

Peterborough Examiner

Highlights and Red notations by Ambrose

Part 2 of a series: North Kawartha Township says provincial storm damage relief could be coming

frustrated Jack Lake cottager says it's too little, too late

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By **Brendan Burke** Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Sun., July 17, 2022 timer 4 min. rea

Facing sharp criticism from some Jack Lake residents who say the townships of North Kawartha and Havelock-Belmont-Methuen have failed to adequately assist cottagers in the wake of May 21's devastating derecho, both municipality's mayors say they're continuing to seek post-storm assistance from the province — and that Jack Lake cottagers have not been neglected post-storm. **Neither Township have made an application to Have Minister of Municipal Affairs activate the Disaster assistance Recovery Assistance For Ontarians (DRAO) I submitted a formal request July 7 2022 to both Havelock Belmont Methuen and North Kawartha Townships with propose motion for Townships to formally request activation of DRAO. HBM briefly discussed my request at their Council meeting July and then unanimously passed motion to receive my letter and not respond to it or act on it. I was advised late Friday afternoon July 15 that NK Mayor Caroline Amyotte would not even permit my letter requesting Provincial Financial Relief to be placed on the Council agenda for their July 21 meeting. Surprised Mayor would have that kind of authority to keep my request for Provincial Financial Relief from Council's attention.**

North Kawartha Mayor Carolyn Amyotte says the municipality is working to receive provincial support in the form of two programs: the Municipal Disaster Recovery Assistance program (MDRA), meant to help cities and towns recover from substantial damages following a natural disaster, including repair to public infrastructure, and the Disaster Recovery Assistance for Ontarians program (DRAO), which applies to private property and allows individuals to recoup losses not covered by insurance. **Shockingly this program.. even if activated in our area... will not assist cottagers— just permanent residents!!!even so neither Council has proceeded with a Council resolution for either Program. Uxbridge area was activated already, and Ottawa has submitted a Council resolution request to the Province.**

“The Ministry of **Municipal Affairs** has to activate those programs **Yes and neither HBM nor NK townships have requested activation** in order for the next steps to proceed. **I’m hopeful**, in talking with our MPP (Dave Smith) and Municipal Affairs Minister Steve Clark, that they will activate those two programs,” Amyotte said.

I and other affected waterfront residents are hopeful, but I am concerned that without aggressive support from our Townships and support from MPP that our area will not be activated for assistance. In communications with the provincial Disaster Assistance Officethey claim they sent Disaster Assistance Teams to assess damage and found that most of the damage to private property was insured. That is factual incorrect ...but cannot be resolved till the claim application process.... following decision by Minister of Municipal Affairs to activate the relief program in our area.

“**There will be some infrastructure that we will hopefully get some coverage on**” continued Amyotte.

Street talk in Apsley area is that the North Kawartha Township only had damage to two light fixtures at a wharf on Stoney Lake and Hydro repair crews scratch a particular road surface. There might be more but request for this information to both twp Staff and Mayor Amyotte was not to be available 5 weeks after the storm.

For municipalities to be eligible for assistance through the MDRA program, the recovery costs must equal at least three per cent of the municipality's taxation revenue for that year.

As of last week, the City of Peterborough was not eligible for MDRA funding. The city has racked up \$3.3 million in cleanup costs — a million less than the three per cent of taxation revenue total needed to kickstart the program.

While Amyotte won't know for certain until later this week, she's confident North Kawartha's recovery costs will "meet and surpass threshold for disaster assistance."

In an email to the Examiner, the township's CAO Alana Solman said "preliminary estimates of the cost of the storm to date and future recovery are approximately \$300,000." Solman said this amount would exceed North Kawartha's three per cent threshold. **It will be interesting to see what is included and surprising this information would be made available to media and denied to a ratepayer based on my request.**

But for some Jack Lake area cottagers, talk of incoming assistance is too little, too late.

Longtime Jack Lake cottager Ambrose Moran, whose storm-damaged property is located in North Kawartha Township, wants to know why area cottagers weren't on the receiving end of additional supports from the get-go — when Amyotte declared a state of emergency.

Mayor Amyotte while under state of emergency was allowed to act without any Council input and refused to consider establishing requested brush depots convenient to affected property owners

Faced with power outages, downed trees, hydro poles and light posts, damaged infrastructure, disrupted internet, blocked roads and severed communication channels between key emergency services, Amyotte made the declaration on May 22, activating the township's Emergency Control Group and triggering its Municipal Emergency Response Plan.

Mayor Amyotte declared State of Emergency Sunday May 22 and had first meeting with Emergency Control Group Tuesday May 24. Monday was a statutory Holiday!!

Eight days after declaring State of Emergency Mayor Amyotte did a tour of the township!! ..Very small parts of the Township were damaged mainly North Shore of Stony Lake and the small part of Jack lake within North Kawartha.

“Taking this action means that our local government has access to outside resources and support,” Amyotte stated at the time.

The only additional resource NK Mayor Amyotte can identify is the fact that The County of Peterborough made available their Brush Depots— BUT- this service was made to all County residents regardless of whether a state of emergency was declared.

And

I can not image any Jack Lake travelling 60 to 100 km each way to deposit brush at depots they would need maps to find in Havelock Douro Buckhorn or Millbrook.

And

Surprise such a program would support transporting firewood to distant areas along with gypsy moth invested brush to be hosted by our southern County facilities. Government of Canada is restricting transfer of firewood to mitigate spread of certain beetles in trees.

Below is Mayor Amyotte announcement of the only additional resources she made available to Jack Lake ratepayers and my FB reaction



Mayor Carolyn Amyotte

June 24 at 6:20 PM · 🌐



Wind Storm Cleanup

Peterborough County

Residential brush can be dropped off at any Peterborough County public works depot for free.

- Douro Depot – 713 County Road 4
- Havelock Depot – 649 County Road 46
- Centreline Depot – 1275 County Road 24
- Buckhorn Depot – 2467 County Road 36
- Millbrook Depot – 1111 County Road 10

The County is providing this service as part of the wind storm cleanup and is available for residents and not commercial or industrial brush.



Ambrose Moran

How stupid do people think we are that we would drive at least an hour both ways to get rid of brush I just got rid of another large trailer load 5 minutes from here and not on private property and certainly not in a designated township request brush depot. And there were no particular operating days or hours or size restrictions and no tipping fees. Anyone knowledgeable about putting in place waste management programs would take into consideration energy cost which would not support individuals transporting brush very long distances An environmentally friendly brush disposal program would be based on chipping near source. Cottagers are starting to accept that no help will be available from townships despite claiming to be doing their best



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The declaration left Moran and other Jack Lake cottagers asking the same question: What “outside resources” are being used to help waterfront residents? Cottagers lamented “inconvenient” transfer stations and a lack of action to address a heightened fire risk due to scattered brush.

In response to cottagers’ frustrations. Amyotte said many residents have been “taking care of their own property, doing what they need to do, using extra resources we’ve provided.”

There were NO extra Resources provided by North Kawartha and simple request to just establish convenient brush depots was repeatedly denied by Mayor Amyotte who took a “Business as Usual” approach and yes property owners.. who experience far more damage than the very minimal experience by the Township.... have had no choice but proceed with cleanup without any assistance. It is my observation that some individual waterfront property owners on Jack Lake had damage exceeding the total damage to all the NK Municipal infrastructure.

In an email to the Examiner, the township’s CAO Alana Solman said “preliminary estimates of the cost of the storm to date and future recovery are approximately \$300,000.” Solman said this amount would exceed North Kawartha’s three per cent threshold. **That is to qualify for municipality to receive assistance - not property owners**

But for some Jack Lake area cottagers, talk of incoming assistance is too little, too late.

Asked what those extra resources are, Amyotte said, “it comes back to opening up our transfer sites in different locations, coordinating with Peterborough County; opening up those locations for people to take their brush and debris to — something we wouldn’t normally do.” **60 to 100 km away each way !!**

While the state of emergency is over — it was lifted on June 17 — those resources will “continue to be provided for the foreseeable future,” she said.

In a June 7 council meeting, Solman said “declaring the emergency is not related to the disaster assistance program. A lot of people think those things

are related ... That wasn't the reason we declared ... one is not dependent on the other."

Without triggering immediate financial relief, Moran says the state of emergency declaration amounted to "ceremonial" political posturing that ultimately did little **NOTHING** to help cottagers. Residents would have been better served had the township requested the province to designate the region as a natural disaster zone — a move undertaken by the City of Ottawa in June — he said.

Neither NK or HBM Townships have formally ask for Province to activate financial assistance program and Mayor Amyotte refused to allow my request to even go to Council for upcoming Council meeting.

"The May 21 storm is a wake-up call for what can be expected from local governments to support waterfront property owners in need when climate change produces future storms and natural disasters. Lessons need to be learned. It is unsettling to think what local and provincial governments would do if a real disaster occurred requiring significant response," said Moran.

But Amyotte maintains the municipality has been steadfast in its response.

"No one has been forgotten or ignored. There's a big picture and that's what we have to look at — all of North Kawartha. Hundreds of people have come together to help each other. I'm pretty proud overall." **I agree Cottagers have come together and in fact opened up North Kawartha Public Roads but Mayor Amyotte has contributed nothing to assist cottages.**

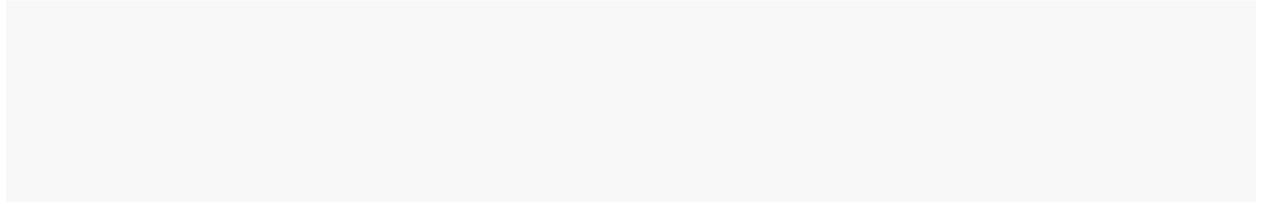
Meanwhile, Martin says Havelock-Belmont-Methuen is continuing to work with the province to secure any additional supports that are available.

But HBM Mayor Martin and his Councilors vote unanimously On July 12 not to support my provided motion to request our area be activated by Province for Disaster Relief funding

Brendan Burke is a staff reporter at the Examiner, based in Peterborough. His reporting is funded by the Canadian government through its Local Journalism Initiative.

Link to article with photos PETERBOROUGH EXAMINER if you are able to open

<https://www.thestar.com/pe/news/peterborough-region/2022/07/17/part-2-of-a-series-north-kawartha-township-says-provincial-storm-damage-relief-could-be-coming.html>



Link to web site www.ApsleyWatch.com --→ storm Damage