per cent increase in Marina fees for the 2025 season, there was a huge loss of boaters because fees were no longer competitive. The PDWPA continues to advocate for more reasonable fees to help rebuild the clientele.

Norfolk County responded by implementing some reductions. The Association continues to be concerned about revenue generators for the Marina because anything that makes it appear less economic raises the potential that there will be a move to sell it, perhaps for residential development. In June, 2025, a condo development proposal was presented to Council-in-Committee and received as information. As yet, it has not been considered or approved.

Governance

In March, 2026, Norfolk County adopted a Staff recommendation to create two Municipal Development Corporations (MDCs) that act largely independently of the County within guidelines established by Council: MDC1 was created to administer a tourist levy to be charged for short-term accommodation, whereas MDC2 would manage the acquisition of land for industrial development AND oversee the development of the PDHM. The PDWPA feels strongly that the two functions of MDC2 are incompatible and will lead to inadequate oversight of the Marina, given that the governing board will be unlikely to include a critical number of individuals with direct knowledge of Marina management. The Association is also concerned that the set-up cost of MDC2, which includes the hiring of two new staff members, will be excessive. One of our Directors suggested in a deputation to Council that an MDC3 be established to govern the Marina. This proposal has been ignored. The PDWPA continues to watch developments as the detailed mandate for MDC2 is to be debated by Council early in 2027.

It is noteworthy that the Port Rowan Harbour Marina is not included in the planned MDC2. Instead, control of it has been transferred to the Department of Recreation, Culture and Events on the basis that it is considered to function more as a park than a marina. The PDWPA met with the Port Rowan Harbour Committee, a citizen group analogous to the PDWPA that monitors the Port Rowan Harbour Marina, to discuss common issues. The two groups will remain separate, but will continue to work collaboratively where appropriate.

If you have thoughts about this proposal or any other issues relating to the Port Dover waterfront, you are encouraged to make them known to our local councillor, Adam Veri at adam.veri@norfolkcounty.ca.

Port Dover Harbourfront Park and Public Access

It has been the position of the PDWPA for some time that the marina property has enormous potential beyond its current use solely as a marina that gives the appearance of excluding everyone except boaters. Indeed, the Association is striving to promote the concept of the marina property as being a public park that happens to have a marina. On January 20th, 2026, the Association presented the Harbourfront Park Vision to the Port Dover Lions Club. Community support and partnerships along with support from Council are important for this project to move forward. Certainly, the Marina is open to non-boaters at present, despite the imposing fence (thankfully, the “No Trespassing” signs have been taken down), but much more could be done to make it an appealing destination.

Indeed, the Association has recently learned that all the benches and patio chairs at the PDHM are available for public use. Picnic tables in the pavilion are also available when not in use by marina patrons. Please note, however, that the gazebos are for patrons only. Park your car or bike in designated areas and enjoy this beautiful waterfront area.



With regard to public access, it is notable that there is no way to walk to the Marina easily; access is essentially limited to people driving. The only street access is by way of Passmore Avenue that does not have a sidewalk. Other possible pedestrian accesses could be generated on the southern extension of Ontario Street, and by constructing a walkway that would follow the eastern side of the harbour channel,

allowing pedestrians to cross the Highway 6 lift bridge and then turn right onto Lynn River Court, ending up at Landing Park directly opposite the Dover Wharf Condominium development. From there, it is a short walk behind the Commercial Harbour businesses to the Marina.



Marina Dredging

The PDWPA continues to monitor the issue of siltation of the Port Dover Harbour Marina entrance, which has led to restricted access for large boats, including the Coast Guard's vessel. A similar, but worse, siltation problem exists in the Port Rowan Harbour Marina, in part due to failure in the past to address a known

problem of sediment accumulation. Contamination of the sediment is a significant issue in Port Rowan, but is apparently a less serious concern for the Port Dover Harbour Marina. The PDWPA will watch developments and provide input as appropriate.

PROPERTY ADJACENT TO THE DOVER WHARF CONDOMINIUMS

The Association has been monitoring the property beside the Dover Wharf Condominiums on Harbour Street as constant erosion has been occurring due to the removal of the former building and deterioration of the seawall. This has resulted in the property becoming both a safety concern and an eye sore on the waterfront. The owner has been waiting for the necessary permits to rebuild the seawall. Since the Federal Government owns part of this property that borders the Lynn River, it is the Association's hope that a waterfront connection to the Lighthouse Trail will be provided.



ENTRANCE GATE TO THE PORT DOVER PIER

Last year, to the consternation of many people, the Port Dover Harbour Authority erected a fence at the landward end of the Port Dover Pier. This was done at the insistence of the Federal Government, which owns the Pier, in response to three ongoing lawsuits relating to accidents that had occurred on piers elsewhere in Ontario. Since construction of the fence, there has been considerable

unhappiness, both with its presence (non-negotiable) and its lack of esthetic appeal. The PDWPA has been working actively over the last several months, in cooperation with the Port Dover Harbour Authority, to develop a design for a more attractive entrance that will withstand the elements for decades. A rendering of the selected design prepared by Daryl Granger is provided below. Of this design, Daryl says:

"I'm excited to present my concept for the gate at the Port Dover Pier, drawing inspiration from my documentary "Netting the Waters". My vision is to create a striking gate that resembles a fishing net. This design will feature net floats that suspend the net, with buoys and flags marking its beginning and end—celebrating our fishing heritage. To enhance its charm, I propose adding silhouettes of perch and pickerel, which will cast beautiful shadows on the ground at sunset, creating a captivating atmosphere for visitors. Above the gate, a silhouette of a fishing tug will allow the sky to shine through, symbolizing abundance and the promise of a good catch, with seagulls soaring above as a sign of prosperity. This design not only beautifies the pier but also strengthens our community connection to its fishing legacy."



The Association is very pleased to announce that fundraising for the construction and installation has already started, with approximately one quarter of the total anticipated cost (ca. \$10,000) having been promised by the Port Dover Harbour Authority, the Port Dover Lions Club, as well as present and past members of the Board of the PDWPA. It is hoped that replacement of the existing fence will take place this fall, after the end of the current tourist season.

In order to complete this visually impressive project, the Association is initiating a fund-raising effort. Any contribution, large or small, will be appreciated greatly and will have lasting benefit to the Port Dover community. The plan is to place the names of all donors who give \$500 or more on the fence, to recognize their valuable contribution. Details of how to make a contribution are provided at the end of this Newsletter.

PROTECT OUR WATERFRONTS (POW) FACEBOOK GROUP

Warren Cummings, our Secretary, has created the Facebook group site **Protect Our Waterfronts (POW)** so that members and the public can voice their concerns and receive information about waterfront-related issues. This is a “private” group to discourage postings by individuals who do not have an affinity with the local community. We encourage you to join if you haven’t already. Posting of pictures of Port Dover and adjacent waterfront scenes, as well as comments about issues relating to our local waterfronts, are most welcome.

UPCOMING MUNICIPAL ELECTION

Norfolk County Council controls many of the issues relating to access to and development of the Port Dover waterfront. Therefore, the upcoming municipal election on October 26th, 2026, is of significant importance. It is vital that we understand how candidates feel about the issues such as the governance and future of the Marina property, the revitalization of Silver Lake, the extension of trails giving access to the waterfront, and the general protection of that waterfront that contributes to defining the nature of Port Dover. Please make your concerns and wishes known to the individuals who are running for office. Question them about how they plan to address the issues relating to the waterfront. There are many communities in Canada and around the world that have failed to realize the importance of waterfront access until it is too late. Please don’t let Port Dover join that sad group.

If you are interested in following Council activities relating to waterfront issues, there are several options. We recommend going to the link

<https://www.norfolkcounty.ca/>.

At the very top of the page, you will see a notification of the next Council meeting or Council-in-Committee meeting, with links where you can access a copy of the Agenda with the accompanying reports or to watch the meeting live (at the date and time posted). (Council-in-Committee meetings are where issues are discussed before coming to the Council Meeting for formal ratification. Past meetings can also be watched after the video feed has been posted). Below this line, you will see the heading "News and Notices". By clicking on this link you can sign up to receive notifications from the County on a range of subjects of your choosing. These notices are a simple way of keeping up to date on what the Council and County are doing.

MEMBERSHIP, DONATIONS, VOLUNTEERING, AND ANNUAL MEETING

MEMBERSHIP

The PDWPA relies on membership dues to exist as an organization and to fund its activities. Without our dedicated members, the PDWPA would cease to exist. It would not be able to keep an eye on activities affecting the waterfront or to advocate for projects that would make the waterfront more accessible to the public. Thus, you are encouraged to purchase your membership for 2027 now. If you aren't a member, we would welcome your participation. Payment of dues (\$20.00 per year) is possible by using one of four options:

- cash given to a member of the Board;
- cheque made payable to the "PDWPA", mailed to Warren Cummings, PDWPA Secretary, P.O. Box 67, Waterford, ON N0E 1Y0;
- e-transfer to pdwpa20@gmail.com; or by
- credit card. This option will be forthcoming soon. Check the PDWPA website <https://portdoverwaterfront.ca> for details as they become available.

New members should include a completed [Membership Application Form](#) with their payment.

In an effort to attract new members, the Association will be holding two **membership drives at the Silver Lake Market, on Saturday, Sept. 5 and Sept. 26, from 8:00 am until 12:30 pm.** We hope to have a larger copy of the proposed new entrance to the Port Dover Pier on display for people to see. You can also renew your membership at these times.

DONATIONS

If you are also interested in making a donation to the installation of the entrance to the Port Dover Pier (see above), the amount of your donation can be included in your payment; any amount over and above the \$20 membership fee will be added to the fund for the pier entrance gate, with our sincere thanks.

VOLUNTEERING

The Association is always looking for members to volunteer to serve on the Board of Directors and to help out with our membership drives, fundraising, and other activities. If you have a few hours to spare, we would appreciate hearing from you. If you are interested in serving as a Director, please contact Warren Cummings warren.cummings@rogers.com by mid September.

ANNUAL MEETING

Our 2026 Annual Meeting will be held **Wednesday, October 7th at 7:00 pm in Walt's Kitchen at the Silver Lake Market.** You will hear more about what the Association has been doing and you can renew your membership for 2027 at that time. This is also your chance to mix with other individuals who are committed to preserving public access to the waterfront. We look forward to seeing you there.

For additional information on these and other waterfront issues, you can also visit the website of the Port Dover Waterfront Preservation Association at <https://portdoverwaterfront.ca>.

