

Algonquin Trail Stakeholder Consultation Meeting

April 27, 2018.

1. What do you see as the future of the rail trail within Head, Clara & Maria?

We feel that the trail system will offer our Township a wonderful opportunity to show case our magnificent wilderness and Ottawa Valley hospitality. [REDACTED] have owned and operated [REDACTED] businesses in our municipality and we have had the opportunity to interact with many visitors during our [REDACTED] years of ownership. These people were always amazed at the amount of experiences our little community has to offer. (i.e., hiking, fishing, ATVing, hunting, snowmobiling, camping, sightseeing, etc.). Our area is truly unique because it covers a huge tract of land with a remarkably low population. This is one of the main reasons we are different from everyone else. Over the years [REDACTED] paid to be graded by different tourist associations. These people always commented on our ability to give visitors a rare opportunity to explore a truly natural Canadian wilderness.

Added Benefits of Tourism for the township

As a side benefit the local businesses in our community have provided our Township with many rate payers over the years. These people started coming to our municipality for a holiday and as part of their retirement they moved here or bought cottages or camps.

Also, many of our residents live here because they enjoy all of the activities that the Algonquin trail will be promoting. We have a very active recreation committee in this community and the trail will help them to come up with local events and groups that can come together to enjoy the great outdoors.

We attended the council meeting in April and Cathy McKay mentioned that she wanted to promote some community building events in the township and we feel that the trail system would offer a perfect venue for these type of ideas.

2.What development would you like to see within Head, Clara & Maria?

This trail system will help the Township to further develop tourism. In the past few years 4 businesses have been sold to new families. These new owners are made up of people who are planning on making our township their forever home. These businesses have exciting plans to promote our area. They made the lifestyle choice of raising their families in a rural community. It is exciting to see anyone embrace this challenge because in this day and age it is hard to get young people to break away from technology long enough to get outside to enjoy a whiff of fresh air. [REDACTED] know from personal experience that it is hard work to operate your own business and any way to promote more visitors to the area is truly welcomed. When you operate a small business, you have to do a majority of the work yourself in order to cover your overhead costs. If these businesses had an enhanced income, they would be in a better position to hire local people.

3.How do you feel about the potential for creation of new business through a municipal corporation to raise funds for the municipality through methods other than taxation?

We think that the Township has an exciting opportunity to enhance the amenities that are already offered by our businesses. “The Mom and Pop businesses” that we do have would benefit if the services that the municipality offered did not overlap with any of their endeavors. (i.e., the trail side café provided a food service during the winter).

We do not see the benefit of our municipality purchasing a business offering a full range of services because the expenses would take many years to recoup and would be in direct competition with people who are trying to make a living in our community.

(i.e., initial cost of purchase, insurance, wages, maintenance, etc.)

4. Do you have any concerns with increased development along the trail? For you personally? For the community? For residents who live along the trail?

██████████ attended the January council meeting when representatives from Renfrew County presented a slide show concerning the Algonquin Trail System. We found out that there is an operating budget for trail improvements for such as: Brushing, Fencing, Mowing, Signage, Inspection, Garbage, Bridge Repairs, and Gates. There are also Grants available and revenue coming in from existing leases and partnerships with different trail organizations and stakeholders. We feel that if these things are put in place, the increased development will not have a negative impact on our residents.

5. Are you concerned with any negative effects of the trail development? For you personally? For the community? For residents who live along the trail?

Even if all of the things in question number four are put into place, there will still have to some way to monitor the Algonquin Trail through our Township.

At [REDACTED] we have an operating [REDACTED] Improvement Plan. This plan is revisited monthly at our staff meetings. We celebrate successes, monitor concerns, and make adjustments to our practices accordingly. This concept would help the Township form a committee to oversee the Algonquin Trail. Different stakeholders from our municipality could have a voice. This would help to address any problems in a timely fashion. It would also provide feedback on what is going well.

We would like to thank you for giving us this opportunity to speak about this matter. I would like to end with a two-minute commercial from Go Rving.com. This little advertisement is a perfect example of how our Township could help visitors create the unforgettable memories of a lifetime.