

Speaking Notes – Brenda Quinn – 24 August 2020

Hello, my name is Brenda Quinn and I've been a Cobourg resident for many years now... a Northumberland resident for my whole life. I appreciate this opportunity to make my presentation to Mayor Henderson and the Council of the Corporation of the Town of Cobourg.

The purpose of my presentation today is to request that the town set up a Task Force which will be charged with coming up with a workable procedure to make the Victoria Park and Beach area "free" for Northumberland residents and ensure that all non-Northumberland residents pay a fee to use the Park and Beach.

My rationale for this recommendation is as follows:

Until my retirement three years ago, I was a downtown Cobourg retailer, a business my husband and I started back in 1988 . We currently own a commercial building in downtown Cobourg as well as a residence in Cobourg's east end and pay some pretty hefty property taxes into Cobourg coffers!

Over the past two decades I have become increasingly aware and concerned about the great influx of out-of-town visitors who are putting tremendous pressure on our Town's resources by flooding to our downtown beach and Victoria Park areas during the summer months. For the most part, these people have one destination in mind – the beach and/or Victoria Park. They bring their own food/supplies, set up, have picnics, sometimes illegally barbecue, and then in many cases, leave their garbage strewn around the park area. If parking areas near the beach/park are full, then they migrate to the nearby residential streets, parking haphazardly, often blocking driveways and leaving behind a lot of garbage that these homeowners must then deal with and pay to dispose of. Or – their alternative is to park in downtown commercial parking lots illegally, preventing legitimate customers from parking in these lots and again, leaving their garbage deposits behind when they depart the town at day's end.

Not to mention the huge cost of lifeguarding the Cobourg beach. I understood this to be budgeted at \$194,805 for just a three month period in 2020. I've also been informed that if a town supplies lifeguards for their beach, then the Town could be held liable should something happen to someone that these lifeguards aren't able to help. In these days of people suing everyone, that is a VERY scary scenario.

It would be worth looking into the Beach liability issue, should the Town NOT hire lifeguards, but posted the Beach as "Use at own risk" - Lifeguards NOT on duty, but supplied water safety information packages, similar to what is supplied in Ontario Provincial Parks. Ontario Parks do NOT provide lifeguards.

These out of town park and beach users do not shop downtown, they do not go to area restaurants- they don't stay overnight in area hotels – they come – enjoy the beach/park – sometimes by the busload, and then depart at the end of the day back to their homes in Durham, Clarington and Toronto, leaving the garbage remnants of their day behind.

The cost for Town Maintenance staff to pick up all this garbage and dispose of it on a daily basis must be very prohibitive ... and it's totally ridiculous that Cobourg residents are footing this bill day in- day-out, for up to five months each summer.

For me, this came to a head back in June of this year, when I was horrified to hear a figure of \$377,000 mentioned by Dean Hustwick, the Director of Community Services, for operating the Beach for the months of June, July and August in 2020 (when Council was talking about whether or not to close the beach this summer due to Covid-19.) I would imagine that for a "normal" year, this figure would be much higher as the season would be longer and going forward in subsequent years with increased sanitation and safety requirements re: Covid-19, the cost will of course be even higher.

We MUST get control of the rapidly increasing crowds who are coming to the Cobourg Beach and Victoria Park each summer. In subsequent summers, I would imagine the stress to our Beach and Park area will only be increased, as more and more communities are realizing just like I have, the costs and liabilities involved with opening their beaches and parks without control of the influx and repayment from out-of-towners for the services and amenities provided and thus will come up with user-pay systems of their own.

In view of what I have just detailed, I reiterate that the Council of the Corporation of the Town of Cobourg, strike up a Task Force as detailed earlier including local residents and downtown business and property owners, reporting to Councillor Emily Chorley in her role as Co-ordinator of Parks and Recreation Services. Town staff would provide research and secretarial/administrative services as required.. The Task Force's main goal will be to make the Beach/Park area self-supporting with a user-pay system. At this time, I would like to put my name forward as a volunteer for the Task Force once it's established, in my role as both a Cobourg resident and a downtown building owner.

The time to act is "now" - so as to have this working model well in place by June of 2021....
Thank you.