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**Municipal Councillors and Administrators**

Pauline Rochefort, Mayor  
Township of East Ferris  
390 Hwy. 94  
Corbeil, Ont P0H 1K0  
[municipality@eastferris.ca](mailto:municipality@eastferris.ca)

ATTN: Pauline Rochefort, Mayor

Dear Ms. Rochefort:

Re: Maple Lane and Access Roads

With reference to the recent request by Steve Horton that the Municipality of East Ferris undertake the formal inclusion of Maple Lane and corresponding access roads into the Municipal Road system, I submit the following letter:

Background

Maple Lane was originally constructed by forestry bushwhackers to enable forestry workers to access the lumber camp which was located on my property at the turn of the last century! Let us not forget the backbreaking work that they undertook to swiftly clear the brush and trees through mosquito infested swamp and rocky terrain just barely ahead of the workhorses pulling their cargo-laden wagons alongside a legion of lumberjacks! Their legacy is a part of our Canadian history! This was not formerly an Algonquin footpath! The first cottage was constructed by Dr. Ranney in 1911. In 1923, the Iroquois claimed that the lumber camp was operating on their property, and were duly compensated! My summer cottage was erected, without liens or claims, in 1932. In the early 1950's more summer cottagers arrived who needed to drive their vehicles over the road without damaging their car or muffler. My father, the former G.J. (Gerry) Labreche ordered and paid for a load of fill. You may have heard my father's name before as the real estate developer who handled the negotiations and conceived of the development of McPherson Drive, and also the property previously known as Camp Ontario on Landon Lane...in case you were wondering where the name Labreche comes from. Since that time, residents of Maple Lane have brought in loads of fill every year and shared in the work of maintaining and grading the road, adding culverts and, with the decision of some cottagers to reside here (Parcel 302B) year round, snowplowing!

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## Alternatives

There are two alternatives: either the road continues to be maintained by the residents, or the Municipality of East Ferris takes over the care and maintenance of the roadway. Let us examine these alternatives!

### Maintenance of Road by Residents

#### Pros:

1. It doesn't cost the Municipality anything.
2. The road looks picturesque.
3. They have a bunch of "seemingly qualified" volunteers to do the work.

#### Cons:

- Residents pay to purchase culverts, sand and gravel to maintain the road just to access their homes in addition to hefty municipal taxes. Other roads are paid for and maintained by the Municipality through our property taxes. Although neighbouring Mirimishi Road was constructed several years ago and not in accordance with newer "green" technologies, at least it is maintained by the municipality in all seasons!
- The road barely meets the needs of year round residents, whose numbers have increased at a slow, but persistent rate, especially in the last few decades. It is unreliable for summer residents who wish to visit their dwelling outside of July and August!
- None of us are qualified road contractors! The road has been maintained simply by adding a load of gravel and grading it several times during the year. Placing a sign on the road that says "use at your own risk" does not ensure the safety of others!
- Our volunteers are becoming older and not all of us are able to participate in roadwork! If residents go on vacation, sometimes all at the same time, or are otherwise unavailable, there is a unique downtime when there is a shortage of volunteers. Things have changed from the "good old days" when most of us just parked out here for the summer, since the demand is now for the volunteers to keep the road in good condition year round! Further, I have counted up to six professional medical personnel residing here (Parcel 302B) who require reliable access to their jobs via Maple Lane! Expecting that the roads remain open at all times for emergency vehicles is an unreasonable demand of our aging volunteers!

We are thankful to our volunteers for their free work and effort!

### Maintenance of the Road by the Municipality

Now, let's look at the other option: the Municipality of East Ferris includes Maple Lane, a major road, as a part of the municipal road system.

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Let us first examine why it may not be in the best interests of the municipality to consider Maple Lane as a municipal road:

Cons:

1. It costs money for the Municipality to maintain roads.
2. Residents pay their taxes anyway and they are locked into property ownership, so why bother!
3. The Algonquins are going to own the road anyway!
4. If the Municipality maintains this main arterial road they will have to maintain a bunch of other back roads too.
5. The budget is already set in stone.

Now let us consider the alternate option:

Pros:

1. This will alleviate long-held suspicions that this large community (South Shore Property Owners' Association - Maple Lane - Parcel 302B) has that the Municipality is collecting high taxes while not providing us with services which other taxpayers enjoy.
2. Reliable access to deliveries of pharmaceuticals is increasingly needed due to a higher population.
3. There will be fewer accidents because of an inaccessible road!
4. Fires may be readily doused rather than having the fire truck sitting out on the Centennial Crescent while someone's house on the shoreline is burning down. I have been told by one of your firemen that the road does not accommodate a fire truck.
5. This is major road which has a larger number of residents than any other "back road" in the municipality and, in all due respect, these citizens should receive equal service!

Issue of the Algonquin Land Claim

The Algonquin Land Claim is currently under discussion! For what reason is this road, originally constructed on Crown Land over a century ago, being offered to the Algonquins ahead of the requirements of the municipality to ensure the safety of its residents? Surely the municipal council is not required to sit on the fence until 2023 to act on this important issue. Doug Carr insisted that even though the Algonquin will own the land, we "will get to use the road"! We don't even know what the ramifications of this entail, since we haven't been told, but in other jurisdictions residents will no longer be allowed to maintain their road even though they "get to use it"; it goes a little deeper than just "using" the road. It is not fair that our association pays for the maintenance and upkeep of the road while the ownership and future

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responsibility for maintenance by the Algonquins is questionable. The situation has changed a lot since the Land Claim began! More residents now live here and, as in Doug Carr's own words (with reference to the reasons why the Algonquins want the land parcels), current property owners also "want to work and to play"! Continued access to my shoreline property is worrisome!

### Conclusion

I feel strongly that the municipality should be giving due consideration to the visitors and residents who reside in Parcel 302B and who use Maple Lane for access! Considering the length of this major artery, current standards of access require municipal attention. Please begin the process of discussion on this topic!

### Future Road Considerations and Proposals

As previously mentioned, none of us are road contractors! My qualified road contractor, Shawn Dumont, who is now working on my two private roadways has had the time to assess the current state of Maple Lane and arterial roads! Currently, Maple Lane sits on clay which retains water beneath the gravel. The clay needs to be dug out before the gravel is put on top! According to road engineering standards, six feet of gravel needs to be put on top of the clay if the current awkward method of road construction continues to be used. This is why Maple Lane dissolves into a slippery dangerous mudflat from time to time. During the winter, water seemingly appears out of nowhere because it is seeping out of the clay - not because we need another culvert! I might add that we are an environmentally minded group out here and have deep antipathy towards pavement and asphalt and the damage that it incurs in the environment! Shawn's method of construction is up to date and environmentally friendly without the use of environmental toxins! I might add that he snowplows and sands in the winter using a combination of non-toxic materials thus avoiding the harmful effects of road salt on the environment! Shawn is able to create a hard surface on the road which is cheap, cost effective and pleasing to the eye. He has had extensive experience in building municipal and Ontario roadways! He has alleviated water issues which I would never have solved on my own, and which other untrained volunteers are unable to identify! These are some of the issues which should be considered if the municipality chooses to move forward and retain a contractor.

I know that you usually put out tenders for work to be done...usually cost factors in...but there is such a thing to be said for hiring the "only (the best) guy in town"! I will invite you out to look at the project on my property. Maple Lane and it's arterial roads deserve this kind of attention.

I believe Shawn Dumont (ACE Contracting (705) 477-2310) to be worthy of consideration. Before he started his own company, he previously worked for

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Ken Jackson who you already know. His care for the environment is most likely to be acceptable to the residents, which is an important consideration.

Recommendation

The least you could do is seek permissions and examine proposals. The need is immediate! Tax paying essential and other important workers should not be risking their lives to get to work in Winter, early Spring, and after every rainstorm long after other roads are clear! Regardless of age, everyone is entitled to necessary medications, personal support workers and medical deliveries! Responsibility for the health and safety of tax-paying citizens should be at the top of the municipal agenda!

Please take the necessary steps required to consider this urgent matter!

Sincerely,

**Jill Labreche**

*Cc: Steve Horton*