



**FRENCH VERSION ONLY WAS SENT TO THE MUNICIPALITY**

July 12, 2021

Dear Mr. Mayor and Councillors,

We are writing to you as members of the Executive of the Poisson Blanc Watershed Association (ABVPB) about the proposed zoning addition for Newton Bay, specifically in areas V115 and V116.

The Executive Board has chosen not to take a position for or against these zoning additions. Instead, the Board decided to make sure our members were well informed, and we encouraged them to participate in the consultation process.

Obviously, it was not an easy process. We would like to share some of our concerns about the process that was followed, and make some suggestions if the consultation or approval process should resume, or if the Council were to consider other such proposals.

We recognize that zoning additions like this can always lead to confusion and disagreement. To minimize this situation, we believe that the entire consultation process should be guided by the principles of openness, transparency, fairness and democracy.

In this case, the whole process started badly when it appeared that major development work on Boynton Road was underway without a permit or notice to neighbors. Although landowners have legal rights to make changes to their property, the scope and scale of the work suggested major changes in land use which resulted in the creation of a "Protect Newton Bay" group.

After some time and work already in progress, residents received a notice to their permanent residence of the proposed zoning additions, we were told that the municipality was not obligated to send such notices. In our view, the principle of openness requires such a mailing. We thank the municipality for sending the notices and encourage that this **always** be a step in the consultation process when considering zoning additions.

Unfortunately, the proposed addition notice left the residents with many unanswered questions. The notice did not explain the implications of a T7 zoning. The purpose of the consultation process was not clearly explained. No details on the referendum process were provided. The role of the Municipal Council in the approval process was also not explained. The notice only presented series of dates, without details of the implications of each deadline.

This forced residents to scramble to research relevant information, consult with experts, municipal employees and elected officials to get their questions answered. Meetings with municipal officials were requested, scheduled, and then canceled. There is no doubt that this was as frustrating for the municipal staff as it was for the concerned owners.

We now know that a majority of residents have expressed their opposition to the proposed zoning additions. Considering this along with canceled briefing meetings, it is believed the responsible choice was to suspend the zoning approval process.

We know that the Council can put an end to this approval process. If the Council decides to resume consideration of this proposal, initiate a new consultation process on a revised proposal or to propose other zoning changes in the future, we suggest these recommendations to you in the process of consultation:

1. Require that all commercial developers in the vicinity of Newton Bay and Lac Poisson Blanc prepare a development plan to be presented to the urban planning inspector and present in writing the reason(s) for the adding zoning.
2. Organize a public information meeting at a date and time convenient for residents (both permanent and part-time) to answer their questions.
3. Cooperate with the Association to ensure that residents are well inform.
4. Ensure that all owners who have expressed, by email or other means, their concern about the proposed zoning for V115 and V116 are informed directly of the next information meeting date.
5. Invite members of the municipality Planning Council to attend the meeting.

6. Set a reasonable deadline after a public meeting for people to send in their comments.
7. Formulate the referendum process in writing.
8. Ensure that the voting process is democratic and fair between full and part-time residents so that all can vote.
9. Ensure that all relevant information is made available to all landowners. That a translation may be available for non-French speaking people.
10. Given the specific situation of Newton Bay in the future biodiversity zone of the MRC, the municipality must consider this fact as well as the dimensions of the bay during the summer. Although V117 and V118 may not share a land boundary with V115 or V116, we all share the same access to water. Its environmental protection is what unites the community. Our association is dedicated to the ecology of the bay and to building the community around it. The massive influx of new visitors can put a lot of pressure on what currently exists.

We are confident that Municipal Council will take an approach of transparency, fairness and democracy in responding to recent events.

Some of the Board members would be happy to meet with you.

Yours truly,

The Executive Board Members of the ABVPB

Alphabetical Order: Carla Monette, David Orfald, Gilbert Lafontaine, Jeff Parkes, Johanne Legaré (for Linda Cornell), Monique Hébert Lesage, Pierre Charlebois