



Grand River Conservation Authority Minutes - General Membership Meeting

Date: June 23, 2023
Time: 9:30 am
Location: Hybrid Meeting of the General Membership
GRCA Administration Centre
Zoom Virtual Meeting

Members Present Bruce Banbury, Christine Billings, John Challinor II, Ken Yee Chew, Brian Coleman, Doug Craig, Kevin Davis, Mike Devine, Jim Erb, Susan Foxton, Guy Gardhouse, Gord Greavette, Lisa Hern, Daniel Lawrence, Dave Miller, Rob Shirton, Jerry Smith, Shawn Watters, Chris White, Kari Williams, Alex Wilson, Pam Wolf

Regrets Gino Caputo, Colleen James, Natasha Salonen, Sandy Shantz

Staff Samantha Lawson, Karen Armstrong, Beth Brown, Ron Gasparetto, Brandon Heyer, Janet Ivey, Lisa Keys, Katelyn Lynch, Sonja Radoja, Lisa Stocco, Pam Walther-Mabee, Marijan Blazevic, Michael Penney, Tyler Slaght, Eowyn Spencer, Vahid Taleban, David Townsend

Others Martina Cotter

1. Call to Order

The Meeting was called to order by the Chair at 9:31 a.m.

2. Certification of Quorum

The Secretary-Treasurer certified quorum with more than half of the Members present. A total of 22 Members attended the meeting.

3. Chair's Remarks

The Chair welcomed the Members and made the following remarks:

- The Grand River Conservation Foundation has released its 2021-2022 Report to the Community, which was received by the Board of Directors at the Annual General Meeting on June 21. The Foundation also approved its strategic plan, both of which will be shared digitally. The annual Grand Champions Appreciation luncheon returned on June 22 after a three-year hiatus due to the pandemic. The luncheon was well attended by past and present donors. The Chair thanked Gord Greavette for attending as well.
- The Chair indicated that he and S.Lawson will be attending Conservation Ontario Council on Monday, June 26, Agenda highlights include CO comments on proposed updates to several pieces of legislation and updates on key CO projects and initiatives.

C.Billings and J.Smith joined the meeting at 9:32 a.m.

4. Review of Agenda

23-100

Moved By Brian Coleman

Seconded By John Challinor II

THAT the agenda for the General Membership Meeting be approved as circulated.

Carried

5. Declarations of Pecuniary Interest

There were no declarations of pecuniary interests made in relation to the matters to be dealt with.

6. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

23-101

Moved By Pam Wolf

Seconded By Doug Craig

THAT the minutes of the General Membership Meeting of May 26, 2023 be approved as circulated.

Carried

7. Business Arising from Previous Minutes

There was no business arising from the minutes of the previous meeting.

8. Hearing of Delegations

There were no Delegations.

9. Presentations

K.Yee Chew and A.Wilson joined the meeting during the presentation, at approximately 9:34 a.m. and 9:40 a.m., respectively.

9.a Unauthorized Activity at Rockwood Conservation Area - Pam Walther-Mabee, Manager of Conservation Area Operations

P.Walther-Mabee provided a detailed overview of unauthorized rock-climbing activities occurring at Rockwood Conservation Area, which included background information regarding the property and permitted uses. The presentation included the following key points and discussion:

- The GRCA is a private landowner and is subject to all obligations and regulations of a private landowner.
- Rock climbing has been considered by the GRCA and remains a prohibited activity at the Board's direction, in consideration of safety and liability, required resources to provide direct and ongoing supervision, ongoing maintenance costs and operational agreements, limited emergency access, insufficient infrastructure, and land ownership at this particular location.
- Among the considerations listed, P.Walther-Mabee elaborated on the existing infrastructure in the location of the CA that rock-climbing has come into question, and noted that there are no formal trails or direct access to the area, which creates unsafe conditions and difficulties for first responders in emergency situations. The area is not included on trail maps and is not maintained for public access. The area is home to two species of endangered bats, and natural heritage staff have expressed concerns about public use near significant native species at risk.
- Rock climbing enthusiasts have installed clips and equipment on the rock wall in question without authorization or agreement. Staff have managed enforcement at

the site given that rock-climbing activity is not permitted and have attempted to deter users from climbing at the site. Use has been discouraged through various methods of education and enforcement, up to and including ticketing, and users have been required to vacate the premises. The associated user group has been informed that the removal of the anchors and clips was required.

- GRCA staff hired a contractor to complete the task of removing the equipment.
- There were questions and comments from Board members, inquiring if reconsideration of the activity may be timely, and if speaking to the owner of the adjacent property is an option.
- P.Walther-Mabee noted that the GRCA does not own the entire rock-face in question, which further prohibits the area as an ideal spot for the sport. S.Lawson confirmed that the property owner has previously declined inquiries related to the sale of the property.
- J.Challinor added concerns from the perspective of emergency access to the area for injuries and fatalities, noting that it is a high-risk activity that is a liability with very little benefit.

10. Correspondence

23-102

Moved By Susan Foxton

Seconded By Brian Coleman

THAT Correspondence from Danielle Ripsman, Colleen B., Liz Maffett, Ben Webster, and Jessie Blake regarding unauthorized rock-climbing activities at Rockwood Conservation Area, and from Jennifer Saunders regarding protection of Ontario wetlands be received as information.

Carried

10.a Rock climbers re: Unauthorized Activity at Rockwood Conservation Area

10.b Jennifer Saunders re: Wetlands Protection

11. 1st and 2nd Reading of By-Laws

None.

12. Reports:

12.a GM-06-23-49 - Capacity Measures and Operational Improvements at the Elora Quarry

- P.Walther-Mabee provided an overview of capacity management and improvements made to operations at the Elora Quarry. The presentation highlighted challenges that significantly impacted the natural environment, the local community, and the user experience at the CA.
- Pre-pandemic challenges included: parking and user line-ups that spilled out to public roadways and other local businesses causing frustration to the local community and traffic gridlock, a significant number of trespassing incidents, limited beach access and overused restrooms which drained staffing resources and caused frustration for users and safety concerns for employees, as well as destroyed vegetation and a significant negative impact on the natural environment. The GRCA relied on the OPP for ongoing traffic control and enforcement support which was effective but costly, and not a feasible long-term solution.
- A lot of consideration was given to addressing the numerous issues at this location. Implementation of capacity management began in 2021 with the installation of perimeter fencing, an online reservation system for timed day-use

and parking fees, and access limited to a specific number of parking spaces and patrons per day. The impact was significantly improved user and employee experiences, and a return of natural vegetation in trails and surrounding natural areas.

- There was discussion from the Board, with questions related to overall cost of improvements, technological requirements of the booking system currently in place and possible upgrades to include an option for conservation area membership pass holders, potential to increase parking and capacity by a limited number of users per day, carpool or transport options from another location, and consideration of overall increases in the cost of living and accessibility of services.
- P.Walther-Mabee responded to questions and provided context or further background in response, noting that some points will require further consideration.
- The Chair thanked staff for the presentation and confirmed that staff will take the discussion as direction to review capacity and the current reservation system and membership card issue. Staff will bring a report back to the Board.

23-103

Moved By Pam Wolf

Seconded By Susan Foxtton

THAT Report Number GM-06-23-49 Capacity Measures and Operational Improvements at the Elora Quarry be received as information.

Carried

12.b Ad-hoc Conservation Authorities Act Regulations Committee - June 7, 2023

There were no comments or questions regarding this item.

23-104

Moved By John Challinor II

Seconded By Gord Greavette

THAT the minutes of the Ad-hoc Conservation Authorities Act Regulations Committee Meeting of June 7, 2023 be received as information.

Carried

12.c GM-06-23-47 - Progress Report #5 - Ontario Regulation 687/21

There were no comments or questions regarding this item.

23-105

Moved By Christine Billings

Seconded By Kari Williams

THAT Progress Report #5 be approved, circulated to all participating Grand River watershed municipalities, posted on the Grand River Conservation Authority website, and submitted to the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry in accordance with Ontario Regulation 687/21.

Carried

12.d GM-06-23-48 - Cash and Investment Status

There were no comments or questions regarding this item.

23-106

Moved By Bruce Banbury

Seconded By Guy Gardhouse

THAT Report Number GM-06-23-48 – Cash and Investment Status – May 2023 be received as information.

Carried

12.e GM-06-23-52 - Financial Summary

- D.Miller inquired about the special projects environmental education budget of \$500,000 which appears to be over-budget in 2023 given actual expenses incurred in 2022. S.Radoja reviewed the concern and noted that the budgeted amount of \$500,000 is correct, and represents anticipated spending for construction of a new Guelph Lake Nature Centre.

C.Billings exited the meeting at approximately 10:18 a.m.

23-107

Moved By Shawn Watters

Seconded By Brian Coleman

THAT the Financial Summary for the period ending May 31, 2023 be approved.

Carried

D.Craig and D.Lawrence exited the meeting at approximately 10:20 a.m.

12.f GM-06-23-51 - Request for Proposals - Engineering Consulting Services, Permits and Plan Review

There were no comments or questions regarding this item.

23-108

Moved By John Challinor II

Seconded By Pam Wolf

THAT the Grand River Conservation Authority accept the proposal from Stantec Consulting Limited to carry out engineering consulting services up to the amount of \$150,000, excluding HST.

Carried

12.g GM-06-23-50 - Dunnville Two Zone Floodplain Policy and Mapping Update, County of Haldimand

V.Taleban provided a presentation on the report, with the following key highlights and discussion points:

- Haldimand County retained a consultant to complete a floodplain analysis and scoped master servicing plan for a business park located in Dunnville, in support of phase 2 of their official plan update. This was completed to determine if a two-zone floodplain could be applied, and where it could be applied if applicable. The goal of the study is to permit responsible development within the fringe of the floodplain.
- The study incorporated local streams and waterways with modelling relating to local tributaries and headwaters, and the lands with the business park floodplain study. As a result, it has been determined that development could reasonably be permitted within certain locations and within regulations if a two-zone approach were implemented. This would result in a net gain of developable industrial space, commercial space, and residential units.
- Board members discussed the report and inquired about the anticipated results based on current zoning laws, as well as the fringe area of the floodplain, and the regulation and requirement for the benchmark flooding used in modelling.
- There was further discussion regarding benchmark flooding with consideration of climate change and increased extreme flood events. It was noted that provincial regulations and baselines set the requirements for benchmarks.

23-109

Moved By Shawn Watters

Seconded By Mike Devine

THAT a Two Zone Floodplain Policy Area for portions of Dunnville be endorsed;

AND THAT the updated floodplain mapping, as prepared by J.L Richards & Associates Limited (June 2022), be used as the guiding document when dealing with planning matters and permit applications in the study area.

AND THAT amendments to the Grand River Conservation Authority's Ontario Regulation 150/06 mapping be approved to incorporate the revisions to the floodplain and associated regulated allowance.

Carried

12.h GM-06-23-53 - Current Watershed Conditions

There were no comments or questions regarding this item.

27-110

Moved By Gord Greavette

Seconded By Susan Foxtton

THAT Report Number GM-06-23-53 – Current Watershed Conditions as of June 14, 2023 be received as information.

Carried

12.i GM-06-23-54 - Foundation Member Appointments

There were no comments or questions regarding this item.

23-111

Moved By Lisa Hern

Seconded By Rob Shirton

THAT Robert Eilers, Jerry Lawlor and Karen Leiva be appointed to the Grand River Conservation Foundation for a term of three years;

AND THAT Ted Smith be re-appointed to the Grand River Conservation Foundation for a term of three years;

AND THAT Wayne Fyffe be re-appointed to the Grand River Conservation Foundation for a term of one year.

Carried

13. Committee of the Whole

Not required.

14. General Business

There was no General Business.

15. 3rd Reading of By-Laws

None.

16. Other Business

There was no Other Business.

17. Closed Meeting

23-112

Moved By Gord Greavette

Seconded By Susan Foxtton

THAT the General Membership enter a closed meeting in accordance with the *Municipal Act section 239(2)* for the following purpose(s): litigation or potential litigation.

Carried

The General Membership convened in closed session and the live stream was ended.

23-113

Moved By Jerry Smith

Seconded By Lisa Hern

THAT the General Membership reconvene in open session.

Carried

The General Membership returned to open session and the live stream was resumed.

17.a Minutes of the previous closed session

23-114

Moved By John Challinor II

Seconded By Bruce Banbury

THAT the Minutes of the previous closed session be approved.

Carried

17.b Litigation or Potential Litigation

There was no motion required for this item.

18. Next Meeting - August 25, 2023 at 9:30 a.m. (Hybrid)

19. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 10:44 a.m.

23-115

Moved By Guy Gardhouse

Seconded By Ken Yee Chew

THAT the meeting of the General Membership be adjourned.

Carried

Chair

Secretary-Treasurer