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Councillor impressed with U. S. developers

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A Prince Edward County councillor has returned home impressed after a two-day trip to the United States to view a pair of facilities operated by a company hoping to build a large cottage development at East Lake.

Councillors Barry Turpin of Bloomfield and Keith MacDonald of Hallowell along with a municipal planner and building inspector made the two-day bus trip to Maine and Massachusetts to view facilities developed by Cottage Advisors Canada Inc.

Cottage Advisors LLC was established in 2006 and is focused on establishing recreation cottage developments. They are currently working on three projects worth a total of \$150 million.

The company, which has made no formal application to the municipality, has unveiled plans for the development of an 80-acre waterfront site on the south side of East Lake. The resort is expected to include approximately 230 cottages, resort amenities, activities for all ages and rental management services, worth an estimated \$50 million. A rezoning application is expected to be filed for the project this fall.

Although MacDonald was unavailable for comment, Turpin said he liked what he saw during the trip.

"I was very impressed with both facilities," said Turpin. "Perhaps what impressed me the most is the lengths they went to at both sites to ensure they met all the regulations of the local municipalities."

Turpin said while the concept of both American facilities was similar -both offered privately owned seasonal cottages -the development in Wells, Maine is on a municipal water and sewer system. The other facility in Westford, Mass., near Boston was in a rural setting and used its own water and sewer system.

"The development in Massachusetts is very much like East Lake in that it's a rural setting in a wooded area. They have installed a Zenon water system there and it is state-of-the-art, so you know these people don't cut corners and they get things done properly," he said. "The cottages are very well built and they are not an intrusion in the wooded areas. They sit off the ground on Sono tubes and fit in very well."

Turpin said the trip allowed him to gather information before the project moves forward, likely in the fall.

"I would think that after the studies are completed, (Cottage Advisors) will make a presentation to planning and then hold public meetings," he said. "This is potentially a very big development for Prince Edward County and I just wanted to take advantage of the trip to gather information."

Cottage Advisors spokeswoman Lizanne Donnelly said public engagement is a key component of the project.

"In Massachusetts the community had a number of concerns and Cottage Advisors met with them and got a list of those concerns. They went away and dealt with them and then met with local residents again. I think by the third meeting there weren't any more concerns," she said. "Their approach is to work with the community and now some of the people own property at the resort and some of the kids work there. It's become another place to go in the area."

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