



**Grand River Conservation Authority
Addendum - General Meeting**

Friday, August 28, 2020

9:30 a.m.

GRCA Zoom Virtual Meeting

Link to be distributed via email prior to meeting

	Pages
12. Reports:	
<i>k. GM-08-20-48 - New Guelph Lake Nature Centre Update</i>	<i>1</i>
THAT Report GM-08-20-48 - Guelph Lake Nature Centre Update Report be received as information.	
<i>l. GM-08-20-57 - Region of Waterloo - Indigenous Reconciliation Action Plan</i>	<i>5</i>
THAT Grand River Conservation Authority staff maintain observer status on the development of an Indigenous Reconciliation Action Plan within the Region of Waterloo.	
17. Closed Meeting	
<i>d. Personal Matter about an Identifiable Individual</i>	

Grand River Conservation Authority

Report number: GM-08-20-48
Date: August 28, 2020
To: Members of the Grand River Conservation Authority
Subject: New Guelph Lake Nature Centre Update

Recommendation:

THAT Report GM-08-20-48 - Guelph Lake Nature Centre Update Report be received as information.

Summary:

At the November 2017 General Membership meeting, the following motion was approved:

THAT the Grand River Conservation Authority make a contribution of \$100,000 towards the construction of a new Guelph Lake Nature Centre;

AND THAT staff proceed with obtaining a detailed design plan, cost estimate and tender with the objective of completing the project by summer of 2020.

These recommendations were made with the commitment that the Grand River Conservation Foundation (GRCF) would continue to fundraise for the project and reach the full fundraising goal before the project was completed.

Since then, staff have been working to refine the approved consultant's contract, updating the total project estimate and working through a detailed design of a scaled back Nature Centre while respecting base design requirements which align with donor gift agreements. Staff were unable to tender the project and complete construction by summer of 2020.

The current estimated cost to complete the balance of the project is \$2,050,000. The balance of the GRCF funds for the project is \$1,683,467.03 (\$1,213,467.03 received + \$470,000 committed). In addition, there is \$100,000 set aside in the Guelph Nature Centre reserve that has not been accessed to date. Therefore there is currently an estimated project funding deficit of \$266,532.97 provided the committed funds are received. If committed funds are not received, the current estimated project funding deficit is \$736,532.97.

Staff have reviewed options for next steps ranging from proceeding to tender with an anticipated project deficit by borrowing from GRCA reserve funds, through to reducing the size of the building even further to find additional cost savings. At this time, staff are deferring a tender for the new GLNC. This decision will be revisited by August 2021. Deferring the tender allows time for additional fundraising to occur and allows more time to better understand the immediate and potential long term impacts to our Nature Centre buildings resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Report:

Background

Several reports related to the GLNC have been discussed with the General Membership.

In January 2011 (GM-01-11-03) it was noted that the estimated cost of a new facility, based on the preliminary design, was estimated to be approximately \$2.5 to \$3 million, including design, site and construction costs. The project would be conditional on these capital funds being raised by the GRCF. At this meeting, the project was approved and the GRCF was asked to launch a fundraising campaign to fund the project.

In September 2013 (Report GM-09-13-103), an update was provided reflecting that an RFP for Architect Services had been issued through a public process that defined the scope of work and that prior to proceeding to a construction tender a detailed estimate of the costs for the entire project would be presented to the Board along with confirmation that the required funding is in place to complete the project.

In November 2017, (Report GM-11-17-115) the Board was advised that the scope and scale of the proposed GLNC has been reduced, a \$2 million budget had been established and that almost \$1.6 million in donations had been received by and/or committed to the GRCF. At that time, staff recommended to proceed with obtaining detailed design plans, cost estimate and tender for a new GLNC with the objective of completing the project by summer of 2020 and that the GRCA make a commitment to contribute \$100,000 towards the construction project. The General Members approved these recommendations with the understanding that the GRCF would continue to fundraise for the project and reach the full fundraising goal before the project was completed. The GRCA contribution of \$100,000 was transferred into the Guelph Lake Nature Centre reserve and has not been accessed to date.

Current Update

Staff have worked with +VG Architects to decrease project costs by eliminating unnecessary building footprint, removing features not immediately required or committed to as part of existing donor gift agreements, selecting simple and durable finishes, refining base scope and minimizing landscaping as part of construction. The current GLNC detailed design includes the following:

- A 4,400 sq.ft. Building with 3 or 4 classrooms (depending on the position of the retractable wall), office, lunch room, storage room, animal care room, and washrooms.
- The access road and parking lot has been started as part of previous works and will be completed as part of the building construction.
- The GLNC will connect to the septic system and well installed as part of the Guelph Lake shop construction.
- Green features have been incorporated into the design and more are planned as future work as funding becomes available.
- For cost savings, landscaping as part of construction is planned to be minimal and only accounts for topsoil and hydroseeding of disturbed areas. Future community engagement/volunteer projects could incorporate additional low maintenance and sustainable landscape design elements utilizing plants from the Burford Nursery.

Despite significant efforts to reduce the cost of the project and the determination to fundraise sufficient funds to complete the project, there continues to be a comparable project funding deficit to what was forecasted in the November 2017 Board report. Funds have been raised since 2017, however, we have also applied donations to infrastructure project costs related to water/septic and an access road.

As a result of the global COVID-19 pandemic, all five of GRCA's Nature Centre buildings have been vacant since March 2020 when all programming was cancelled in the interest

of public health & safety and the unknowns brought on by the pandemic. The current needs of our Nature Centre buildings are still unknown at this time. Typically by August, School Boards have approved their annual budgets and determine what commitments they will make to the GRCA for the 2020/2021 school year to participate in our outdoor education program.

Recognizing the continuing forecasted project deficit and the current unknown need of the building as a result of the pandemic, staff have reviewed the following options. Each option considered has advantages, disadvantages and risks.

- 1) Tender the current design with an anticipated funding deficit. After the tender results are known, borrow GRCA reserve funds to be repaid by the GRCF as additional fundraising efforts continue through construction and occupancy.
 - This option allows the project to proceed as intended, however, there is a risk that the GRCF is unable to obtain the donations necessary to fund the balance of the project costs and the current need of the building is unknown at this time as a result of the pandemic.
- 2) Defer the tender for up to one year and revisit this decision by August 2021.
 - This option allows additional time for fundraising efforts to continue and allows more time to better understand the immediate and potential long term impacts to our Nature Centre buildings resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. However, construction costs are likely to escalate, the delay may result in additional consulting costs if building codes change, and the current GLNC is in need of upgrades and repairs.
- 3) Revisit the needs assessment for the GLNC and determine if there is a less expensive building option to operate the Outdoor Education Program. This option would require the renegotiation of donor gift agreements as commitments have been made in regards to naming opportunities and building room sizes.
 - This option may result in project cost savings, however, a significant amount of staff time will be required to renegotiate donor gift agreements and a substantial amount of time and money has already been committed to the current design which would be lost. Further, the current design is based on the needs affirmed as recently as early 2020.

Given the amount of uncertainty at this time, staff are deferring the tender at this time in line with option 2. This allows time to reassess the current needs of the Guelph Lake Nature Centre building as a result of the pandemic and to allow more time for donations to be received. The decision to defer the tender for this project will be reviewed by August 2021 or sooner if new information becomes available. A recommendation, or options to be considered, will be brought to the Members at that time.

Financial implications:

The current estimated cost to complete the balance of the project is \$2,050,000. The balance of the GRCF funds for the project is \$1,683,467.03 (\$1,213,467.03 received + \$470,000 committed). In addition, there is \$100,000 set aside in the Guelph Nature Centre reserve that has not been accessed to date. Therefore there is currently an estimated project funding deficit of \$266,532.97 provided the committed funds are

received. If committed funds are not received, the current estimated project funding deficit is \$736,532.97.

Estimate for a New Guelph Lake Nature Centre, Demolition of existing Nature Centre, and an Outdoor classroom	\$1,700,000
10% contingency	\$170,000
Consulting fees, permits, furniture and equipment	\$180,000
Estimated total to complete the balance of the project (HST not included)	\$2,050,000

Balance of GRCF funding Received	\$1,213,467.03
Balance of GRCF funding Committed	\$470,000
GRCA Committed Funding in Guelph Lake NC Reserve	\$100,000
Subtotal	\$1,783,467.03
Estimated GRCF project funding deficit	(\$266,532.97)

To date, the GRCF has also contributed \$220,000 towards the following project costs: building studies, consulting fees, surveys, utility infrastructure, and access roads.

Additional projects have also been completed as part of the site masterplan which support the proposed new GLNC including pollinator gardens, a pond and nature trails.

Other department considerations:

This project has involved staff from many different work groups at the GRCA and the Grand River Conservation Board has done considerable work fundraising for this project.

Prepared by:

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Manager of Central Services

Approved by:

Karen Armstrong
Deputy CAO, Secretary-Treasurer

Grand River Conservation Authority

Report number: GM-08-20-57
Date: August 28, 2020
To: Members of the Grand River Conservation Authority
Subject: Region of Waterloo- Indigenous Reconciliation Action Plan

Recommendation:

THAT Grand River Conservation Authority staff maintain observer status on the development of an Indigenous Reconciliation Action Plan within the Region of Waterloo.

Summary:

Not applicable.

Report:

The Region of Waterloo and staff representatives from the local municipalities are working with the local Indigenous community on a collaborative approach to create an Indigenous Reconciliation Plan. A key objective is build stronger relationships and mutual trust and respect with the Indigenous community to work together to create a path forward.

The Region of Waterloo and the City of Kitchener are the co-lead on this project. The Region of Waterloo will lead the procurement process to obtain an independent Indigenous consultant to facilitate an engagement process and work with a soon-to-be-formed Indigenous advisory group to develop the Reconciliation Action Plan and its recommendations. Through observer status the GRCA will continue to be informed of the project's progress.

While this project will be focused on the local Indigenous community in the Region of Waterloo, the work undertaken by the consultant, municipal working group and Indigenous advisory group could enable further discussions on GRCA's path forward to address the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action to improve service to Indigenous Peoples.

Financial implications:

No financial contribution is required for observer status on the project.

Other department considerations:

The Resource Management Division and the Communications Department have been consulted.

Prepared by:

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Manager of Property

Nancy Davy
Director of Resource Management

Approved by:

Samantha Lawson
Chief Administrative Officer