

## **WORA AGM MINUTES, September 6, 2025**

- The meeting was held at St. Thomas' Church, Shanty Bay. **Domenic Natale, President of WORA**, called the meeting to order at 10:38 am. 52 people were in attendance.
- **Michael Higgins**, Vice President of WORA, offered to donate the proceeds from a three-day reduced-price rental of his suite at the St. Regis Manhattan hotel to WORA.
- Domenic gave **Opening Remarks**, welcomed everyone, and introduced the WORA Executive and Advisory Board.
- Domenic delivered the **Treasurer's Report**, of behalf of Kelly Lazar, who could not be present due to a conflict. He noted that Kelly is retiring from the WORA Board and he thanked her for her years of support and service.
- For the period July 1st, 2024 to June 30th, 2025, WORA had Revenue of \$8,210, Expenses of \$6,291.12, Cash of \$7,227. A resolution was unanimously passed to retain Accounting firm J.D. Accounting and Business Services for fiscal 2026.
- **Election of Officers:** To fill the opening for one additional Board member, Barry Lipson, a distinguished lawyer and published author, and resident of Oro-Medonte, was elected by unanimous vote by members.
- **Resolution to approve the Board's activities during the past year:** Motion by Brenda Harris, seconded by Bruce McCartney, approved unanimously.
- **Updates:**
  - Domenic read an email from **Jane Voorheis**, unable to attend, on the Barrie annexation issue, subsequently discussed in the meeting as part of our Discussion with our Elected Officials.
  - **David Johnston** reported on the current situation with STR's. We are entering the "end game". STR operators want the unchallenged right to operate in any neighbourhood of the township. Licensing has not proved

to be effective anywhere. He issued a call to action: Attend the consultations; oppose the idea of licensing STR's anywhere they are not currently permitted. It is important to "SHOW UP and PUSH BACK!!!" *We are all only one bad real estate deal from having an STR next door.*

- **Margaret Prophet** gave an update on the work of the Simcoe County Greenbelt Coalition (SCGC) and the upcoming Greenbelt Review. She underscored the fact that the excuse being used to justify expansion into the Greenbelt – namely to address the housing shortage – is false. There is more than sufficient land to build needed housing within existing urban boundaries. Like David, Margaret urged public engagement to support the Greenbelt. Called on folks to attend the Oro Township Council meeting on September 24.
- **Claire Malcolmson**, retiring Executive Director of the Rescue Lake Simcoe Coalition after seven years; Claire will stay on the Board and will continue her work for environmental causes as a consultant. Claire spoke about the frustration of dealing with a Provincial Government that does not care about protecting the environment. She highlighted two major issues: the impact of massive storm events, related to climate change, which are delivering huge amounts of phosphorous into Lake Simcoe; and salt pollution, noting that Ontario is the biggest user of winter salt in Canada, responsible for nearly 50% of salt use across the nation. Claire called on WORA members to take action at [www.saltcoalition.ca](http://www.saltcoalition.ca) to add their voice to protect Ontario waters. The salt issue is linked to sprawl, with more roads meaning more salt adding to water pollution. A new report on Lake Simcoe Protection is due soon.
- **In Conversation with our Elected Officials: Mayor Randy Greenlaw; Deputy Mayor/Ward 4 Councillor Peter Lavoie; Ward 3 Councillor David Clark:** Mayor Greenlaw opened the conversation with a brief update, noting that the staff changes made in this term have created the

most competent, qualified senior staff team anywhere. Topics discussed included:

1. **Annexation:** Both Barrie and Orillia are seeking to annex parts of O-M. For details of the proposal go to the Springwater municipal website - <https://www.springwater.ca/en/news/township-of-springwater-releases-legal-opinion-on-city-of-barrie-s-proposed-boundary-adjustment.aspx> as they have been told to keep them confidential. All three speakers underscored that the Province has the final say, that there has been no public input, that *they are doing the best they can with the cards they have been dealt...they are between a rock and a hard place...they will have to take what we take. The Province holds all the cards.* For instance, O-M has not yet been reimbursed for its clean-up costs from the Spring ice-storm, despite being the first township to complete the clean-up and submit the invoice as required, being told that the repayment may be linked to the annexation settlement. They noted that there is no justification for annexation of township land either for residential or industrial purposes; even the report by Hemson Consulting states that Oro-Medonte land is not needed for industrial expansion; nor for residential land, since Barrie needs only to intensify development within its current borders.
2. **STR's:** In response to a question as to why Council included licensing STR's in any neighbourhood, even where not currently permitted, as a choice in its report on policy options, despite a commitment to protect residents from STR's and the noxious intrusion effects they cause, the political response was they were obliged to *include all options.* An objection was made that by listing it as an option, Council was implying that all the options had equal value, which is clearly wrong! The response from our politicians was that STR's are a province-wide, even national and international growing problem and

that Oro-Medonte Council was not likely to succeed where other bigger urban municipalities are failing.

3. **Other issues raised were:** **Dark Sky lighting** -they are working on it; **Conservation Authorities**- they have asked the Province to amalgamate the Lake Simcoe and Nottawasaga Authorities to save overhead costs and improve efficiencies; and **O-M boundaries** – realignment is under consideration, reducing the number of wards from 6 to 5.