

Update from WRAFT — Summer 2010

June 28, 2010

The WRAFT Board met in December 2009 and again in June 2010, to take stock of our position and to do some planning for the year ahead. At the most recent meeting, the leaders represented around the WRAFT table expressed their continued interest and concern in the issues facing property taxpayers, and a willingness to push for improvements and reforms where possible. Continued communications with the political leadership, and with the members of our allied organizations will be our fundamental plan, and this will largely be accomplished through the active interest and leadership on the property tax file from the Federation of Ontario Cottagers' Associations.

In essence, the reforms towards a more transparent MPAC, plus the Liberals' move to a 4 year assessment cycle, seems to have effectively quelled much of the dissent in the broader property paying population. WRAFT's Board and advisors feel the Liberal government and bureaucracy are now satisfied with the changes they have made to the system. This is borne out by the lack of noise or complaints from individual property owners. The next realistic opportunity to raise the issue and seek real debate and possible reforms is during the policy development process that all parties will undertake in advance of the 2011 elections. As 2010 progresses, WRAFT will be seeking out the appropriate opportunities to effectively appeal to all Provincial political parties.

Recognizing the "WRAFT-friendly" approach proposed by the Progressive Conservatives in their Homestead Act, and specifically from their finance critic (now leader), WRAFT has continued our discussion with the PC leadership, with the aim to turn up the heat during the policy development process later in 2010 and into 2011.

WRAFT met with PC Leader Tim Hudak in January, and restated our desire to push for change. This was met with some interest, but hinged somewhat on our ability to elicit voter excitement around the issue. Since the Liberal changes we have not heard much concern expressed by property owners, including those on waterfront. As a result we're not sure how much grassroots energy we can realistically muster as 2010 progresses.

We have subsequently participated in other PC events in an effort to promote our interests with the party that is likely to have the most opportunity to call out the inequities in the current system and who can hopefully leverage our issue through the political (election) process.

Given the lack of short term opportunity to realistically get reforms to the overall system — early in 2010 WRAFT distributed to the membership (and posted to the WRAFT and FOCA websites) — some practical advice, in keeping with our interest in ensuring no one is unfairly dealt with in the existing CVA system, and to respond to member requests from the WRAFT Annual General Meeting in the fall of 2009, related to dealing with inappropriate assessments. Included was background and information on how to deal with an inappropriate assessment, information on challenging your assessment through the Request for Reconsideration process, and information

on filing an Appeal with the Assessment Review Board (ARB). **Please note the deadline for requesting reconsideration for this year was March 31!**

WRAFT will look forward to the ideas, the energy and participation of waterfront groups as we move towards the 2011 election, and will communicate our plans around raising the property tax agenda and profile in the fall of 2010.

Terry Rees
Executive Director, WRAFT