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Petition demands swift lake cleanup

TRACY KIBBLE
Staff Reporter

More than 330 Musselman's Lake and Ballantrae residents signed their names to a petition — instigated by Lake Musselman Club — asking the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville to protect the lake.

Club advisor Ken Jobe, a long-time lake resident, said if there had been more time, the club would have had 600 names supporting its cause.

The petition asks town council to "co-operate" with the tri-party study by the Ministry of the Environment, the Lake Simcoe and Region Conservation Authority and the York Region Board of Health, to establish a policy that would "protect the natural environment of the community and eliminate pollution."

But Mayor Fran Sainsbury said the expert tri-party group, headed by Ron Brooks from the ministry, is "addressing the concerns" and the town and the residents "have to be patient" until the final study results are documented before further action can be taken.

"I realize this red-tape process gets everybody down but the research document is not ready yet. I am asking (advocacy groups and concerned property owners) to wait for the document," she said in a telephone interview with The Tribune.

"These experts are taking the trouble at great expense to address concerns and we're doing everything we can (at this point)," she said.

The Lake Musselman Club — a group advocating the "Save Our Lake Project" — has put together a series of documents outlining its concerns and has delivered the petition to local media and the town office.

The club has been dedicating its time and effort to one cause: the preservation and protection from pollution of Musselman's Lake.

The club "fears a communal water system will increase the problem (of lake pollution)" and stated in a letter dated Oct. 25 to the mayor that "the introduction of this water system is premature. It is too costly and should not be installed until after a sewage system is constructed."

Council stymied on well-capping bylaw

TRACY KIBBLE
Staff Reporter

An advocacy group, against the Town's communal water system proposal for the Musselman's Lake-Ballantrae areas, said council cannot "legally" force residents to cap their own private wells.

The Musselman Lake Environmental Advisory Corporation wrote a lengthy letter to council last week regarding the group's concerns, including "exorbitant" shared costs for hookup and the Ministry of the Environment's "mandatory hookup" stipulation for funding.

"Legal council has advised us that no party can legally suggest or enforce mandatory capping of wells. Drilled or dug wells are private property and protected as such. Therefore, such a proposal should be removed as a consideration for individual hookup," the letter stated.

Mayor Fran Sainsbury told the Tribune, the involvement of solicitors gives cause for the town to refer to its own solicitors to check out and verify legalities.

"The capping of wells is (a solution) to prevent cross-contamination to the municipal water source (from private systems that may already be contaminated)," she said.

Gordon Ullman, the corporation's solicitor, also stated that according to the Municipal Act, a public vote is in order "to fairly register community opinion and decision."

Town council is waiting until the tri-party expert team from the three government agencies has completed the summer-long water quality and quantity study — results to be announced in a public meeting in early December — and further decisions will then be made.

