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The Woodland Heights Herald

Helping Make Our Community as Friendly as it is Beautiful



Paving Deerfoot Trail

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The Origins of Woodland Heights

A Vision of Nature and Community Realized in Huntsville

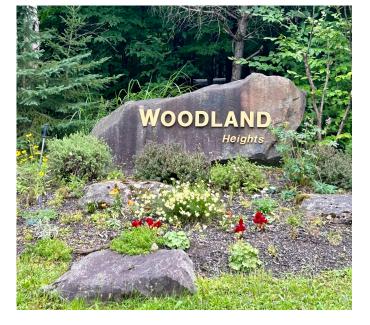
You'll recall our historical series most recently covered the Deerhurst Resort to present day. After selling Deerhurst Resort in 1989, Bill Waterhouse turned his attention to a new venture that would blend nature, community, and thoughtful development. He set up his office in a familiar place—the former schoolhouse on Canal Road, the very building where he had once been a student. From this nostalgic base he purchased 500 acres of forested wilderness, land he knew from hunting and camping, and the planning for Woodland Heights began.

The first step was surveying and establishing the Phase 1 property. With lumber prices soaring, the initial road was cut in for about 1,000 feet, primarily to harvest logs. But this early activity sparked curiosity. Locals and visitors alike began stopping by, asking if a new development was underway. The buzz was undeniable, and soon a dedicated sales office was established right at the start of Deerfoot Trail.

Demand surged immediately. On opening weekend, numerous homes were sold, driven by the allure of the Sanctuary—a 200-acre nature reserve that would become the heart of Woodland Heights. It was the first residential development in Ontario to feature a dedicated nature reserve, setting a precedent for environmentally conscious planning.

Continued





Placing Boulder at Entrance to Woodland Heights

Woodland Heights Continued

The Sanctuary offered more than just scenic beauty. Its spring-fed ponds, stocked with speckled trout, became a major draw. The main pond at Deerfoot Trail and Birchwood Drive was equipped with a dry hydrant, providing a water source for the fire department—an innovative safety feature that underscored the community's thoughtful design.

Guided by renowned naturalist Robin Tapley, the trails within the Sanctuary were carefully laid out to preserve the natural landscape while inviting exploration. Marshes, forests, and walking paths created a haven for wildlife and residents alike. Early promotional events, including dogsledding and nighttime snowshoeing through the Sanctuary, attracted buyers from Toronto and beyond, eager to experience the magic of Muskoka living.

Originally, plans included a clubhouse and restaurant, but the community quickly voiced concerns about increased traffic. In a democratic move, residents voted against the idea, preserving the peaceful atmosphere that had drawn them to Woodland Heights in the first place.

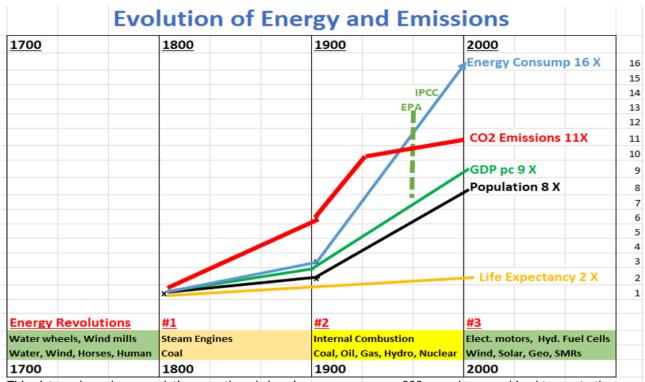
The first homes were built on Deerfoot Trail in 2001, marking the beginning of a vibrant neighborhood. Surveys for Phases 2 and 3 were completed in 2003, and by 2004, Phase 4 brought the development to its full capacity of 137 building lots. Today, only ten lots remain undeveloped. This is a testament to the enduring appeal of the community.

According to Roy Van Duzen, Sales Manager during the development's peak years, Bill Waterhouse's vision was "to create a development for people who wanted to be together in nature, and as a community." As a guest at our recent Street Party & BBQ, he's pleased that vision has been realized in Woodland Heights, where nature and neighborliness coexist in harmony.

From its humble beginnings in a schoolhouse to its status as one of Huntsville's most sought-after communities, Woodland Heights stands as a tribute to thoughtful planning, environmental stewardship, and the enduring power of a shared vision.

Climate Change and Wooland Heights

40 years ago in the 1980s, global population reached 5 billion and the world's top 2,500 climate scientists issued a warning that carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions were accumulating in the atmosphere. Two hundred years of burning carbon-based fossil fuels was slowly but surely changing weather patterns around the world. Those emissions act like a greenhouse roof, trapping heat inside the thin layer of atmosphere surrounding the earth. The excessive heat is melting polar ice, glaciers, and permafrost, causing sea levels to rise. It's also responsible for dryer landscapes, wildfires, extreme winds and flooding. These factors are driving up the costs of food, housing, and infrastructure throughout the world. Environmental actions that have been taken since the 1980s were able to bend the emissions curve, but not enough.



This picture shows how population growth and changing energy use over 200 years have combined to create the dangerous level of global carbon emissions now causing climate change.

In 2025, global population passed 8 billion and is expected to hit 10 billion by 2050. With that added consumption, reserves of oil and gas will be largely depleted by 2050, causing energy shortages. No country by itself can solve climate change or energy shortages. A cooperative global effort is required.

Many countries are working hard to replace carbon-based energy with clean, renewable sources. This includes solar, wind, hydro, biofuels, geothermal, and nuclear energy. Introducing much more efficient electric vehicles, mobile equipment and electric heat pumps will also help. But completing the transition to clean and efficient energy in only 25 years is a very tall order. That means resilience to climate change will be increasingly important. Resilience is the ability to withstand or to recover quickly from difficulties we can't prevent.

As residents of Woodland Heights, we live in a forest. The 2025 wildfire season is expected to set new records. I cannot recall major wildfires ever being so close to us as they have gotten this year. Forests can take from 70 to over 100 years to fully recover from a fire. In order to help our community build our resilience to climate change, I have helped arrange for a fire prevention expert from the MNR to present to us at the upcoming AGM on October 18th. This presentation will help with insight into how we can make our homes less vulnerable to forest fires. More details can be found in the AGM announcement.







Hugh with wife Charlotte

Getting to Know You

DISCOVERING OUR NEIGHBOURS

Hugh Holland: A Voice for Change in Woodland Heights

For the past 15 years, Hugh Holland has called Woodland Heights home—a place where his passion for community, climate advocacy, and lifelong learning continues to flourish. A retired professional engineer with a remarkable 40-year career at General Motors, Hugh now channels his energy into writing, researching, and raising awareness about the pressing issues of energy and climate change.

Each month, readers of The Doppler look forward to Hugh's thoughtful column, where he dives deep into the complexities of global energy systems and the urgent need for sustainable solutions. His articles reflect not only technical expertise but also a genuine concern for the planet and future generations. "I've always loved researching," Hugh says. "It's how I stay connected to the world and keep learning." That curiosity has never waned. Whether he's analyzing policy shifts or exploring emerging technologies, Hugh's writing is grounded in facts and driven by purpose.

Beyond the page, Hugh leads a vibrant life. He golfs weekly and has been a proud Rotarian for over 30 years—embodying the Rotary spirit of service above self. He and his wife Charlotte share a blended family of five children and seven grandchildren, who inspire much of his advocacy work.

Hugh's journey from engineering boardrooms to community columns is a testament to the power of lifelong engagement. In Woodland Heights, he's not just a resident. He's a voice for change, a steward of knowledge, and a neighbor who never stops caring. Thank you, Hugh, for being such a good citizen, and neighbour.

Plan to Attend the Annual General Meeting

Saturday, October 18th, 2025

Each October, you have the opportunity to participate in your community's Annual General Meeting (AGM) and receive an update from your Board of Directors on issues that affect you and your community. The Board consists of a group of volunteer residents that work on your behalf to oversee and advocate for the best interests of Woodland Heights. Last year, with the first return to a "live" meeting format since Covid, we had close to sixty residents attend! They enjoyed a productive and interactive meeting as well as an educational presentation from a local expert.

Here are the details for this year's AGM:

WHEN: Saturday, October 18th

Doors open at 9:30, meeting starts at 10 AM (to 12:15 PM)

WHERE: Deerhurst Resort, The Waterhouse Ballroom

Use main entrance and go up to second floor

SPECIAL GUESTS: Andrew Buwalda, General Manager, Deerhurst Resort

Shane McCool, Ministry of Natural Resources & Forests



Care to Start a Club?

In an earlier edition of The Woodland Heights Herald, we highlighted that one of the benefits of living in a community like ours can be sharing common interests. This can not only help pass the time pleasantly, but sharing common interest can often be the foundation for new connections and friendships. To that end, a friendly reminder that if you have a particular interest or hobby and would like to connect with others who share the same, let us know at wHCAherald@gmail.com . Examples could be going to the local theatre, dining out or a monthly cooking club, or perhaps enjoying movies or games nights through the winter. We can highlight your interest via the WH Herald and connect those who respond. What have you got to lose?

The Heart of the Community:

HUNTSVILLE AND DWIGHT LIBRARIES THRIVE BEYOND BOOKS

The Heart of the Community: Huntsville and Dwight Libraries Thrive Beyond Books

When you think of a library, do you simply think of books? Community libraries have evolved to become much more than shelves of books. They're lifelines of connection, learning, and opportunity. In Muskoka, the Huntsville Public Library and the Lake of Bays Dwight Library exemplify this spirit, offering vital services that extend far beyond traditional lending.

The Dwight Library, affectionately known as "the little library that roars," serves a population of just 3,400, yet its impact is outsized. According to the library, each cardholder receives an estimated \$366 in services annually—a testament to the value packed into this small but mighty institution. From internet access and Wi-Fi to technology support and programming for all ages, Dwight Library is a hub for students, entrepreneurs, and anyone seeking a safe, welcoming space.

Excitingly, the Dwight Library is undergoing a much-needed expansion. The province is funding the cost of a new building. The internal resources—tools, furnishings, and programming—are being financed through community fundraising. With a little more than half of their one million dollar goal already met, the library is well on its way to growing its capacity to serve. Those interested in supporting this initiative can visit <u>lakeofbayslibrary.ca</u>.

Meanwhile, the <u>Huntsville Public Library</u> continues to be a cornerstone of the town's cultural and educational life. It offers extensive programming for children, tweens, teens, and adults, fostering lifelong learning and community engagement. Whether it's story time, author readings, tech workshops, or book clubs, Huntsville's library is a place where curiosity is nurtured, and connections are made. There are regular speakers on a wide range of topics from healthcare and mental health, to hobbies and business skills. Curious if there's something for you at the Huntsville library? Have a look at <u>their programming page</u> and you'll be pleasantly surprised!

In an age where digital access isn't universal and safe public spaces are more important than ever, libraries like these remind us of the enduring power of community. They're not just places to borrow books—they're places to belong.

