

Mayor, Mr. Chairman and Councillors.

My name is Penny Knapp and I own the cottage directly across the road from Scott & Suzanne, at 131 Oakdene Crescent, in Little Britain.

I have had my place for roughly 8 years now and other than the occasional hello to a neighbour I have not had much involvement with the neighbourhood. This continued after Scott & Suzanne initially moved in 4 years ago, however, over time our friendship has developed. Suzanne & Scott are both lovers of nature and the environment. Suzanne in particular, is a one woman cheerleader for the environment. She has single handedly encouraged neighbours and outsiders, whom think our dead end street is a great place to dump things, from doing so. From her pesticide free yard, to her love of all creatures great & small, she continually teaches people whenever and however she can. I am amazed at how much information about the environment and nature this woman knows and how willing she is to share it. Suzanne volunteers her time writing for the Lindsay Advocate. She is passionate about saving the dying bee populations and is an avid birder. Her entire backyard is a testament to that fact. Her plants are grown, positioned and cultivated to attract a variety of Ontario birds. She spends considerable dollars buying only the best bird seed and as a result, I have personally witnessed a cornucopia of birds. Her particular interest in the Osprey, does not just end in her own backyard. There are a few nests in the area that she continues to check on regularly, to see how the species is faring. It is her goal to make sure this species is safe and continues to flourish. She is continually talking with experts in the field of Ospreys, to continue maximizing her efforts. Keeping all this in mind, it did not surprise me that Suzanne & Scott went all out with the construction of the Osprey observation platform. The platform was constructed with safety in mind and how best to take advantage of

observing the Osprey nesting in their own backyard, without interfering with them. To those people who have commented that the platform was just a way to look at sunsets, I would have to disagree. Suzanne & Scott have been very careful with allowing people to go up during critical times of the year for Ospreys. From the time the babies were born until the time they were able to leave the nest or “fledge” (and yes, Suzanne taught me the correct terminology), outsiders were not allowed up the platform. Most of the time Suzanne & Scott have watched sunsets not from the platform, but from their deeded access dock that they share with 4 other neighbours.

MaryEllen Blair recently submitted a photograph attesting to the fact that people go up the tower “during the summer months (Osprey nesting time)”. The date stamp (August 19, 2018) is clearly seen and the Ospreys in this nest, had already fledged by that time. (As an aside here, I am wondering exactly whose privacy is being invaded as Scott & Suzanne are showing some people the platform while there neighbour is lurking by photographing their every move to “catch them” having people there.) When this deck was initially built 2 years ago, Suzanne & Scott took the time to invite a few of the neighbours on our street to come and experience it, re-assuring them of both safety and purpose and interestingly enough, without much resulting ado. I would consider myself good friends with these people and I have only been invited up on 3 occasions and for a very short period of time and after the Ospreys had fledged. It’s also interesting that it’s only been since there was a falling out between neighbours, that complaints have been lodged and a small campaign to bring the Osprey platform down has ensued. This could very easily turn into a “he said she said” situation, as there have been many times when Scott & Suzanne’s privacy has been severely compromised by their neighbour to the south, (some of which I have personally witnessed), however, Scott & Suzanne have decided to take a higher road and simply address the

issues at hand. So I would like to comment on the issues that seem to be paramount in everyone's mind, from my perspective.

Firstly, the safety concerns. As a friend of these people, I know that it was built with safety in mind and that after consultation, any minor issues will be addressed. MaryEllen Blair recently submitted a photo that demonstrates how "open" the backyard is. What is not shown here, is that there is an existing gate that can easily be closed and amended in such a way to ensure relative safety. Can it be guaranteed that someone won't climb the fence? No. Just like anyone who has a swimming pool in their backyard, cannot guarantee that someone is not going to climb over the fence and jump into the pool and drown. Heck, Marineland cannot even guarantee, with all it's staff, security and video cameras, that someone is not going to climb over the fence into an animal enclosure as happened with Tilikum, a killer whale.

The next issue is whether or not we are going to see additional platforms such as these, popping up all over Mariposa. Since letters have been sent far & wide regarding this meeting and the cause of it, I doubt there will be an onslaught of people looking to "give it a go" considering the cost of such an endeavour and the resulting debacle that has ensued. Suzanne & Scott have been very much stressed about the outcome of the observation platform and again have spent much time and funding to re-assure everyone of the safety and intent. I am amazed already at the amount of time, and resources that's been spent on this relatively insignificant item. As our Mayor Andy Letham indicated at the last meeting, a few minor adjustments should ensure that all the safety & privacy measures could be met, so that there is a positive outcome for everyone.

The aesthetics of the structure have also come under fire and from a design perspective (I have my certificate in Interior Design and was the assistant design editor at Style At Home Magazine), I feel that the structure blends beautifully into the environment. The materials chosen provide maximum safety while allowing for it to blend in seamlessly with nature. If you didn't know it was there you would have to actually look for it.

The other issue that has been raised is privacy. Since I live directly across the street from them, with little shelter from them by any high bushes or a great number of trees, I just want to say that I value my privacy as much as anyone else does. I must say that I don't have a problem with their elevated deck. Their property is already elevated and their front porch also looks upon my cottage so they already can look across and see what's happening there. If they spent all day & night up on the deck, every day, maybe I would feel differently. But the fact is that is not the case. They can already see whatever I do from their front porch vantage. In fact, people walking at street level have a better vantage onto my property than anyone standing on this platform. Indeed, I feel that my privacy is more threatened by neighbours who trespass on my property without my permission.

Jim Blair declared at the public meeting of September 12, that feels he can no longer meditate because of the tower. I have contacted Melanie Fry, who has a business revolving around spiritualism and meditation and she states that, *“Meditation is a practice where an individual uses a technique, such as focusing their mind on an object, thought or activity, to achieve a mentally clear and emotionally calm state. Meditation has been practiced since antiquity in numerous religious traditions and beliefs.”* She goes on to say that meditation, *“can take place wherever and however you like, within reason of course, that is one of the beauties of*

meditation, because it is such a flexible process it does not have to adhere to any type of formal process or set of rules.” I

personally also meditate on a regular basis both at the cottage and at my home. When at the cottage, I choose to meditate on my dock where if I choose to let it, my ability to meditate would be severely hampered from the onslaught of activity & noise coming from motor boats, jet skis, fisherman, saws, barking dogs and the shrieks of neighbouring children or gunshots ringing through the air on a fall day. In fact, I would daresay my privacy is severely compromised anytime I am on the dock by all these things that happen many times a day, throughout the summer and fall. I accept this as being a part of my neighbourhood at a lake.

While I am not trying to excuse Suzanne & Scott for building without a permit, there have been many times that legalities in the neighbourhood have been pushed with illegal dumping at the end of the street (including hunters dumping Canada Goose carcasses), off-lead animals wandering on other peoples property, barking & snapping (A problem since there are several neighbours who have a fear of dogs), questionable fire burns, and hunters dumping severed animal heads on the lawn of someone who was trying to get some hunting laws legally changed. I am more concerned about some of these items, than I am that Suzanne & Scott are watching my every move. They both have jobs and are busy working at those, rather than trying to live their life vicariously through mine, while sitting on their Osprey observation deck.

Quite frankly, I am disappointed in the reaction of a few of the neighbours. As I indicated earlier, this debate could dissolve into a “he said she said” and can be seen for what it actually is; a falling out between neighbours where one neighbour will say things that are either

fabricated or out of context, to cast poor light on the other. I resent immensely, that MaryEllen Blair, in her submission, has indicated that people who do not live here permanently, should not have the right to comment on what is happening. However, Ian Walker, B.Sc., Planning Officer – Large Developments Development Services – Planning Division, City of Kawartha Lakes - 705-324-9411 extension 1368, felt otherwise, as his department sent letters to **all** the people whom might be affected, regardless of their permanency. In fact, one of the letters that supported Meg's position came from one of "those" people who in fact, do not currently live here all year round. I was also deeply offended when MaryEllen stated, "she wished more people could attend this meeting to protest this "grotesque structure", but this is a weekday and they must work to earn their living and cannot take time off". This meeting **does** happen to fall on a work day for myself, and because I feel it's important to support my neighbour and what they are attempting to accomplish, I have taken a day off **without pay** to come and do so. Trust me, I am not independently wealthy and at my pay scale, a day off makes a difference.

The point of the matter is that we are at a critical juncture in time, when we are filling our our oceans with plastic, dumping waste into our lakes, poisoning our food chain and drinking water and killing off species at an alarming rate with little regard of consequences. While other people talk about making some changes, Scott & Suzanne have taken a positive step to make a small difference, investing their own time and resources, in an attempt to make this little **rural** section of the world, Mariposa Township, in the city of Kawartha Lakes, a better place. Instead of causing them huge amounts of grief, we should be supporting them and asking ourselves what can I do to make a difference?

Thank you for your time,
Penny Knapp