

Thornbury Harbour

The Thornbury Harbour, located at the south end of Nottawasaga Bay at the mouth of the Beaver River, is owned by Fisheries and Oceans Canada and has been leased by the Town for decades. (TBM has attempted to purchase the Harbour outright, but a land-under-water claim by First Nations has prevented that.) TBM owns all dockage, moorings and buildings. The Harbour is self-financing through 5,500 linear feet of dockage and mooring, gas, water and hydro fees. Boat owners also pay for winter land storage, launch and lift out and sign a no-fault damage statement providing insurance coverage at their own expense. 20% of mooring fees go to Fisheries and Oceans for the lease, with approximately 50% of that and additional grants coming back to TBM for capital expenses.

There is a distinct advantage to this arrangement, as opposed to a private entity taking over the lease, for the entire Town of The Blue Mountains, and at no cost to the tax payer! Whether by land or by sea, it is important to locals and tourists alike. For boaters, the harbor offers launch facilities, transient and seasonal moorings, a pump out station, a fish cleaning station and even a shower facility.

The Harbour is also home to Thornbury Yacht Club, an active group which supports a number of local charities including one of my favourite experiences, *Sail for Hope*, which has donated over \$100,000 to the Canadian Cancer Society in our region.

For non-boaters, Bayview Park on the east has a pavilion, washroom facilities, tennis and sand volleyball courts and a playground and pebble beach. Little River Beach on the west has a sand beach waterfront area, washrooms, picnic tables and a playground for younger children. From the safety of the park, they watch older children jump from our famous pier, dreaming of their first leap in future years.

Several streets in the harbor area intersect with the Georgian, Beaver River and Bayview Trails, and a beautiful trestle bridge, and run south from the harbour waterfront area into the commercial area of Thornbury and Clarksburg, as well as to the Fish Ladder which is of interest to locals and draws thousands of tourists by land and water each year to see the fishway, active with Chinook Salmon in the fall and Rainbow Trout in the spring.

Thornbury Harbour is one of the most important gateways to our community, but also a place for recreation for both locals and visitors alike, drawing people to the economic areas of Thornbury and Clarksburg and connecting to the extensive trail system as well as to healthy life style activity including swimming, boating/sailing, fishing, hiking, cycling, strolling along the waterfront or just sitting on a bench and watching the sun go down.

Our waterfront and our mountainsides are part of the physical assets that make the Town of The Blue Mountains a truly four-season community and the main reason so many people choose to live, work and play here. I am not in favour of privatization of any of our waterfront parks because I believe that keeping them in the public hands guarantees that all members of the public will continue to have access.

My vision of environmental and economic sustainability for the Town of The Blue Mountains includes protecting and investing in the valuable asset we call the Thornbury Harbour, and in all other public waterfront access properties as well.

Odette Bartnicki