
HALDIMAND COUNTY

Report PDD-13-2025 Zoning By-law Amendment Application to Add a Place of Worship to the Subject Lands – 1899 Lakeshore Road, Selkirk

For Consideration by Council in Committee on May 20, 2025



Objective:

To consider rezoning the subject lands, 1899 Lakeshore Road, Selkirk, to permit a place of worship, to facilitate worship services and related activities at the Disciples Conference Grounds.

Recommendations:

1. THAT Report PDD-13-2025 Zoning By-law Amendment Application to Add a Place of Worship to the Subject Lands – 1899 Lakeshore Road, Selkirk be received;
2. AND THAT application PLZ-HA-2025-027 to amend the Haldimand County Zoning By-law HC 1-2020 by rezoning 1899 Lakeshore Road from 'Open Space "(OS)" Zone to 'Open Space "(OS.8)" Zone with special exceptions to permit the use of a place of worship, be approved for the reasons outlined in Report PDD-13-2025;
3. AND THAT the application is deemed to be consistent with the Provincial Planning Statement, 2024, conforms to the Haldimand County Official Plan and has sufficient regard to matters of Provincial interest under the Planning Act;
4. AND THAT the by-law attached to Report PDD-13-2025 be approved at a future Council meeting.

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Reviewed by: Shannon VanDalen, MCIP, RPP, Manager, Planning & Development

Respectfully submitted: Mike Evers, MCIP, RPP, BES, General Manager, Community & Development Services

Approved: Cathy Case, Chief Administrative Officer

Executive Summary:

A Zoning By-law Amendment application has been received to consider adding the use of a place of worship within the existing buildings at the Disciples Conference Grounds, located on the north side of Lakeshore Road in Selkirk.

The proposal would utilize and/or retrofit the existing on-site buildings (i.e., pavilion, mess hall) to allow for church worship services and related activities to take place on the subject lands. As such, no new buildings or structures are being contemplated at this time.

Background:

Description of Subject Lands

The subject lands are a large 20 hectare (49 acre) rectangular-shaped lot located in the geographic Township of Rainham, on the north side of Lakeshore Road. The property is legally described as Rainham Concession 1, Part Lot 20 and known municipally as 1899 Lakeshore Road (see Attachment 1).

The subject lands are the present site of the Disciples Conference Grounds and Camp, which was purchased in 1953 to provide a camp space for fellowship among the Ontario Assembly of the Christian Church (OACC) congregations as well as the broader faith community.

The Disciples Conference Grounds contains a number of existing structures, including a pavilion, mess hall, washroom facilities, guest cabins, caretakers' cabin and a pump house. The lower half of the subject lands contain the structures associated with the Disciples Conference Grounds and Camp with some woodlands and thicket of trees surrounding the cabins and buildings while the norther half of the subject lands contain significant woodlands and are heavily forested and contains no buildings or structures. A portion of the subject lands is also located on the south side of Lakeshore Road and contains a portion of lakefront property; however, these lands are not within the scope of the application.

Neighbourhood Context

The southern portion of the subject lands is within the Lakeshore Node of Sweets Corner Road and contains the existing buildings and structures associated with the Disciples Conference Grounds.

A summary of the surrounding land uses is described as follows:

- North:** To the north of the subject lands are agricultural uses and operations with associated residential dwellings.
- South:** To the south of the subject lands is Lake Erie.
- East:** To the east of the subject lands is vacant and undeveloped land that contains significant woodlands in its entirety and form part of the significant woodland features contained within the subject lands.
- West:** To the west of the subject lands are large agricultural lands and associated residential uses as well as low density lakeshore residential dwellings.

Current Land Use Permissions

The subject lands shown in Attachment 1 are designated "Resort Residential Node", in part (southern portion) and "Agriculture", in part on Schedule "D.9" (Lakeshore Node of Sweets Corners Road) in the Haldimand County Official Plan. The Resort Residential Nodes are not considered settlement areas, however, are rural areas of concentrated existing development in nodal or linear form along the Lake Erie shore and predominantly consist of recreational residences and may include related commercial, institutional and recreational facilities serving the area.

The subject lands are presently zoned 'Open Space "(OS)" Zone, in accordance with Haldimand County Zoning by-law HC 1-2020, which primarily permits existing residential uses, limited commercial uses including farmer's markets and accessory retail uses and parks and open space uses, including campgrounds, parks, golf courses, tent and trailer parks, fair and exhibitions grounds and conservation areas. As a place of worship is not a permitted use (primary or accessory) in the "(OS)" Zone, a Zoning By-law Amendment application has been submitted in order to rezone the lands to permit the proposed uses through a site-specific provision.

Subject Application/Development Proposal

The subject application contemplates adding the use of a place of worship within the existing buildings at the Disciples Conference Grounds. The proposal would utilize and/or retrofit the existing on-site buildings (refer to Attachments 2 and 3) to allow for church worship services, congregations and related activities among the broader faith community to take place on the subject lands. Accordingly, no new development (i.e., new buildings or structures) are proposed to facilitate the proposal. The proposed use is considered to be complementary to the existing land use permissions and will not adversely affect the subject lands or neighboring areas.

It is Planning staff's understanding that an existing parking area with approximately 60 spaces is presently existing and has been overgrown with vegetation. It is also staff's understanding that the proponent is re-establishing this parking area for the future use of the place of worship, which is to be contained within the existing pavilion, which is estimated to attract 220 worshipers. As the subject lands are under Site Plan Control, the details of the parking area, space dimensions will be deferred to the detailed-design stage to ensure the parking lot is sufficient in terms of accessibility and meeting all applicable parking provisions in the Zoning By-law.

Analysis:

Provincial Planning Statement, 2024 (PPS)

The Provincial Planning Statement, 2024 (PPS) is a policy statement issued under the authority of Section 3 of the *Planning Act* and provides policy direction on matters of provincial interest related to land use planning and development. As a key part of Ontario's policy-led planning system, the Provincial Planning Statement sets the policy foundation for regulating the development and use of land province-wide, helping achieve the provincial goal of meeting the needs of a fast-growing province while enhancing the quality of life for all Ontarians.

The PPS does not provide direction regarding specific institutional uses (i.e., a place of worship) that do not impact matters of Provincial interest. However, the PPS does contain policies pertaining to public spaces, recreation, parks, trails and open space. In particular, section 3.9.1(d) of the PPS states that healthy, active and inclusive communities should be promoted by:

d) recognizing provincial parks, conservation reserves, and other protected areas, and minimizing negative impacts on these areas.

Planning comment: When the property was purchased in 1953, it was vacant of any buildings or structures. The existing buildings were constructed shortly after acquisition in 1953 with minimal tree removals. The structures are built within the woodlands and as no future buildings or structures are being contemplated at this time to facilitate the proposal, there will be minimal negative impacts on these protected areas.

Accordingly, Planning staff are of the opinion that the proposal is generally consistent with and does not conflict with any policies of the PPS.

Haldimand County Official Plan

The Haldimand County Official Plan (HCOP) creates the long-term framework for guiding land use changes in the County by protecting and managing the natural environment, directing and influencing growth patterns and facilitating the vision of the County as expressed through its residents. The HCOP also provides the avenue through which Provincial Policy is implemented into the local context.

Designation

The subject lands are within the Lakeshore Node of Sweets Corners Road, and located on the north side of Lakeshore Road.

The subject lands are designated “Resort Residential Node”, in part (southern portion) and “Agriculture”, in part on Schedule “D.9” (Lakeshore Node of Sweets Corners Road) in the Haldimand County Official Plan.

As stipulated in section 4.E of the HCOP, the Lakeshore Area in Haldimand County has unique development circumstances that are due to:

- a) Its location adjacent to the north shore of Lake Erie;
- b) The ribbon development pattern along the shoreline with concentrated development in certain Resort Residential Nodes;
- c) Development is on private services with the exception of the Major Industrial uses in the Nanticoke area;
- d) The predominant residential character of the area for both seasonal and year-round uses with commercial and tourist opportunities scattered throughout; and,
- e) The industrial uses located around the Hamlets and Nanticoke and Port Maitland.

Resort Residential Node Policies

Further, section 4.E.9 of the HCOP states that Resort Residential Nodes are not settlement areas. They are rural areas of concentrated existing development in nodal or linear form in Lakeshore locations which are predominately recreational residences, and may include related commercial, institutional and recreational facilities servicing the area. Resort Residential Nodes are identified on Schedules “D.1” to “D.21”.

Planning Comment: The Disciples Conference Grounds were established in 1953 and have been consistently used as a religious retreat, Christian education and campsite for decades. The purpose of adding the use of a place of worship will allow the organization to facilitate church worship services and related activities to take place within the existing buildings as part of the site’s program. As noted above, the Resort Residential Nodes may permit some limited forms of institutional uses, which could include a place of worship to serve both the area and those using the camp site as part of the greater Disciples Conference Grounds purpose. No new buildings or structures are being contemplated to facilitate the proposed use of the place of worship.

Natural Environment Policies

The subject lands are located partially within and adjacent to a candidate significant woodland, which according to Section 2.A.2. of the HCOP, are considered a Significant Natural Environment Area (NEA). Accordingly, any proposed development (which also includes a change of land use) or site alteration is proposed within or adjacent to an NEA, an Environmental Impact study (EIS) shall be required to ensure that any proposed development will not result in any negative impacts on the ecological and hydrologic functions of the natural features and their functions.

Planning Comment: While the location of the existing buildings is within and adjacent to the NEA, the proposal does not contemplate any new construction or site alteration as the proposed place of worship will be contained solely within the existing pavilion on site. As such, Planning staff are of the opinion that the requirements for an EIS can be waived in this instance as the proposal is not anticipated to have any negative impacts on the natural heritage features or their ecological and/or hydrologic functions. The Long Point Region Conservation Authority—which has watershed jurisdiction in this part of Haldimand and was circulated—has not raised any concerns with the staff recommended approach to the NEA.

Lakeshore Hazard Lands

Section 2.C.3) of the HCOP includes policies pertaining to the hazard lands located along the Lake Erie shoreline, in particular, fluctuating water levels, storms, wave uprush, ice build-up and erosion. These hazard lands are Regulated by the Long Point Region Conservation Authority (LPRCA) in accordance with Ontario Regulation 41/24 (Prohibited Activities, Exemptions and Permits). The southern portion of the subject lands are within an identified shoreline hazard and may be subject to significant damage potential. The policies in this section contain limitations and prohibitions on certain types of development within the shoreline hazards lands.

Planning Comment: The existing buildings associated with the Disciples Conference Grounds are located outside of the hazard lands and the LPRCA Regulated Areas. As such, there are no anticipated impacts from an environmental hazard perspective.

Planning staff are of the opinion that the propose use of a place of worship within the existing camp site is consistent with the intent and purpose of the Haldimand County Official Plan.

Haldimand County Zoning By-law HC 1-2020

The purpose of the Haldimand County Zoning By-law HC 1-2020 is to regulate the use of land within the County by stating exactly how land may be used, where buildings and other structures can be located, the types of buildings that are permitted and how they can be used, and the lot sizes and dimensions, parking space requirements, building heights, and setback from the street. The Zoning By-law implements the Official Plan policies and is legally enforceable.

The subject lands are presently zoned 'Open Space (OS)' with special exception 36.178, in accordance with Haldimand County Zoning By-law HC 1-2020, which permits existing residential uses, limited commercial uses including farmer's markets and accessory retail uses and parks and open space uses, including campgrounds, parks, golf courses, tent and trailer parks, fair and exhibitions grounds and conservation areas. Site-specific provision (36.178) was created through prior Zoning By-law Amendments (By-law No. 10-H-97 and 11-H-97), to permit the use of a camp ground in the "(OS)" Zone with an amended definition of campground for the subject lands, as well as placing the lands under Site Plan Control.

The Zoning By-law Amendment application is seeking to amend the land use permissions for the subject lands to facilitate and permit a place of worship to allow for church and worship services to occur in conjunction with the camp ground facilities programming. As such, the proposal seeks to rezone the subject lands from 'Open Space "(OS)" Zone to 'Open Space "(OS.8)" Zone with a special exception to permit the use of a place of worship.

Planning Comment: As the proposed use is anticipated to be used in conjunction with the programming of the Disciples Conference Grounds, and no additional buildings or structures are proposed to be constructed to facilitate the use as it will be contained within the existing buildings. As such, given that no buildings or structures are being proposed that would have the effect of substantially increasing the size of or useability of the site, would not meet the definition of development under section 41 of the *Planning Act*. Accordingly, as the subject lands are under Site Plan Control through the above-noted By-law, it would be appropriate to direct the proponent to seek an exemption to Site Plan Control (SPC) through a Site Plan Waiver request. SPC remains applicable for the parking area should any of the work relating to re-establishing it trigger any significant grading, drainage or other design works.

Accordingly, Planning staff are supportive of the proposed Zoning By-law Amendment application and are of the opinion that the development proposal is generally consistent with the intent and purpose of the Haldimand County Zoning By-law HC 1-2020.

A copy of the proposed draft Zoning by-law is attached as Attachment 5 to this report.

Financial/Legal Implications:

Not applicable.

Stakeholder Impacts:

Public Comments: No comments from the public, including area residents were received at the time this report was written.

Development & Design Technologist: No comments or concerns.

Building and Municipal Enforcement Services:

General Comments

- Property zoned OS w/ special provision 36.178. Place of worship not currently a permitted use.
- Any development will be subject to site plan control and LPRCA approval.

Application-Specific Comments

- Provide complete site plan with all information on one plan.
- Parking:
 - Include dimensions of parking spaces and aisles.
 - Include setbacks from property lines.
 - Provide capacity/attendance numbers for place of worship.
- Sewage system evaluation required (by licensed sewage system installer) to confirm existing sewage system is adequate for proposed use, and in good working condition.

Planning Comment: While the subject lands are under Site Plan Control, the proposal does not contemplate the construction of any new buildings or structures, accordingly, would not trigger the Site Plan requirements under Section 41 of the *Planning Act*. As such, Planning staff recommend that the proponent request a Site Plan Waiver application, which will require a more detailed concept/site plan and confirmation of parking as part of the submission requirements.

Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation (MCFN): No comments received.

Six Nations of the Grand River:

- 10:1 tree replacement ratio for any trees slated to be removed. A stage one archeological assessment be completed and sent to Tanya Hill-Montour for her review upon any ground disturbances.

Planning Comment: Planning staff are currently engaged with the Six Nations to waive the archaeological assessment requirements given that no new development or site alteration is being proposed.

Economic Development and Tourism (EDT): EDT has no comments or concerns.

Canada Post: Please be advised that Canada Post does not have any comments on this application for the addition of a place of worship on the property as this will not affect mail delivery.

Long Point Region Conservation Authority (LPRCA): Long Point Region Conservation Authority (LPRCA) staff have had an opportunity to review the application PLZ-HA-2025-027 and can provide

the following comments based on LPRCA's plan review responsibilities for Haldimand County's consideration.

It is staff's understanding that the submitted application will facilitate the addition of a site-specific provision on the property zoned OS-1 to allow for an existing structure to be used as "a place of worship".

Delegated Responsibility from the Minister of Natural Resources, Chapter 5.2 of the Provincial Policy Statement, 2024

Conservation Authorities have been delegated responsibilities from the Ministry of Natural Resources to represent the provincial interests regarding natural hazards encompassed by Chapter 5.2 of the Provincial Policy Statement, 2024 (PPS). The overall intent of Chapter 5.0 - Protecting Public Health and Safety of the PPS is to reduce the potential public cost and/or risk to Ontario's residents from natural or human-made hazards. As such, "development shall be directed away from areas of natural or human-made hazards where there is an unacceptable risk to public health or safety or of property damage, and not create new or aggravate existing hazards".

The application is subject to the following subsections of Chapter 5.2 of the Provincial Policy Statement:

5.2.2 Development shall generally be directed, in accordance with guidance developed by the Province (as amended from time to time), to areas outside of:

- a) hazardous lands adjacent to the shorelines of the Great Lakes - St. Lawrence River System and large inland lakes which are impacted by flooding hazards, erosion hazards and/or dynamic beach hazards;
- b) hazardous lands adjacent to river, stream and small inland lake systems which are impacted by flooding hazards and/or erosion hazards; and,

LPRCA staff can advise that the application is consistent with Section 5.2.2 a) and b) of the Provincial Policy Statement, 2024.

Permitting under Ontario Regulation 41/24

The subject lands are partially regulated by Long Point Region Conservation Authority under Ontario Regulation 41/24. LPRCA's regulation limit extends outward from the shoreline, the watercourses, and wetland present on the property by varying distances. Permission from this office is required prior to any development within the regulated area as defined in the *Conservation Authorities Act*.

Development is defined as:

- the construction, reconstruction, erection or placing of a building or structure of any kind,
- any change to a building or structure that would have the effect of altering the use or potential use of the building or structure, increasing the size of the building or structure or increasing the number of dwelling units in the building or structure,
- site grading, or
- the temporary or permanent placing, dumping or removal of any material, originating on the site or elsewhere (Ontario Regulation 41/24).

Planning Comment: Acknowledged. The applicant is hereby notified that a Permit may be required for any applicable development as noted above from the LPRCA and are further advised to contact LPRCA's office prior to any applicable development. While it is Planning staff's understanding that no new buildings or structures are proposed, we advise to contact LPRCA's office to ensure no further approvals are required to facilitate the proposal.

Report Impacts:

Agreement: No

By-law: Yes

Budget Amendment: No

Policy: No

Attachments:

1. Location Map.
2. Site Plan.
3. Site Plan Details.
4. Parking Area.
5. Draft Zoning By-law.