

Haliburton / Stanhope Municipal Airport ***Another Fact Sheet for Ratepayers***

As the Township Council of Algonquin Highlands forges ahead with plans and actions for the expansion of the Haliburton / Stanhope Municipal Airport, concerned landowners and ratepayers who have been or will be directly affected by the “project” join the council in encouraging more informed involvement by the people of Algonquin Highlands. Please contact the sites, people and resources recommended by Council in the fact sheet you received with your latest tax notice. Please also visit the site of the Maple, Beech and Cameron Lakes Area Property Owners Association (maplebeechcameronlakesarea.com) and consider becoming a member – this organization is NOT just for “cottagers” but for all people concerned with how the area can and should be developed.

- Previous and current councils have consistently claimed a high rate of support for the Expansion of the Airport based on the fact that there has been little loud opposition. Most people have not had the time to inform themselves well enough to make a decision on the matter. Some in the township administration feel that public meetings are too difficult to “manage”. **Find out more, ask questions, demand full information.**
- In 1984 the Airport Master Plan investigated the possibility of the construction of a 1200m runway to upgrade the airport as it existed, then. No **need** was identified. The construction of the current paved strip was considered adequate for the 20 year plan. **Funds from other levels of government were made available for the upgrade.**
- The 2001 Airport Development Plan included a study of prevailing winds at an airport in another county with very different surrounding lands and concluded that the current runway at Stanhope was becoming less usable. A crosswind runway *would* slightly improve safety and availability, and a proposal for a crosswind runway was made in the 1984 Master Plan. In 1984 the crosswind runway – very close to the same direction as the one being proposed now - idea was abandoned partly because of buildings to the south of the runway. **Those buildings are still there.** More revenue really means fewer **losses**, the airport **costs us money.**
- The Township receives favourable responses from agencies and businesses every time an improvement is proposed – 1984, 1987, 1997, 2001, etc – rarely does this “support” include taking financial responsibility, and few of the business and economic advantages forecasted in past economic studies have ever materialized.
- The “Business Vision” adopted by council this year is another very optimistic set of projections based on a model developed from airports and communities with few, if any, similarities to ours. There is no reason to believe that this “Vision” is better than the last ones. **Has the Council seen or looked for any opportunities besides the airport?**
- The Township is acquiring lands at what it considers a fair and current market value. Where offers are rejected the Township feels that expropriation is warranted and, in one case, the process of expropriation is underway. More lands or partial deforestation of properties will be required for the current design of the new runway to be usable as planned. When is the Council going to let these landowners know what its’ plans are for them? Lands purchased are **no longer generating taxes.**
- Council *has* lowered tax rates, but we all know that actual taxes payable have increased. Just check your assessment. Cost estimates for the new runway construction are based on **very early and non-engineered plans.** Over the past 4 years Council has been unable to find a funding source, if one doesn’t turn up will they return lands expropriated?
- This is a **very** large and complex project which has some Township officials saying things like “... others will have to step up to the plate; the County...the Province...the Feds...” The truth is the only people who **have** to step up to the plate are the ratepayers of this Township. Some of us already have, whether we want to or not. Read the “Business Vision” for what it is, a sales pitch; if you feel that the council has this one right then express your approval. If you still have doubts or questions, **ask them to slow down and explain.** Don’t let this happen because you didn’t know!
- We invite you also to look at the attached map – some of the features might surprise you.