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# Let's welcome Big Bay Point Resort

Now that most of the hurdles have been cleared, residents should welcome last week's Ontario Municipal Board approval of Big Bay Point Resort.

After five years and millions of government dollars spent on consultations, surveys and legal fees, the Kimvar Enterprises/Geranium Corporation project finally received approval Friday. It's not the last step before construction can begin, since opponents have already filed a judicial review on the matter, but there's a good chance the resort will eventually proceed.

Once complete, the resort will feature 1,600 residential units, 400 hotel rooms, a 1,000 slip marina, golf course, conference centre, theatre, an indoor sports, a recreation and fitness facility and retail space.

Although opponents have argued the resort will cause environmental damage to the Lake Simcoe watershed, there's also evidence to suggest the exact opposite. Geranium will be spending \$10 million to extend municipal sewer services to the resort, giving about 1,600 property owners access to government water treatment facilities in the area.

The resort also includes an 87-hectare stretch of environmentally protected land, and will be built to high Leadership in Energy and

## Comment

by Chris Simon

Environmental Design (LEED) standards.

And in a growing and job-starved town like Innisfil, the resort will provide several important economic benefits. The resort will create 940 permanent jobs, making it the largest employer in the town. During construction, 3,600 person-years in employment will be generated, as will \$1.2 million in permit fees and \$17.7 million in municipal and school development charges.

Resort operators also estimate a \$50 million boom to the local economy, with the purchase of appliances and furniture by residents, once units start selling.

Property owners and tourists are also expected to spend about \$35 million in the area each year.

But there are other benefits as well. The recreation centre, marina and other public facilities will give town residents more to do, without having to travel to Barrie. In a lot of ways, the resort has the opportunity to become a

waterfront destination, available and easily accessible to all residents of region.

The resort will help improve transportation in the area, with a main collector road running through the resort. Recently, several members of town council expressed concerns over safety in the Big Bay Point area. Adding another route into the Point will help reduce traffic volume and safety concerns.

Of course, the concerns of site opponents are fair. They believe First Nations groups were not adequately consulted on the site, suggesting it may have historical significance. Opponents have also said that logically, so much development along the lakeshore will have an environmental impact on the area.

However, the town, county and provincial governments have all given the project approval, and obviously feel comfortable with construction plans. Archaeologists have reviewed the site, and believe it is not historically significant. And many of the environmental impacts should be offset by the positive measures resort operators will be taking.

Innisfil needs sustainable employment, local entertainment and residential units. This resort will give residents reasons to stay, and tourists reasons to visit.

# Leaver's letter a sign of society

## Letters From Our Readers

I decided to step out of my comfort zone and respond to this elderly lady Helen Leaver's letter.

I believe for her to have been made to wait outside for a taxi at a local gas station during our most recent snow storm only reaffirms what I feel and continue to see what has happened to our society as a whole. Her generation knew what kindness really meant, to help a fellow man or woman. It was that generation that served (in the world wars) and gave their lives so that many of us can enjoy our freedoms now.

How cruel to make anyone wait like a dog out in the cold like they did. It is appalling to hear anyone be anything less than

compassionate to an obviously elderly person, treating them like we owe them nothing, like they don't matter.

I honestly think that if that "gentleman" as she referred to him as, saw a doe instead of a deer needing to seek that same shelter, he might have ignored any such rule.

People are treating each other disrespectfully at all ages like they don't matter. So many people have become selfish and ignorant, rude and just plain cruel, with their words, their ideas and their actions against even the sincere, who never once posed a threat of any kind.

To me, this is what's wrong with everything: Our children, our society, our homes, our families. No one cares much about anyone other than themselves. We all talk the talk but second guess or refuse to walk the

walk. We all think we're nice to others, good parents, nice neighbours, good members of the community, great citizens. I could keep going here sadly at every level. But it is times such as this when each of us should at least have tried to make a difference.

It would not have mattered if that lady stood inside. Honestly, tell me that there is a policy in place that specifies 'no kindness, no compassion' in this regard, and that failure to adhere to these rules would be grounds for dismissal. Come on now.

On the contrary, I bet that local business owner would have much rather been reading in our local headlines that it was 'that' local gas bar and its attendant that were kind and compassionate to offer shelter to this lady during the storm. How many other gas stations have a GO bus

stop, phone booth and a gas bar on Innisfil Beach Road, within walking distance of each other.

Not my idea of free advertising, nor my idea of how I'd like others to think of the way I run my business.

Even with the hurt feelings that this lady has been made to feel about her recent treatment, she presented her feelings with dignity and respect to others by wording her letter the way she did.

This is something that we all need to take a closer look at within ourselves for each and every instance that we may come upon and really honestly walk the talk.

We really need to start acting like the decent people that we all think we already are.

Morals, principles or ethics: Does anyone have these anymore, outside of being paid to have them or

use them? Hat's off to those of us that do try to make these differences, for the world needs more of us.

God knows there are plenty who are and would be appreciative. For some, it just hasn't happened to them yet.

To you, Helen Leaver, who had this most unfortunate experience, do not worry, there are still some that know the real meaning of respect. Thank you for stepping up and writing in, I feel you wanted to make a difference with your letter, by speaking to a generation that needs to be reminded of their personal accountability for their decisions through their actions.

Have a very merry Christmas, with all it's meaning, the old fashioned way; the proven, better way.

Lisa Bélisle,  
Alcona

# Council is missing the point on planning

## Letters From Our Readers

Planning is defined as a method of proceeding with plans developed in advance.

It's unfortunate that Innisfil has chosen another path for planning. It would seem that by all accounts Innisfil has taken a reactionary approach to

planning for its future, one directed by developers and the temptation of a larger tax base without regard for the bigger picture.

Had our politicians moved forward in the 1990's with a comprehensive plan for employment, we would not find ourselves in the position we are in now. Currently, Innisfil's plans do not conform with the province, the County of Simcoe, the Planning Act,

the Provincial Policy Statement, IGAP and the soon to be announced Lake Simcoe Protection Act.

The public sent a clear message to the town at the public meetings on our new official plans that employment (Innisfil Heights) was the number one priority. How did the town and or its consultants fail to inform the public that this approach was not likely to be received in a

favourable manner by the county or the province?

Council acknowledged at a recent meeting that they are being bombarded from all angles. Other policy and decision makers are seeking more public input. The time has come for Innisfil to realize we are part of a bigger picture, but in order to better the quality of life for us and future generations we have to look and think outside of the box.

I am raising three children in Innisfil and know they would like to have careers, not minimum wage jobs, if they choose to enter the work force in Innisfil.

Council would be well served by also striking a public committee to work along with consultants and elected officials to move forward in the planning and development for the future.

John Hurd,  
Innisfil