

THE GARDINER

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REAL ESTATE LIMITED, BROKERAGE

CHRISTIE'S
INTERNATIONAL REAL ESTATE

Muskoka Newsletter, Spring 2020

www.CottagesInMuskoka.com

MUSKOKA COTTAGE REAL ESTATE MARKET UPDATE 2019/20

What emerged in urban resale markets as a major concern in 2019 was a chronic dwindling of supply. Over the past three years, since the implementation of the foreign buyer's tax in early 2017, most urban centers in Southern Ontario have witnessed the number of available properties reduced to unprecedented low levels. At year-end in the greater Toronto area, for example, there were just over 7,000 properties for sale, a 35 percent decline from the year before.

In 2017 and 2018 the same trend was developing in the Muskoka and area recreational, waterfront marketplace. Although the declines in supply were not as severe as in urban markets, they were concerning. For reasons that are not entirely clear, that trend was reversed in 2019, throughout the recreational marketplace in Muskoka and the surrounding waterfront regions. In 2019, 3,268 waterfront properties came to market, a substantial increase compared to the 2,917 properties available to recreational waterfront buyers in 2018, an increase of 12 percent. (Key metrics provided by the Lakelands Association of Realtors.)

In the broader marketplace sales of recreational properties remained stable. In 2018, 1,586 properties were reported sold, a number that increased to 1,602 properties in 2019, a modest increase of 1 percent. Although sales were stable, prices continued to increase. In 2019 the average price for waterfront property sales throughout the region came in at \$767,482, a 5.2 percent increase compared to the average sale price of \$729,481 achieved in 2018. These numbers clearly indicate that the days of finding an inexpensive waterfront property anywhere in the region are over. By comparison, the average price for a home in the greater Toronto area in December was just over \$830,000.

The above noted average sale prices are elevated by the higher average sale prices of recreational properties on Muskoka's Big Lakes (Lakes Joseph, Rosseau, and Muskoka) and Lake of Bays. By contrast, in Haliburton and Almaguin Highlands, the average sale price for waterfront properties was just under \$500,000 and slightly higher in the Haliburton region at \$551,553. In both of these regions inventory levels increased

substantially compared to 2018.

The Lake of Bays/Huntsville waterfront marketplace continued its contrarian pattern. As in other regions, listings of waterfront properties increased in 2019, from 400 in 2018 to 439 this year. However, reported sales did not follow suit, with sales declining from 201 in 2018 to 175 this year. It would appear that the Lake of Bays/Huntsville market finds itself in that middle space where prices are too high for some buyers, who then look to Haliburton or even Almaguin Highlands for a recreational property, and the substantially higher sales prices of recreational properties on Muskoka's Big Lakes.

Like all other regions, the District of Muskoka saw an increase in waterfront listings in 2019. In 2018 there were 1,222 properties available for sale, increasing to 1,297 in 2019, an increase of just over 6 percent. Sales remained stable, marginally decreasing year-over-year. As it did in the broader market, the average sale price increased from \$922,510 in 2018 to \$1,004,992 by the end of this year, a 9 percent increase.



Average sales prices continued to increase on Muskoka's Big Lakes, and quite substantially at that. In 2018 the average sale price for recreational properties sold on Lakes Muskoka, Rosseau, and Joseph (for sales over \$500,000) came in at \$2,069,142. In 2019 that number increased by a head-turning 25 percent to over \$2,600,000. This represents a sharp rebound in prices compared to the lows of 2018 following a spike in average prices in 2017. These average sale prices were represented by stable sales, with 165 in 2018 and 162 this year. Most of the sales (more than 50 percent) took place on the lower-priced Lake Muskoka.

Chestnut Park and its sales representatives

had a banner year, with increased sales and increased dollar volume. Once again Chestnut Park's Port Carling office dominated the market place, with sales volumes in excess of 125 percent compared to the closest competitive office. Overall Chestnut Park's sales volume increased by 10 percent compared to 2018, and dollar volume increased by 11 percent, achieving more than a 15 percent share of the entire recreation market place.

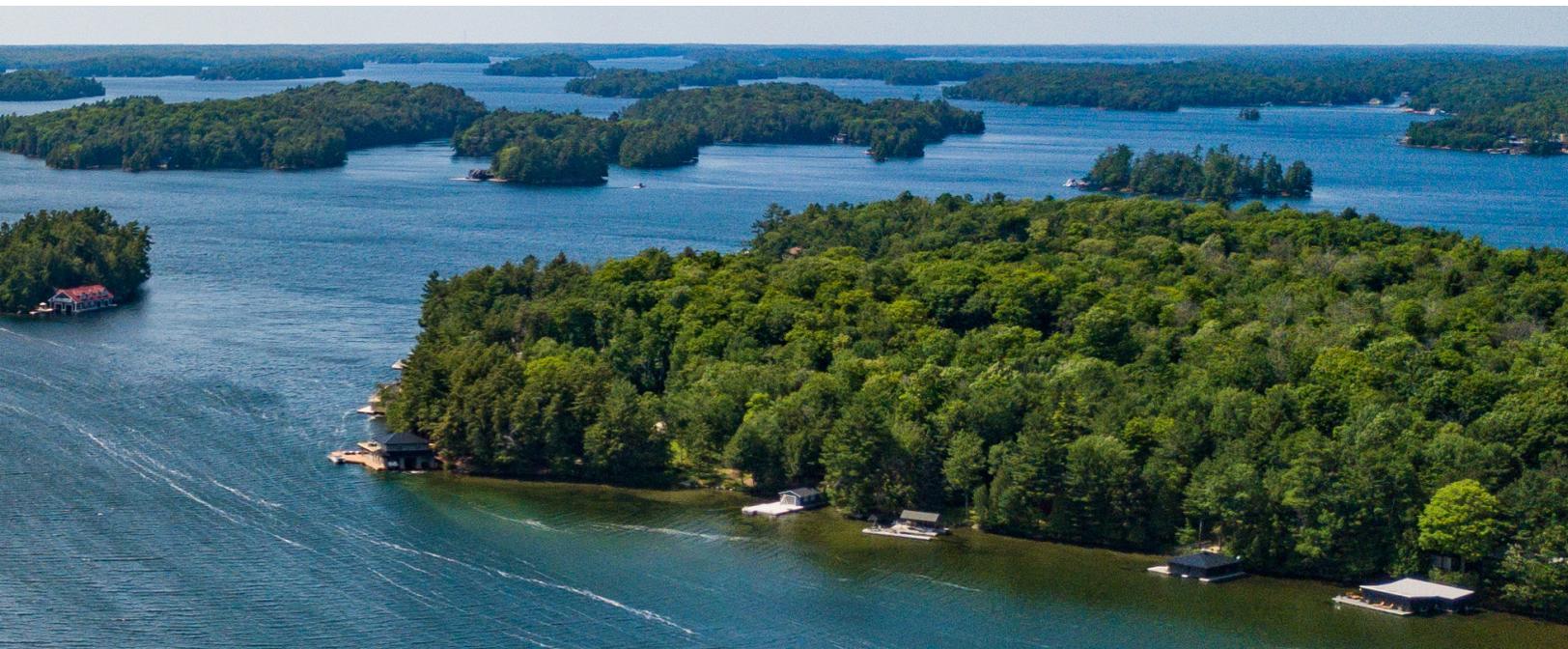
Looking forward to 2020, and barring any major economic disturbance, either nationally or internationally, the recreational landscape should remain little changed. Unlike urban markets, supply is improving, which will give

buyers some choice. Increased supply should have a moderating impact on prices, especially give the fact that they have reached fairly frothy levels, except in a few local marketplaces. This may be the year in which buyers see the value in Lake of Bays/Huntsville, where sales have lagged other regions. Of course, the Muskoka Big Lakes appear to march to their own drummer, especially in a climate of economic prosperity. Expect prices to rise on the Big Lakes but not as dramatically as they did in 2019.

Prepared by Chris Kapches, President & CEO, Chestnut Park Real Estate Ltd.

FREE COTTAGE EVALUATION

If you would like a **FREE**, confidential evaluation of your cottage property for estate planning, potential sale or insurance purposes, just let us know. We are always available to provide this service.



MUSKOKA COTTAGE MARKET WATCH

NUMBER OF LISTINGS & SALES

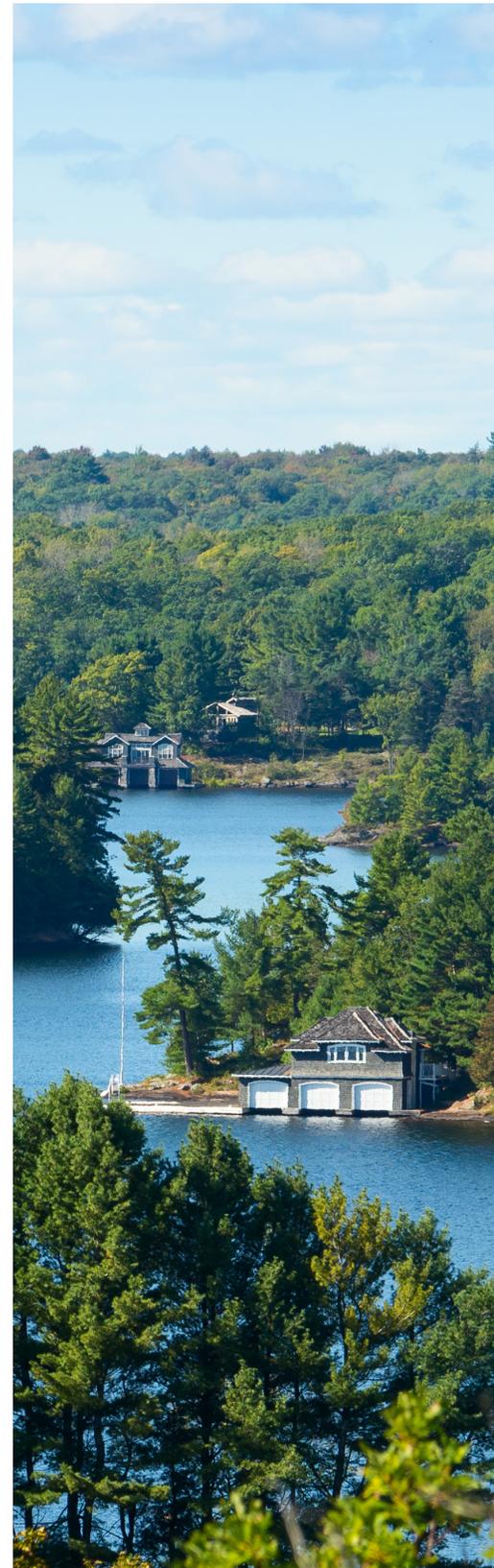
Unit Sales Volume – Summary of Waterfront Single Family MLS® Listings and Sales for the last 4 years by area as reported by The Lakelands Association of REALTORS®

Area/Type	Waterfront Single Family Listings				Waterfront Single Family Solds			
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2016	2017	2018	2019
Muskoka Lakes Township	476	454	331	383	290	259	180	184
Bracebridge	135	146	144	162	85	87	95	100
Gravenhurst	223	202	133	191	120	110	89	90
Lake of Bays	320	271	224	234	162	147	115	89
Huntsville	265	151	176	205	128	81	86	86
Total Muskoka	1419	1224	1044	1175	785	684	565	549
Lake Joseph	111	92	55	78	54	44	32	28
Lake Rosseau	86	71	68	85	57	37	32	41
Lake Muskoka	230	248	180	203	119	139	101	93
Lake of Bays	169	153	135	150	68	59	58	58
Huntsville Big 4*	136	72	77	111	72	45	30	37

*Mary Lake, Fairy Lake, Peninsula Lake, Vernon Lake

Sales by Price Range — Summary of Waterfront Single Family MLS® Listings and Sales for the last 4 years by area and price range as reported by The Lakelands Association of REALTORS®

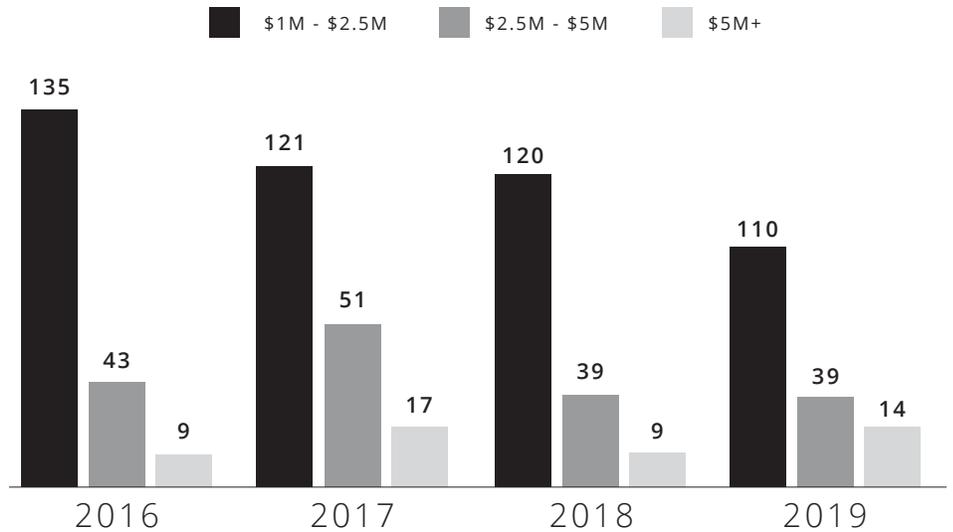
Area/Type	Listings				Solds			
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2016	2017	2018	2019
Muskoka Lakes Township								
Over \$5M	23	37	26	45	7	13	8	13
\$2.5M - \$5M	62	75	61	81	24	39	24	32
\$1M - \$2.5M	128	133	115	137	77	80	68	69
Bracebridge								
Over \$5M	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0
\$2.5M - \$5M	2	4	3	5	0	2	3	1
\$1M - \$2.5M	12	15	17	15	3	7	10	7
Gravenhurst								
Over \$5M	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
\$2.5M - \$5M	5	9	6	10	1	3	2	1
\$1M - \$2.5M	32	40	32	38	17	16	15	13
Total Muskoka Lakes								
Over \$5M	24	37	26	43	7	13	8	13
\$2.5M - \$5M	69	88	70	96	25	44	29	34
\$1M - \$2.5M	172	188	164	190	97	103	93	89
Lake of Bays / Huntsville								
Under \$1M	467	317	260	275	247	191	158	132
\$1M - \$3M	106	93	115	148	41	34	41	40
Over \$3M	13	12	26	17	3	2	3	3





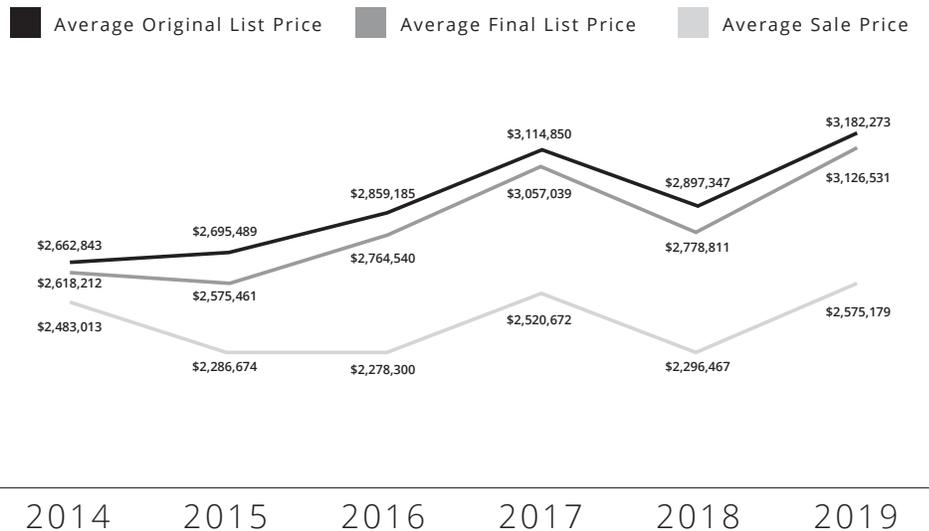
COTTAGE SALES BY YEAR AND PRICE RANGE

Lakes Muskoka, Rosseau & Joseph
and Lake of Bays/Huntsville*
Sales Over \$500,000



*Mary Lake, Fairy Lake, Peninsula Lake, Vernon Lake

Average Price of Lakes Muskoka, Joseph and Rosseau Sales Over \$1M



WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING IN MUSKOKA

The winter of 2018/2019 was long, with a normal amount of snow. However, spring was a different matter. The abnormally high-water content in the snowpack due to the late winter rain, the frozen ground, warm temperatures, and early spring rain, all combined to produce historically high flood levels on the major Muskoka lakes. **More on this situation later in this newsletter.** We then went from flood conditions to very low water levels in late summer, and then unusually high levels in late fall. The Old Farmer's Almanac is predicting that this winter's temperatures, precipitation and snowfall will all be above normal. Next summer is anticipated to be hotter than normal, with precipitation being above normal.

Iris and I were able to spend some time last winter in Mexico – in Ajijic and Cancun. With the assistance of our Team members and the availability of our technology aids, we were able to manage our business without missing a beat. We always have updates to our marketing materials and website to work on, and regular contact with our past and current clients to attend to while we travel.

The 2019 business year was another interesting, challenging, and rewarding year for The Gardiner Team. We would like to thank our many Seller and Buyer clients who contributed to this success. We thank you all for your business and your referrals of family members, friends and business colleagues to us for their Muskoka real estate needs. The referral component of our business continues to grow year over year, along with repeat business from past clients. We sincerely thank you all!

In November, we attended the National Association of REALTORS® 4-day conference held in San Francisco, the largest conference of its kind in the world. By attending, we are able to stay abreast of the latest information and trends affecting the real estate business. Iris and I attended over 20 educational sessions and the vendor expo with over 500 exhibitors. It was well worth the time and expense, and will definitely help us provide the very best of real estate services to our clients.

Our Team member, Lesley-Anne Goodfellow, once again had an outstanding year of condominium sales in both Bracebridge and Huntsville, along with an increased amount of residential activity. With her background as the builder's sales representative for her father's many condominium projects, Lesley-Anne has an intimate knowledge of the various condominium projects in Muskoka, and is well positioned to assist both local residents and retirees who are transitioning to Muskoka, plus cottagers who are selling their recreational properties but still want to maintain a presence in Muskoka. Lesley-Anne maintains a long list of eager buyers willing to jump at a suitable new condo offering.

Our daughter Amanda's real estate career continues to flourish with one of Canada's top performing real estate teams - the Heaps-Estrin Team in Toronto. She is an amazing real estate agent and we couldn't be more proud of her. She has been able to assist a number of our clients with their Toronto residential real estate needs.

Our son Shawn, his wife Shelley, and our grandsons, Hunter and Chase, are also doing well. They continue to travel extensively, with recent visits to Mexico, Orlando Disney World, and London England for a family wedding. We couldn't be prouder grandparents and always look forward to spending time with them whenever we can.

We rely on an extended, comprehensive network of professionals, who are part of our extended Team, to successfully manage our real estate transactions through their many phases. We would like to extend a very special thank you to all the lawyers, bankers/mortgage brokers, home inspectors, surveyors, website gurus, Real Estate Board staff, Chestnut Park (Port Carling) office staff, Chestnut Park (Toronto) marketing support staff, insurers, co-operating real estate agents, brokers and cooperating real estate office staff who contribute to bringing our real estate transactions to a successful and efficient conclusion. A heart-felt "Thank You" to you all!!



RESORT & COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT



BRACEBRIDGE

Touchstone Resort, on Lake Muskoka, is well underway with its Phase 2 development. The newest Cascades buildings are now complete, as are the beach area villas. Once Phase 2 is completed there will be 66 new 1 to 4-bedroom freehold condominium units, in addition to the existing 33 fractional condominium units. Due to the recent LPAT decision, buyers of these units should now be able to close on their purchase transactions, after a prolonged delay.

Right next door to the Touchstone Resort, but independent from it, is the new Villas of Muskoka Condominium development, located on the old Tamwood Resort property. Construction is complete on 8 of the buildings. This development has become a centre of controversy in the larger issue of residential use of resort properties (See separate article on this issue).

In Bracebridge, The Waterways development located beside the HWY 118 Bridge over the Muskoka River has made significant headway with the completion of existing buildings as well as some new construction. We are still not sure what will happen with the 2 exposed foundations that you can see from the bridge. They've been exposed to the elements for a number of years now.

GRAVENHURST

In Gravenhurst, the owners of Taboo Resort have indicated that they are still trying to obtain permission to build additional condominium units on the site of the old main

lodge and restaurant building which partially burned down and then, later, was totally demolished. An announcement in this regard is expected in 2020.

MINETT

At the JW Marriott, plans are still on hold with regard to selling off the remaining 132-hotel/condo units, which were not sold to individual investors when Ken Fowler (the original developer) originally offered them for sale back in 2009. Owned now by Canadian Niagara Hotels (CNH), these units are a unique form of condo ownership, which provide the owners with 9 weeks of personal usage (not consecutive) per year, with the unit being part of the hotel rental pool for the remaining 43 weeks. In 2016 it appeared that the various lawsuits between the hotel unit owners and CNH had been finally resolved, with some long overdue rental payout made to the owners at that time. However, more disagreements have again surfaced between the unit owners and CHN.

In late 2018, Cleveland's House Resort, Wallace Marine, The Rock golf course and a substantial amount of Lake Rosseau waterfront and acreage, were sold to a local Lake Rosseau cottager, Mitch Goldhar. What plans Mr. Goldhar has for these properties are still not known at the time of writing this newsletter. To the best of our knowledge, no plans for the properties have been submitted to the Township for review and approval.

The 43-unit Legacy Cottages development located on the site of the old Lakeside Lodge

on Lake Rosseau, is in limbo until the results of the February 27-28, 2020, Local Planning Appeal Tribunal (LPAT) hearing are known. The developers are permitted to start construction on the units for which building permits have been issued. However, the developer will not be entitled to sell these units as individual units unless they receive a favourable ruling from the LPAT hearings.

HUNTSVILLE

In Huntsville/Lake of Bays, sales continue in the development of new residential units at the old Grandview Resort, and two new condo-type projects have been announced - The "Tom", featuring a campus-like wooded site with walkways beside the hospital, and "Lakeside Muskoka" off Hwy 60. Both are exciting and ambitious projects we hope will be successful.

Commercially, the new brewpub located in the old Dollarama building in Brendale Square downtown Huntsville has had some "limited opening" events to great fanfare, and construction is well underway for the massive redevelopment of the Dominion building in the middle of the downtown area.

Much discussion ensued over the closure of the downtown Huntsville branch of the TD bank, leaving only the new location near Walmart. The former building will be headquarters to the illustrious Wolfe Co. Apparel and Goods, a Zahara's Boutique, and modern second storey rental apartments.

MUSKOKA'S RESTAURANT SCENE



Muskoka's restaurant scene is a vibrant and ever-changing one. While trying to cover all the restaurant changes and additions is beyond the scope of this newsletter, a few notable changes that have come to our attention are as follows:

As has been the case for a few years now, most restaurants, along with retail stores, fast-food outlets and resorts, have struggled with staffing issues. It is so bad that some fast-food outlets are bussing in workers from Barrie on a daily basis.

BRACEBRIDGE

In Bracebridge, the Main Street Deli has re-opened in their new, expanded premises on Manitoba Street, featuring its previous deli menu plus new nightly dinner specials. A welcome new addition to town is Marigold Unique Flavours, an Indian restaurant that has taken over the old Thai restaurant on Manitoba St. Very tasty food presented in a casual/simple setting. Sully's (of local food truck fame) a small casual restaurant, has co-located with Katalyst Brewing Co. in the former downtown location of Muskoka Breweries.

The newest additions in Bracebridge are a Mucho Burrito outlet in the Tim Horton's plaza, and a change of ownership of Signatures on Manitoba Street. It is now called Kitchen's Pastry & Catering, serving breakfast and lunch, in addition to a variety of baked goods. It is owned by two very experienced chefs, so we are expecting great things.

A new brewhouse, owned by Lake of Bays Brewery, is scheduled to open this spring, in the Tim Hortons plaza. We expect it to be similar to the one in Huntsville which

features great pub food and a variety of interesting beers. The Tim Hortons plaza has become the epicentre for casual food in Bracebridge. Parking will likely become an issue at this location, with so many dining venues all requiring parking for patrons.

PORT CARLING

In Port Carling, the restaurant scene remained largely unchanged, with the exception of the change in ownership and name of the former Loondocks. The restaurant is now called Portside Fusion, and as the name implies, offers a varied menu. Great food and a lovely outside patio when the weather permits.

GRAVENHURST

Boston Pizza on the waterfront in Gravenhurst reopened very late in 2018. Hopefully the very high water levels this past spring will not cause a repeat of the rot and mould issues that caused the shutdown and extensive renovation of this restaurant in 2018. With its waterfront location and an extensive menu, it is a very popular place, year round.

HUNTSVILLE

After last year's flurry of new international dining venues hit Huntsville, this year has been relatively quiet. One of our favourite dining venues, Spencer's Tall Trees, has changed hands and is now called Tall Trees Muskoka. The new owners continue to offer a high-quality dining experience and friendly service in the century home on the hill. Two riverfront restaurants, Pub on the Docks and Boston Pizza, which were affected by the spring flooding, are taking advantage of the winter lull to expand and enhance their river view seating areas in preparation for next summer's busy season.

OUR PERSONAL FAVOURITES:

We have often been asked what our favourite dining spots are. Here's what comes to mind at the moment. This list is constantly evolving, so please let us know if you have a favourite place we may have missed:

BRACEBRIDGE

Riverwalk, El Pueblito, Main Street Deli, The Old Station, Pasta Tree & Smoke House, Andrea's Steak House, Marigold Unique Flavours Wabora, and Sully's

PORT CARLING

Turtle Jack's and the Port Carling Golf Club (if you can wangle an invitation by a member), The Water's Edge (Lake Joseph Club in Port Sandfield) and Portside Fusion

GRAVENHURST

The Oar, Dock of the Bay, The Creative Plate on HWY 169, between Gravenhurst and Bala

BALA

Moon River Lookout (we have had some great dinners there this year), Cottage Cravings (great for lunch and hot chocolate), and the Lakeside Cafe

BAYSVILLE

Cast Iron Restaurant

HUNTSVILLE

Tall Trees Muskoka, Marigold Unique Flavours, That Little Place by the Lights, The Artisan House, Bartlett Lodge in Algonquin Park (boat ride taxi to fine dining)

ROSSEAU

Crossroads

ORILLIA

Era 67



THOUGHTS ON DOCK BUILDING

This is a follow-up to the article on docks in last year's newsletter. As a cottage owner in Muskoka, there is a good chance you have had to have your dock repaired or replaced. If a new dock, or repairs to your current dock are in your plans for the future, there are a number of aspects to the project we would suggest you research and consider before committing to this expensive undertaking.

ONE

There are no Ontario Building Code (OBC) specifications for docks. Buyer beware!

TWO

Plans for a new dock or major repairs to an existing dock must be approved by the local Building Department, and most likely, a building permit will have to be obtained.

THREE

Before deciding on where to put your new dock, you will need to check with the local municipal Building Department regarding setbacks, permitted size, etc. You will also need to check on how your shoreline is designated by the Federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans regarding fish habitat. Your shoreline may need a special study to be undertaken by a specialist to determine what can and cannot be built.

FOUR

If your proposed dock is intended to support a boathouse, single-storey or two-storey, you will need to have technical design and construction drawings, stamped by a Professional Engineer. The same Engineer that stamped the drawings is also required to physically inspect the finished constructed dock and certify that it was built according to the plans. This is required before the Building Department will issue a building permit for a boathouse. Use a Professional Engineer who has experience with designing docks in Muskoka.

FIVE

Specifications for a dock can vary widely, as there are no OBC specifications. Some design elements (type of piling, grade of steel for pilings, cross-bracing, method of fastening dock decking to the underlying steel structure, etc.) are inherently stronger than others. The stronger, the better, in order to withstand ice pressure and floatation effects during flooding.

SIX

The cost of a dock can vary widely, depending on the dock builder and the design specifications. Cheaper is usually not better. Obtain a few quotes, based on the same technical specifications.

SEVEN

Unless you are using stainless steel dock piles (or wood cribs), the steel piles will rust over time. The thicker the steel and the higher quality of steel, the longer the dock piles will last before requiring repair or replacement.

EIGHT

Floating docks are always an option, even with a two-storey boathouse on top of them. A floating dock will go a long way towards solving the potential damage issues associated with spring flooding. Note that floating docks also require a building permit from the Building Department.

NINE

If you are going to finish the inside of the lower level of your boathouse, you will want to consider installing air vents in the interior perimeter walls to allow the walls to more quickly dry out in the event they are submerged during flooding. This reduces the risk of mold and rot developing inside the wall cavity.

TEN

We strongly suggest using ceramic coated deck screws to fasten the dock deck boards (wood or composite) so that individual boards can more easily be lifted up for repair or inspection, without damaging the surrounding boards.

RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT DISGUISED AS RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT ON MUSKOKA'S LAKES

The following article is a repeat of the article we published in last year's newsletter, followed with an update on the situation...

Phil Harding is Mayor of Muskoka Lakes Township. He provided the following opinion on the threat and reality of commercial scale residential development on Muskoka's lakes, prior to being elected Mayor.

Residential development at commercial density; this is problematic for Muskoka.

Over the past number of years, many resort properties have tried to redevelop and/or rebuild, but have now moved away from a commercial venture, to one that is 95 per cent residential and not available to the travelling public for increased tourism.

We know Muskoka was built on tourism and resort properties, especially during the summer months. Hotel guests who often fall in love with Muskoka and then subsequently purchase property have helped to develop Muskoka into one of the most sought-after regions in the world.

The issue today, beyond the fact that Muskoka is already extremely busy during the summer months, is that tourism is declining, and developers are convinced they have to sell residential and cottage properties, to make money. The problem with this is that by adding residential development at commercial densities, we contravene the well-established residential development policies designed to protect the environment. This excessive and unnecessary development, strictly benefiting the developers, threatens water quality, our infrastructure and the safety of our lakes. We have to understand changes in the ecosystem over the past 50 years and predict where it is going. We have to understand how our waterways are utilized and what impact these extreme densities of individual boat owners will have on the carrying capacity of the lakes.

Regrettably, some commercial properties have recently been redeveloped under commercial policies, zoning and densities, but have been marketing their properties as "residential, affordable waterfront living." They are utilizing a condominium type of ownership to have the property placed into a rental pool for a couple weeks a quarter (simulating in their opinion, commercial), while at the same time suggesting owners don't even have to vacate if they rent to family.

This is bait and switch and this overdevelopment will destroy Muskoka. At the end of the day, it will be the existing property owners who will experience overcrowding on the water, negative environmental impacts and financial infrastructure deficits needed to service this gross overdevelopment.

It is time to rethink our commercial zoning policies. It is time we understand the recreational carrying capacity of our lakes. It is time we recognize that residential development disguised as commercial has virtually no economic benefit other than lining the pockets of the developers and significantly jeopardizing all things Muskoka.

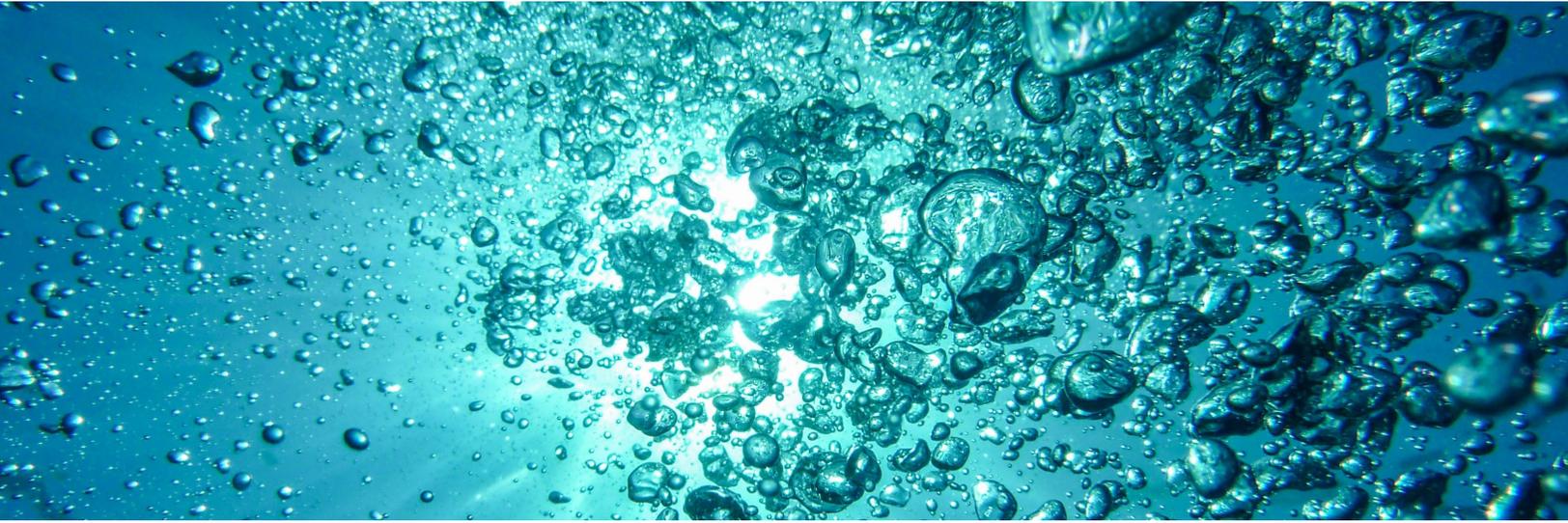
Examples of the type of development that Mr. Harding is referencing are Legacy Cottages in Minett, The Villas of Muskoka development on Lake Muskoka and the new whole ownership condos at Touchstone Resort on Lake Muskoka. There are approximately 100 such commercial resort properties in Muskoka that could potentially be developed along these same lines, if action is not taken to prevent it or modify the nature of the redevelopment.



THIS YEAR'S UPDATE ON THIS ISSUE:

The Local Planning Appeal Tribunal (LPAT) decision on the Villas of Muskoka (formerly Tamwood Resort) and MIST/Touchstone Resort developments issued on October 16, 2019, did not go as hoped for by most Muskoka cottagers, granting the developers the right to carry on with their plans. The LPAT effectively endorsed the developers redefinition of a commercial resort to include individually titled, condominium units with an 8 to 12 week rental pool obligation. However, it is felt that this decision does not set a precedent for other LPAT hearings, most notably the February 27-28, 2020, LPAT hearing on the Legacy Cottages, a 43 cottage units development in Minett. The Township of Muskoka Lakes is hoping they will be able to close the current loophole that permits these developments, as part of the update to the Township's Official Plan. Readers of this newsletter have a very vested interest to support the Township's initiative in this regard.

THE GREAT FLOOD OF 2019



As a cottage owner, you will be well aware of the devastating flood conditions that Muskoka experienced in the spring of 2019. All areas of Muskoka were affected, but perhaps the biggest financial impact occurred on Lake Muskoka, where water levels reached 2 ½ to 3 feet above dock level. In fact, the water was so high on Lake Muskoka that water was flowing backwards – from Lake Muskoka into the Indian River at Port Carling. We witnessed this ourselves over a two-day period. Simply astounding to watch!

The question on everybody's mind is "Is this the new normal?", given we have had abnormal, "once in 100 years" flood conditions, in 3 of the last 6 years.

In July 2019, the Ontario Government appointed Doug McNeil as Special Advisor on Flooding. In his review, Mr. McNeil confirmed that this year's record setting flooding in many parts of the province was caused by a combination of weather conditions...colder-than-average winter and spring temperatures, higher-than-average snowpack, lack of

significant winter thaw and significant rain events in the spring. The Flood Advisor also confirmed that the 42 dams in the Muskoka watershed are not intended for flood control. The management of these dams is controlled through the Muskoka River Water Management Plan. He also found that nothing pointed to human error or the negligent operation of water control structures as the cause of the flooding, and that government and its partners were effective at reducing and mitigating flood risks. You can read the complete 157-page report by going to Ontario.ca/floodreport

Our interpretation of this report is that there are no quick fixes to Muskoka's (and Ontario in general) risk of spring flooding. We can likely anticipate more spring flooding events if weather conditions are similar to the spring of 2019. We find it interesting to note that the Special Advisor on Flooding, Mr. McNeil, found that nothing pointed to human error or negligent operation of water control structures as the cause of this spring's flooding. Many people in Muskoka jumped to the conclusion

that this, in fact, was the reason that flooding in Muskoka was so extensive and severe. We have heard, informally, that the MNRF will be undertaking one prolonged water level drawdown on Lake Muskoka, and possibly Lakes Rosseau and Joseph also, rather than the two-step process employed in the past. If this approach is taken, it may be at the expense of some fish species, as the past first drawdown late in the year was to force the fish to spawn out in deeper water where their eggs would not freeze when the larger winter drawdown took place. We are sure there will be a lot of attention paid to this process this year. If you are interested in monitoring your lake level in real time, you can go to wateroffice.ec.gc.ca click on Hydrometric Station and Network Data, click on Real-time Station Search and enter Station # 02EB018 for Lake Muskoka (Beaumaris) and Station # 02EB020 for Lake Rosseau and Joseph (Port Carling). Other lake data can be found by using the system tools.

IS OUR REGION CALLED "MUSKOKA" OR "THE MUSKOKAS"?

In last year's newsletter we posed the question as to what the name our beloved region is called. We asked for your input, and you provided it. It was not an extensive or scientific poll, but the overwhelming response was "Muskoka". In fact, we received no support or arguments in favour of "The Muskokas". I won't go into some of the comments we received about people who call the region "The Muskokas" (LOL).

IRIS & JIM'S SPRING PICKS

\$11,750,000



ESCAPE REALITY!

You need to be here at this newly built luxurious Lake Joseph cottage! Walls of glass! Spectacular S/W open lake views with multiple comfortable sitting areas. Built & designed by renowned Edgewood Cottages. Sweeping private frontage. There is a garage + Gym, plus stunning 2-story BH. Start making memories of a lifetime

\$5,995,000



EXQUISITE, MODERN LAKE ROSSEAU HIDEAWAY

Ultimate privacy awaits and presents you with a protected swim cove, sand beach, 2-storey boathouse, plus a fabulous contemporary cottage, all with sunset exposure. Things don't get much better than this!

\$2,199,000



ALL THAT IS MISSING IS YOU!

Gorgeous contemporary design with sunset views on Fairy Lake. Visually stunning 232' lot along with 2.75 acres. To be built by high-end builder of luxury Muskoka homes with an unrivaled dedication to quality & detail (+HST)

\$869,000



YOUR ISLAND ESCAPE AWAITS YOU

This very special cottage is ultra-private, with a great view. Features include a spacious living area overlooking the lake, a stone fireplace, 4 bedrooms (1 features a small loft), and a large master with 4 pcs ensuite. There is an incredible 370' of waterfront with deep & shallow water, and the bonus ability to build a 2-storey Boathouse. Sandy shallow water entry for little ones on one side & an inclinator at the 2nd dock to carry all your belongings and guests to the cottage without straining yourself complete the picture. Make your dreams come true!

\$599,000



LOVE TO GOLF?

Then you need to be here at Muskoka Bay! Enjoy a carefree lifestyle at this beautiful 4 bedroom, spacious villa with a golf course view. It comes fully furnished so you just move in and enjoy. Don't miss out on this fabulous opportunity to be in Muskoka and golf every day :-)

\$599,000



GOLF, SWIM, BOAT

Come and enjoy this completely renovated, gorgeous Grandview condo with spectacular views. Walk to the golf course or the private dock to swim. No matter what, you can't help but relax and have fun here. Close to all Huntsville amenities.

\$399,000



COME AND MAKE NEW FRIENDS

Don't miss out on this highly social and well looked after condominium lifestyle. This highly desirable "Legends at the Falls" condo in Bracebridge features one bedroom plus a den, overlooking the falls and Bracebridge Bay. Walk downtown, walk to the river and beach. Come see why this is the building everyone wants to be in!

SEE ALL OUR LISTINGS IN MORE
DETAIL AND WITH PHOTOS AT
www.CottagesInMuskoka.com

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MAKING THE SEARCH EASY!

If you, a family member or a business colleague are in the market for a Muskoka cottage property, or you just want to keep tabs on what's happening in the Muskoka cottage real estate market, please let us know and we will be happy to set you up on our automated cottage search service. This **FREE** service will email you MLS® listings for newly listed properties, or currently listed properties that have just had a price reduction, that match your custom search criteria, up to 24 hours before they appear on REALTOR.ca. You will be the first to know!

If you would like to be added to this free service, please give us a call or let us know by email at GardinerTeam@gmail.com, with the subject line "Cottage Search". Please include your basic search criteria, such as desired investment range, desired lakes, minimum number of bedrooms and washrooms, etc. and we will tailor your search to these criteria as much as our system will allow.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Please "Like" our 2 Facebook pages - **Cottages In Muskoka** and **365 Things To Do In Muskoka**. If you know of a Muskoka event please post and we will re-post.

We continue to strive to make our website relevant and useful to you, the cottage owner. Please let us know of any further improvements you would like to see us make.

You are welcome to follow us on all our social media feeds.



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FREE MONTHLY EMAIL MUSKOKA COTTAGE REAL ESTATE NEWSLETTER!

We produce a **FREE** monthly newsletter that is emailed to subscribers. This newsletter features articles of current interest to home and cottage owners, including the current status of the cottage real estate market. If you would like to subscribe to this newsletter, **FREE** of charge, please send us an email to **GardinerTeam@gmail.com** with *"Monthly Newsletter"* in the subject line.

Note that under our privacy policy we will not sell or otherwise provide your email address to third parties, and you can unsubscribe at any time.

Below are some examples of the content in our monthly email newsletter.

Click to see the latest market update for Muskoka [View this email in your browser](#)

Facebook Twitter Website Email

Dream Cottage for November
\$5,990,000 - Lake Rosseau
What you will love about this property:
 Modern meets Muskoka. Lots of space, perfect for entertaining, huge views, Fun and Fantastic Muskoka Room. Two-story boathouse and a beach!

[READ MORE](#)

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The Fall Invest In Style Issue Is Out Now!

Some of the incredible articles featured in our new issue include our Feature Interview with Chef Anthony Walsh of Maison Selby, TIFF 2019, a spotlight on "The Great One" Wayne Gretzky, and an interior design article featuring Mary Ratcliffe Studio Launching its First Collection.

[READ MORE](#)

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Muskoka Cottage Market Watch, Updated October 31, 2019

Year	\$ 1M-2.5M	\$ 2.5M-5M	\$ 5M+
2016	135	43	9
2017	121	51	17
2018 to Oct 31	114	37	9
2018	120	39	9
2019 to Oct 31	104	35	14

Check out the latest market stats to see what we saw in Cottage real estate this fall.

[READ MORE](#)

News • Real Estate Tips • Interior Design & More

FROM THE BLOG

The Joy of Bespoke Stationery for the Holiday Season

No text or email can ever match the thrill of receiving something handmade—and if it's thick and embossed with your name in gold letters, so much the better. We profile three of the best bespoke stationery companies around.

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