



Friends of the Spit

P.O. Box 467, Station J
Toronto, Ontario M4J 4Z2

SPECIAL ISSUE

September 1985

AQUATIC PARK MASTER PLAN -- A BATTLE HAS BEEN LOST.....

At its September 6 meeting, the Water and Related Land Management Advisory Board (WRLMAB) of the Metropolitan Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (MTRCA) approved "in principle" Option 3 of Aquatic Park Master Plan, Phase I, which divides the Spit into three zones: "recreation", i.e. sailing clubs, etc., "natural resources", and "future development".

The Aquatic Park Master Plan was prepared by the Aquatic Park Task Force (an advisory body comprising MTRCA staff and representatives of government departments and agencies, including the Toronto Harbour Commission). The WRLMAB approved the Plan Option 3 despite the fact that of the 131 public and interest group submissions in response to Phase I Master Plan, the vast majority, that is 122, or 93 percent, were IN FAVOUR OF MAINTAINING THE ENTIRE SPIT AS A NATURAL RESOURCES AREA, (i.e. Option 1).

OUR GREATEST THANKS TO ALL WHO WROTE TO THE MTRCA.

MTRCA GLOSSES OVER OVERWHELMING MAJORITY IN FAVOUR OF OPTION 1.....

Prior to the vote, Craig Mather, Director, MTRCA Water Resources Division, declared that while "the majority (122) were in favour of maintaining the entire Spit as a natural resources area... it is apparent that most responses followed the publication of a nature column in the Toronto Star and in the Friends of the Spit newsletter..." (We wonder about the impartiality of such comments, because 1) boaters must also have read the Toronto Star, and 2) were not their newsletters reporting on the issue! OR were the boaters so confident that they did not bother to write because they had advance knowledge that Option 3 would be approved regardless of the public submissions.

500!!!!....

When questioned about the number of berths the MTRCA would construct (with taxpayer's money!) on the Spit, Mr. Mather replied that "there will be facilities for 500 boats", and that Embayment C (see map) would be paved to provide parking for boaters' cars. He urged the WRLMAB to "prevent any further delay" by approving the Master Plan and its Option 3.

DISCUSSION.....

Two major points were raised by members of the WRLMAB during the discussion preceeding the vote. 1) R.A.P. Moran (see box) stated that he had come prepared to approve Option 3 as a "good, reasonable compromise" that would satisfy the various interests. After hearing deputations from the boaters, he had come to the conclusion that the boaters would never be satisfied until they took over the whole Spit, gradually requesting more space for the expansion of their facilities. 2) A proposed City of Toronto zoning by-law would forbid parking of cars on the Spit which would drastically affect the implementation of Option 3 since boaters need car access to their moorings. Bob Yuill (see box) declared that the MTRCA should seek from the Province a ruling to allow the MTRCA to overrule Toronto by-laws. (We wonder what Mr. Yuill's reaction would be if the MTRCA attempted to overrule a North York by-law.)

THE VOTE

Of the 13 WRLMAB members present, five voted against the recommendation to approve Option 3 (which divides the Spit into three zones), and eight in favour.

This means that 38 percent of the WRLMAB members who voted did not agree with their own staff's recommendation. It seems that this is the first such split vote since the appointment of this WRLMAB.

How the vote went

The following WRLMAB members voted against Option 3: R.J. Crowe, Region of Peel; Elizabeth Gomes, Metropolitan Toronto; Lois Griffin, Etobicoke; Rocco Maragna, Borough of York; R.A.P. Moran, Region of York.
These members voted in favour of Option 3: W.G. McLean, Durham; Bryn Lloyd, Toronto; B.V. Orsini; M.M. Smith, QC, Toronto; Norah Stoner, Durham; Dr. W.M. Tovell, Toronto (seconded the motion); Helen White, Toronto; Bob Yuill, North York (moved the motion), William Belfontaine, Scarborough, was present at the meeting but absent for the vote.

WHAT HAPPENS NOW? -- THE FIGHT GOES ON

PRACTICAL HELP.....

Writing, phoning, meeting, lobbying all take time and money. We lost a battle and now we have to escalate our efforts. The fight isn't over yet, just the battle ground is shifting. Do you have time to help us by joining the Steering Committee? If not, can you help us financially?

POLITICAL INFLUENCE.....

In 1986, the MTRCA Board is going to be re-shuffled and streamlined. New members will be elected representatives (Alderman, etc.) from the Cities, Boroughs, and Regions within the MTRCA boundaries. In the upcoming election, find out where the candidates in your ward stand on the issue. Raise the question at all-candidate meetings. Support candidates that support no development of The Spit.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS.....

We intend to investigate the legal implications of the MTRCA Plan from both an environmental and a zoning point of view. Unfortunately none of the present Steering Committee are lawyers. To pursue this line of attack we need a **lawyer!** Are you a lawyer? Can you help? Can you help find a lawyer?

PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT INPUT.....

We are presently arranging meetings with the Ministers of Tourism & Recreation, Natural Resources, and Environment. Although their staff endorsed Option 3 prior to MTRCA publishing the results of the Public Input, we know that the Ministers decide the final outcome. Both Marion Bryden MPP (NDP) and David Reveille MPP (NDP) have expressed their support for Friends of The Spit (Mrs. Bryden is a particularly active ally). We do need Liberal Support. Are you a Liberal? Is your MPP a Liberal? Can you influence your MPP?

THEY IGNORED YOU!

We know more than 122 letters were sent to the MTRCA supporting a let it be approach. Some of these letters were not counted as received and all of them were ignored or the staff wouldn't have recommended Option 3. Did you write a letter? Write again protesting their attitude to your input and send a copy to Chairman of the Authority, Mr. W.T. Foster, at the MTRCA address or at 164 Princess Anne Crescent, Islington, M9A 2R6.

MONEY.....

We are at the major crisis. We need money to continue the fight. Can you send us a special contribution? Can you send us your 1986 dues now?

IMPORTANT MEETING

NOVEMBER 1, 1985 at 10:00 A.M. at the Black Creek Pioneer Village Visitors' Centre, the full Board of the MTRCA will be meeting, to ratify the decision made at "Committee Level" to accept Option 3. We will be making a deputation at that meeting. The more speakers the better. Can you speak at this meeting? Can you attend to show strength in numbers? It is very important that the Board votes against Option 3 or defers a decision until a true report of Public Input is made. To be put on the speakers' list call 661-6600.

IF YOU CAN HELP,.....

CALL:	Jacqueline Courval	699-6442
	John & Victoria Carley	463-0089
	Lee Gold	691-4215
	Gene Desfor	767-9859

TORONTO HARBOUR COMMISSION ASKED TO DEFEND HYDROPLANE RACING REPORT.....

The Executive Committee was struck by the discrepancy between the THC claims that the races caused no disturbance, including no "offensive" noise levels, and the number of complaints from citizens regarding the deafening noise levels, curtailment of the use of the bicycle trail, etc. A letter from Friends of the Spit listing the damage and nuisance seen by our observers was sent to the members of the Executive Committee.

During its September 4 meeting, the Executive Committee heard a deputation by Friends of the Spit. Our deputation stated that the THC had "thumbed its nose" at the City by holding the races against the wishes of City Council and reminded the Committee that only one of the three city-appointed Harbour Commissioners had voted against the races, and that the City of Toronto should "examine the relevance of the THC in the present context of ever-decreasing commercial shipping and the citizen's increasing demands for free access to their waterfront, before it is entirely used by the THC to its own ends". (The THC is planning a 1,200 berths marina on the neck of the Spit.)