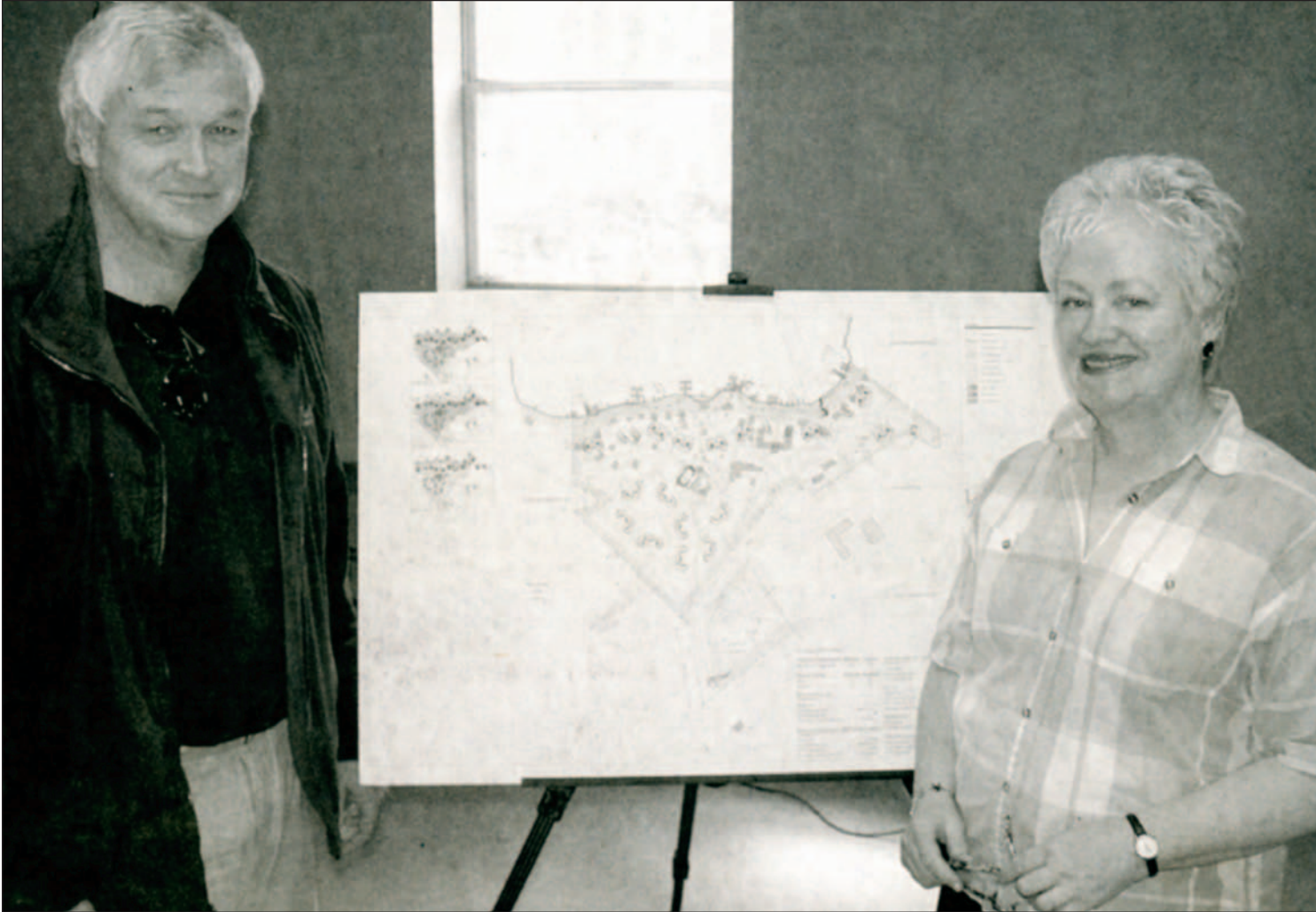


THE HUNTSVILLE FORESTER

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REDEVELOPMENT: Planner Bob List and Lake of Bays mayor Janet Peake discuss plans by Birch Haven to redevelop into a fractional ownership-style development. The resort held an open

house meeting at the Baysville arena on Saturday to explain the concept and answer questions from the community.

‘New’ Birch Haven could attract more traffic to Baysville: mayor

BY TAMARA DE LA VEGA
HUNTSVILLE FORESTER

Lake of Bays mayor Janet Peake said the proposed transformation of Birch Haven Resort into a fractional ownership-style development could be a boon to Baysville.

"This will provide some economic traffic that we haven't had in the past," she said.

"It certainly sounds very interesting and they are reducing the number of boats that are going to be dockable on the waterfront," said Peake, referring to concerns by area property owners that the development may generate a substantial increase in boat traffic on the river.

She said the fact that the new project will no longer include a restaurant gives other businesses in the community an opportunity to fill the gap. That is especially important given that food-based businesses in the village will have the ability to increase service due to water and sewer services.

"The [redevelopment project] will actually create a better

market within Baysville itself," said Peake, speaking to the Forester at an open house held Saturday at the Baysville arena.

Peake, municipal staff, community members and Lake of Bays councillor Marg Casey attended the open house to find out more about the development.

Fractional ownership, which means one unit can be owned by several parties, has been a controversial concept among groups such as the Lake of Bays Association (LOBA).

"I think LOBA still has issues with respect to fractional ownership. I can understand where they are coming from. I understand as well the difficulty in trying to determine whether a use is commercial or residential and the ability of a municipality to try and monitor that," said Casey, adding that commercial resorts in the municipality are also in need of redevelopment in order to stay viable.

"Birch Haven is a good example of that and fractional ownership is the current mechanism that developers are [using].

We might as well try it as a municipality. Time will tell," she said.

"Hopefully it will bring more year-round people into the community to help the businesses in Baysville," said Casey about the redevelopment of Birch Haven.

She said the environmental benefit of the proposal is that the buildings are being moved further away from the shoreline.

"They have respected the standards that the community put forward when we did the new comprehensive zoning bylaw, so I see it as very positive."

According to development president Titos Tylians, the proposed development being called 'Landscapes' will eventually comprise 64 units over what he hopes will be an estimated three-year period.

The first phase of the development will involve ten waterfront units.

The Birch Haven property boasts an estimated 1,200 foot

share of Lake of Bays' approximate 350 miles of shoreline, according to Tylians and the resort's Web site.

He explained that each unit will have ten owners who will evenly split the amount of time each one is entitled to per year.

Tylians also said accommodation will be available to the travelling public, a requirement under tourist commercial zoning.

The units, depending on size, location, and time of season being purchased, start at approximately \$70,000.

"It is affordable and also maintenance-free," said Tylians, who added that purchasing such a unit is a good way of avoiding the expense of maintaining a cottage that is ultimately not used more than several months a year.

He also said the development will enhance the municipality's tax base.