

PUBLIC MEETING – WHAT WE HEARD

565 WESLEY ACRES ROAD

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February 14, 2025

Mr. Matt Coffey

Planning Coordinator, Approvals
Prince Edward County

Via email: mcoffey@pecounty.on.ca

**RE: Public Meeting – What We Heard – January 22, 2025
Zoning By-law Amendment
565 Wesley Acres Road, PEC**

Dear Mr. Coffey,

Fotenn Planning + Design is pleased to submit this letter on behalf of Campfire Circle and Cope Group Inc. for the property municipally known as 565 Wesley Acres Road in Prince Edward County. This letter provides a summary and response to the questions and comments received from the Public Meeting, held on January 22, 2025. The feedback has been summarized into key themes to provide comprehensive responses.

Camp Operations

The proposed camp will operate weekly camp sessions in the summer months and offer limited programming in fall, winter and spring. At full capacity, the proposed development will accommodate 160 campers and approximately 200 staff/volunteers. The organization plans to hire as many local employees as possible for seasonal and year-round roles. Each camper has an individual medical plan specialized to meet their needs, as informed by their care team. During the ‘off-season’, the camp facilities may be available for rental by a limited number of school groups and other kid-focused charities/organizations as a fundraising opportunity for the Camp. The organization also hopes to work with local organizations to provide additional program opportunities for community youth. These private groups will be limited and vetted by Campfire Circle staff and will be required to follow operational rules relating to the use and respect of the site. All third-party groups who use Campfire Circle sites are supervised by in-house staff. The peak season for camp operations will be in the summer, with programs running weekly through July and August. Similarly, it will offer about 30 days of weekend camp experience during the school year, but running at about 1/3 capacity. It will also offer other groups a camp program experience during the school year for an estimated 55 days of use, again at about 1/3 capacity. In summary, the camp is expected to run at, or near, full capacity for about 16% of the year, at about 1/3 capacity at about 23% of the year, and remain mostly dormant (except for maintenance staff) for the rest of the year.

Traffic

Regarding traffic generated by the proposed development, there are very few vehicles that enter and exit the Camp at any time. There are several reasons that Campfire Circle limits traffic on site, but the most important one is for the safety of campers and the protection of the site. At the Muskoka Campfire Circle location, two (2) coach buses bring campers to and from each session. This same model is anticipated to be replicated at the proposed Wesley Acres site – although the number of buses may vary depending on logistics regarding the number of campers and pickup locations. The Camp facilitates a carpool system for staff and volunteers who remain on-site for one or multiple sessions. Visitors are not allowed on the site when the Camp is in session, so daily incoming and outgoing traffic is generally minimal. The proposed number of parking spaces on the site reflect a maximum capacity for occasional single-day events, such as opening ceremonies, or fundraising-related events. The parking area is anticipated to be underutilized for the majority of the year. As part of the Zoning By-law Amendment application, the proposed maximum parking provision (300 spaces) is intended to limit parking in the future and is a reduction from the minimum requirements in the Zoning By-Law.

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Location Selection

Campfire Circle owns and maintains the former Camp Trillium lands located on Garratt Island. At this time, the island property is not suitable for camp operations for a variety of reasons including safety, access, and ongoing maintenance resulting from flood damage. A detailed review of the island site is ongoing to assess opportunities for potential limited camp use in the future. In the meantime, the Wesley Acres site offers a mainland location to support the diverse and unique needs of the Camp and its campers. Primarily, the subject site offers an opportunity for year-round camp activities at a location that is sufficiently sized and suitably accessible to meet the needs of the camp.

Scale of Development

The primary purpose of the Campfire Circle development is to create a medically supported overnight camp experience for children experiencing serious illness. The structural coverage of the camp for zoning purposes is proposed to be ~7.5% of the developable area (i.e. excluding Provincially Significant Wetland areas). The proposed building sizes reflect the need to build sleeping, dining and program areas that are fully accessible for all campers and enable medical care as required.

Site Servicing

The proposed development will be serviced with a private well and septic systems on-site. A Hydrogeological Study and Servicing Options Report was prepared by ASC Environmental as part of the feasibility review for the subject site. This report included a review of well records available through the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP) database, as well as an on-site hydrogeological investigation, which was conducted to assess the site groundwater supply conditions. Subsequently, a Functional Servicing Report (FSR) was prepared by Jewell Engineering. The reports concluded that there is sufficient aquifer storage and demonstrated yield is available to supply the demand for the proposed development, without adversely impacting the neighbouring water supply.

Water for fire protection will be supplied indirectly from Lake Ontario through a shore well and pumped through a pressurized watermain to hydrants distributed throughout the site. Further, informed by a Wastewater Servicing Brief completed by Groundwork Engineering, the FSR confirms that two wastewater systems (septic beds) will be required to manage the estimated load and that adequate space is available on site for the management of the sewage treatment requirements of the proposed development while maintaining environmental and zoning setbacks. The septic systems will be appropriately engineered to treat the limited medical waste produced on-site to ensure that impacts to the surrounding groundwater and surface water sources are mitigated to a standard that the MECP deems acceptable. This is critical for the health of the local environment, as well as the health and safety of campers, staff, and volunteers. Campfire Circle has real-world experience with the unique septic needs of its sites and has not experienced any negative impacts or concerns at their other camp locations. Ongoing water testing of both the groundwater and surface water onsite will be undertaken for the benefit of users and the environment.

Financial Stability

As a registered charity with a 42-year history, Campfire Circle has built a robust fundraising program that provides the annual funding required to successfully operate two overnight camps in Rosseau and Waterford and support year-round programming in children's hospitals across Ontario. All of Campfire Circle's programs are offered free of charge to families. Prior to purchasing the property at 565 Wesley Acres, a campaign feasibility study was conducted to ensure that Campfire Circle could raise the capital funds necessary to build a new medical camp and sustain the increased annual operational costs. Campfire Circle is accredited by Imagine Canada's Standards Programs for charities and not-for-profit organizations. This accreditation recognizes our commitment to operate at the highest level of accountability and transparency. With 40,000 kids affected by serious illness in Ontario, there is a critical need for this programming long-term, so Campfire Circle intends to operate this new medical camp in Prince Edward County indefinitely.

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Environmental Policy Considerations

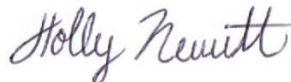
Members of the Prince Edward County Field Naturalists, the South Shore Joint Initiative, and the Environmental Advisory Committee provided comments and questions at the meeting, in addition to the written comments provided through the technical review process. Fulsome responses to these comments and concerns have been provided in a separate, dedicated response letter in order to address each element in greater detail.

We trust these responses address the concerns identified in the correspondence received. If you have any questions or would like to discuss further, please feel free to contact us at 613.542.5454.

Respectfully,



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Fotenn Planning + Design



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