



**TOWN OF LAKE COWICHAN**

Minutes of a Special meeting of Council held and transmitted electronically via Council Chambers located at 39 South Shore Road, Lake Cowichan, BC on Tuesday, September 9<sup>th</sup>, 2025

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PRESENT: Tim McGonigle, Mayor  
Councillor Carolyne Austin  
Councillor Aaron Frisby  
Councillor Kristine Sandhu  
Councillor Lorna Vomacka

STAFF: John Thomas, Chief Administrative Officer  
Ronnie Gill, Director of Finance  
Jas Sandhu, Superintendent, Public Works and Engineering Services  
Dalton Smith, Manager, Cowichan Lake Education Centre  
Brigid Reynolds, Contract Planner  
Roni-Lee Roach, Executive Secretary

PUBLIC: 52

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The Mayor called the meeting to order at 4:00 pm.

**2. INTRODUCTION OF LATE ITEMS**

None.

**3. AGENDA**

No. R.0093/25  
Agenda

Moved: Councillor Vomacka  
Seconded: Councillor Austin  
that the agenda be approved as amended.

CARRIED.

Councillor Sandhu declared a conflict of interest on matters pertaining to 134 Cowichan Lake Road and left the meeting at 4:02 pm

**4. PUBLIC INPUT**

John Thomas, Chief Administrative Officer, read out the parameters of the Public Input from the Town of Lake Cowichan Council Procedures Bylaw, Section 17.2.

Rod Peters

Rod Peters, 258 River Road, asked why the Zoning bylaw needs to be amended as the people are putting in a medical clinic and they have already met all the Town requirements for their building permit.

He stated that the Town is in a critical time right now as it does not have a functioning health area and raised concerns with the Kaatza Health Unit.

Dr. Greg Siren

Doctor Greg Siren, 403 Margaret Lane, Victoria introduced himself as a family physician with the focus of chronic pain and mobility impairment and stated he has been on-called since May in the community to provide a clinic. He shared that it was important to have a primary care clinician living in the community to provide continuity of care.

Lois Atchison

Lois Atchison, 142 Cowichan Lake Road, asked about the current health centre and encouraged Council to proceed and open the clinic at 134 Cowichan Lake Road.

Lorne Scheffer

Lorne Scheffer, 75 South Shore Road, stated that the group that he represents has been working on trying to come up with a plan to provide and fund doctors to come into the community. He supports having a full-time doctor in Lake Cowichan as in the past with Doctor Morrow.

Heidi Smith

Heidi Smith, 6069 Summit in Duncan stated that she travels from Duncan to provide primary care in Lake Cowichan at the Kaatza Health Unit. She shared her view that the state of Lake Cowichan health is terrible and they are having to turn people away who are elderly and vulnerable.



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- Tracy Mitchell Tracy Mitchell, 351 Point Ideal Drive asked why the matter has come to the point that it has reached on the matter and requested what the short and long term health care plans are for the Town.
- Michelle Lind Michelle Lind, 8535 Maple Rise Road, shared her personal pain struggles and advocated for the opening of the clinic.
- Greg Adams Greg Adams, North Shore Road, asked with such a need being established and requirements in the community, what is the downside to saying no to the application. He stated he was trying to figure out why the Town said no.
- Carol Eschak Carol Eschak, 7935 Greendale Road, asked at what point will the public have absolute transparency on what has gone on that has lead us here. There is a lot of innuendo and online postings and she is very sensitive to what her daughter is experiencing on her professional reputation and the spotlight given to her on the matter.
- Mayor McGonigle called for further public input.
- Mayor McGonigle called for public input a second time.
- Carolynne Christie Carolynne Christie, 6879 Cowichan Lake Road, shared that she sustained a terrible injury in Alberta and has received excellent care from the applicant and stated that her services are an asset to the community. Ms. Christie asked for reasons for the no votes to get a better understanding of the decision.
- Kimberley Hill Kimberley Hill, 9949 Swordfern in Youbou asked why everyone is opposed to growth and if Council had everyone’s best interest in growing this community.
- Dave Saunders Dave Saunders, 813 Pears Road in Victoria shared his thanks to the nurses doctors and emergency responders in the room and stated was the reason he created the playbook and toolkit that he presented to Council.
- He stated that the Town was in an emergency situation with no transit and no medical imaging available. The Town needs to create a health care plan for the Town and the community to create economic development, jobs and support the health care workers and the people Council represent. He offered to help with the endeavor of resiliency planning.
- Mayor McGonigle called for further input.
- Lois Atchison Lois Atchison addressed those in the audience and stated that the Kaatza Clinic has been in operation for a long time and encouraged everyone to get their name in for a doctor with the applicant’s clinic.

**5. ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

None.

**6. BUSINESS ARISING AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

- (a)** Councillor Austin read out a statement with respect to events over the past few weeks and her reasoning for her vote at the Special meeting held on August 19<sup>th</sup>, 2025 to review the zoning amendment bylaw.
- (b)** Councillor Vomacka read out a statement which outlined the Town’s Zoning bylaw definition of a home-based business and stated her decision was based on the zoning amendment of the property and not a doctor shortage matter.



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**7. DELEGATIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS**

None.

**8. CORRESPONDENCE**

**(a) Action Items:**

None.

**(b) Information or Consent Items**

None.

**9. REPORTS**

**(a) Council and other Committee Reports**

None.

**(b) Other Reports**

None.

**(c) Staff Reports**

- (i)** Brigid Reynolds spoke on the matter for Council’s consideration to amend Zoning Bylaw No. 1055-2021 section 4.3.11 Home Based Business to add (j) despite any other provision in this bylaw, a structure (“medical services”) as shown in Building Permit 06-2024-19 is deemed to be a permitted home-based business at 134 Cowichan Lake Road, legally described as Lot 1, Section 6, Cowichan Lake District, Plan VIP5853 (PID:005- 902-118).

The Chair afforded an opportunity for members of Council to ask questions or seek clarification on the matter from staff.

**10. BYLAWS**

No. R.0094/25  
Zoning Amendment  
Bylaw No. 1122-2025 at  
135 North Shore Road

Moved: Councillor Austin  
Seconded: Councillor Frisby  
that Council grant 1st, 2nd, and 3rd reading of Zoning Amendment Bylaw No. 1122-2025 to amend Zoning Bylaw No. 1055, 2021 section 4.3.11 Home Based Business to add (j) despite any other provision in this bylaw, a structure (“medical services”) as shown in Building Permit 06-2024-19 is deemed to be a permitted home-based business at 134 Cowichan Lake Rd, Lot 1, Section 6, Cowichan Lake District, Plan VIP5853 (PID: 005-902-118); and  
that the Town of Lake Cowichan not require the application fee to be paid.

Councillor Vomacka Opposed  
CARRIED.

Councillor Austin requested that her concerns with the height of the fence around the driveway be noted.

**11. NEW BUSINESS**

None.

**12. MAYOR’S REPORT**

None.

**13. NOTICES OF MOTION**

**14. QUESTION PERIOD**



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A number of questions, comments and concerns were raised as follows:

- The legal height of fencing which was clarified as 1.2 metres (4 feet) in residential zone;
- Whether the grant funds received from the Growing Community Fund could be utilized for improvements to Kaatza Health Unit;
- Need for more services and doctors to be available;
- Disappointment that members of Council waited to seek further information in a timely manner;
- That with the health concerns at the Kaatza Health unit, it could be moved into the vacant doctor’s clinic.

Mayor McGonigle summarized the meeting by stating that the Zoning Amendment bylaw was given first, second and third reading and it would be forwarded to the next meeting of Council to be held on September 16<sup>th</sup>, 2025 for final consideration and adoption.

John Thomas, Chief Administrative Officer addressed a number of questions posed during the meeting and provided information as follows:

- The misinformation regarding the Kaatza Health Clinic;
- Mandate of health care and the role of the municipality with respect to health care strategy or health care plan in place;
- Transparency; relationship is between applicant and the Town and the duty to resolve issues and that staff provides the information to the Council for its decision making; and
- Once adoption of the bylaw is completed, staff will be in a position to grant occupancy.

**15. IN CAMERA**

None.

**16. ADJOURNMENT**

Mayor McGonigle declared the meeting adjourn (5:06 pm).

Certified correct \_\_\_\_\_ Original Signed \_\_\_\_\_.

Confirmed on the 16<sup>th</sup> day of September, 2025.

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Original Signed  
Mayor