

## SPEAKING NOTES – Councillor McCann – Town Island/MNR Land Transfer

With this resolution before us this evening Council will direct administration to commence discussions with the Ministry of Natural Resources to investigate the potential transfer of Town Island to the Ministry in exchange for Crown land of equal value within or adjacent to the City boundaries for municipal purposes, as well as residential and recreational land development.

Town Island, which has been owned by the City since 1895, is a significant property given its prominent place on Lake of the Woods as one of the last undeveloped and accessible islands that falls outside of the city limits. During this past century, the use of Town Island has been limited to a summer camp site operated by B'nai Brith and a remote beach site. Town Island has generated many discussions with previous Councils as to how to achieve value for the taxpayers of the City of Kenora; while respecting the water quality of the Lake of the Woods, addressing the issue of excessive development on the Lake of the Woods, and how to keep this island as a green space that can be enjoyed by all our citizens and visitors.

We, being the City of Kenora and the Ministry of Natural Resources, feel that we have come up with a solution that is without a doubt a “win-win” for all stakeholders.

The Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) is a very significant owner of property, adjacent and within the limits of the City of Kenora. Property, that if it was exchanged for Town Island, and owned by the City of Kenora could be developed for municipal purposes or residential and cottage purposes, and would increase the assessment base

of the City of Kenora. Property that could also be sold at market value that the City could benefit from. Presently, as the owner of Town Island, if the island were to be developed, the City would not receive any taxes through assessment as Town Island falls outside the City Limits.

If Town Island is exchanged and the MNR would be the registered owner, the property would be de-patented and the MNR would add Town Island to the Lake of the Woods Conservation Reserve to ensure its long term protection. Adding Town Island to the Lake of The Woods Conservation Reserve would guarantee the future of Town Island as a green space for all our residents and visitors while still providing B'nai Brith with an opportunity to operate its summer camp. The Province of Ontario has declared the water quality of the Lake of the Woods as a provincial priority and this would be a step in the right direction to preserving and improving the water quality on the Lake of the Woods.

I will speak briefly as to how this will take place. The City of Kenora will obtain a market value appraisal of Town Island. The MNR will obtain a market value appraisal of a number of properties that they own within city limits. Discussions will take place between local MNR officials, CAO Mr. Bill Priesantanz, City Solicitor Mr. Bruce Ormiston. I will represent Council at these discussions. Any exchange of properties would be on the basis of an equal value exchange.

At this point, MNR is in the process of completing environmental scans of potential properties that will be made available to the City so we are not able to disclose what

properties are under consideration. Before any transfer of properties takes place, however, the public will be advised through the MNR public consultation process, and correspondingly, City Council must, by way of public process pass a bylaw to acquire any lands.