

May 16, 2019

To: Council, c/o the Clerk

From: the President of the FOCA Board of Directors

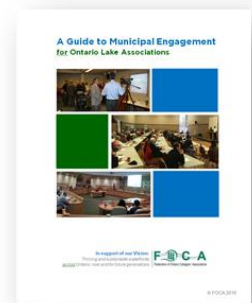
Rural Ontario: we're in this together.

The Federation of Ontario Cottagers' Associations (FOCA) is a residents' group that represents waterfront property owners across Ontario, including a number of families in your Municipality. FOCA is a not-for-profit membership organization, the largest non-farm landowner group in Ontario, with 50,000 member families in more than 500 lake and road Associations.

Our members are your rural residents.

Lake Associations are an important voice in your rural community. Lake Associations are engaged in community-building through local events, in citizen science through water sampling (such as the Lake Partner Program), and in educating and connecting the community on concerns they face every day, from affordability to environmental and policy changes that affect residents.

Lake Associations and their representatives are an important link to your Council, and a source of valuable insight. FOCA has recently developed a ***"Guide to Municipal Engagement for Lake Associations,"*** and we have encouraged our members to reach out to their local Councils, to open or to refresh lines of communication. A digital copy of the Guide is available from the FOCA office (email us: communications@foca.on.ca).



Municipalities deliver some of our most valued public services, including roads, policing, land use planning, bylaw development and enforcement. **What else are local Lake Associations telling us they are concerned about?**

- Responsible short-term rental standards (<https://foca.on.ca/responsible-cottage-rental/>)
- Sustainability in the face of a changing climate (<https://foca.on.ca/climate-change-and-waterfront-ontario/>)
- Septic systems, particularly related to municipal re-inspection programs (<https://foca.on.ca/septic-systems/>)
- Emergency response in remote areas (<https://foca.on.ca/weather-extremes-and-emergency-preparedness/>)
- Roads (<https://foca.on.ca/whos-in-charge/>) and rural services (<https://foca.on.ca/utilities-and-rural-services-overview/>)
- Shifting demographics, as seasonal residents become—in some cases—permanent, and expect year-round services, as well as opportunities to contribute as entrepreneurs or business owners in their rural economies. (<https://foca.on.ca/waterfront-property-owners-and-rural-economic-development/>)

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FOCA is a bridge to the 250,000 waterfront property families across the province who contribute a combined \$800+ million in annual property taxes, steward 15,000 kilometres of shorelines, and own 50,000 hectares of land.

What can your Council do this year?

1. Connect with your local Lake Association representatives. You will find a map that shows all FOCA member Associations in your area, here: <https://foca.on.ca/member-services/list-of-associations/>, or contact FOCA (info@foca.on.ca) to help make the connection.
2. Recognize that consultations scheduled between April and October will receive increased stakeholder input from your seasonal residents, and can be viewed as more inclusive of your waterfront property owners. Maximize your use of digital notices, e-newsletters, web postings and other tools that enable residents to participate, wherever they are. Notices in the local paper are no longer sufficient, when it comes to notifying your constituents about important community events or decisions.
3. Use plain-language notices to help all citizens understand the decisions being made. For great examples from your peers who have already successfully taken up this challenge, visit: <http://www.dazzleawards.ca/>
4. Circulate FOCA resources. We have video, print and digital publications available for your constituents' use, on topics such as septic systems (maintenance & signs of trouble), fish-friendly dock structures and shorelines, ticks, algal blooms, and preventing the spread of invasive species in your region... As just one example, FOCA's publication, [A Shoreline Owner's Guide to Healthy Waterfronts](#), is a free booklet filled with information for rural residents. More than 10,000 copies have been distributed across the province. Contact FOCA for details, including free copies for your municipal office.
5. Connect with FOCA! Subscribe or confirm your consent to receive FOCA Everts (monthly e-news, filled with rural policy and environmental notices): http://bit.ly/FOCA_Evert. Also, send us your e-notices so that we can circulate the news to FOCA's members in your municipality. Please add info@foca.on.ca to your own e-news lists.

SPECIAL CHALLENGE: send FOCA a copy of your BEST municipal plain-language notice we will nominate you for the next **"Dazzling Notice" Awards!**
See the next page for examples...

Thriving and sustainable rural communities are our common goal!

Sincerely,

Marlin Horst

President, Board of Directors - Federation of Ontario Cottagers' Associations

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Some additional information from FOCA for our Municipal partners...

A typical municipal notice:

vs.

A “Dazzling Notice”, worthy of Award:



For more, see: <http://www.dazzleawards.ca/>



IAP2 Core Values for the practice of public participation

Public participation:

1. is based on the belief that those who are affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the decision making process.
2. includes the promise that the public's contribution will influence the decision.
3. promotes sustainable decisions by recognizing and communicating the needs and interests of all participants, including decision makers.
4. seeks out and facilitates the involvement of those potentially affected by or interested in a decision.
5. seeks input from participants in designing how they participate.
6. provides participants with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way.
7. communicates to participants how their input affected the decision.



(IAP2 = International Association for Public Participation <https://www.iap2canada.ca/foundations>)