



Minutes

Friday, March 22, 2019

1:00 pm

Council Chambers – District Municipality of Muskoka
70 Pine Street, Bracebridge, Ontario P1L 1N3

Present

Kevin Trimble (Chair)
Lisa Barry
Don Furniss
Rob Milligan
Debbie Vernon

Patricia Arney
Sandy Cairns
Caroline Konarzewski
Geoff Ross

Rob Atfield
Vincent Evans-Lucy
Jan McDonnell
Peter Sale

MWC & DMM Staff

Christy Doyle
Kevin Boyle

Rebecca Willison
Breeanna Campbell

Christiane Masters

Presenters

Lynn DeCaro
Muskoka Community Foundation

Guests

Maureen Guerriero

Keith Somers

Susan Mazan (@1:45 pm)

Welcome

MWC Chair Kevin Trimble called the meeting to order at 1:05 pm with roundtable introductions. He noted that MWC is scheduling presentations to watershed municipalities later this spring. He indicated that the MWC membership list has been updated and will be distributed to MWC members. MWC members should provide a sort biography and photo to Rebecca for the website or update their current bio.

Confirmation of Minutes

MOTION by Geoff Ross, seconded by Peter Sale

THAT the minutes of the Muskoka Watershed Council meeting dated February 15, 2019 be approved.

CARRIED

Correspondence

None.

Presentations

Muskoka's 2018 Vital Signs – Lynn DeCaro, Executive Director, [Muskoka Community Foundation](#)

Vital Signs is a community check-up that Community Foundations across Canada participate in to measure the health and vitality of communities. Vital Signs® Reports identify significant trends in a

range of sectors and areas that are critical to quality of life and maintaining smart and caring communities.

In 2017 the Muskoka Community Foundation engaged community stakeholders in a Vital Conversation Series to begin laying the groundwork for the 2018 Muskoka Vital Signs® Report. Participants were asked to identify what unique challenges their organization faced, share innovative approaches and highlight any pressing issues or gaps in the delivery of services in Muskoka. In addition, data was obtained from the 2016 Census Report released by Statistics Canada as well as multiple local sources.

The 2018 Vital Signs® Report is available at <http://muskokacommunityfoundation.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/msk-vitalsigns-web.pdf>.

Following a question and answer period, Kevin thanked Lynn for her presentation.

Overview of the FrogWatch Program – Caroline Konarzewski

Frogs and toads are an important part of local biodiversity and have a special role to play in keeping the environment healthy. With their semi-permeable skin and their ability to live in the area between water and land, frogs and toads are very sensitive to pollution and other environmental changes.

Worldwide, many wetland species are declining in numbers or have recently become extinct. Monitoring frog and toad populations is one way to check the health of wetland areas.

Tracking changes in the population of frogs and toads in Canada, their geographic range, and the beginning and ending of their calling season can help us understand what is happening in their environment. The most effective way to track changes in frog and toad populations is to listen for their calls during mating season in the springtime. Male frogs and toads call to protect their territory and attract females. Each species of frog and toad has a very distinctive mating call.

Over time, trends in FrogWatch observations may detect measurable climatic change in Canada. FrogWatch data also contribute to scientific databases on frog distributions.

FrogWatch observations help scientists:

- Track climate change using phenology data
- Identify positive and negative population trends
- Learn about the range and distribution of frogs and toads (especially in the northern extent of known ranges)

Learn more about the FrogWatch program at <https://www.naturewatch.ca/frogwatch/>.

Following a question and answer period, Kevin thanked Caroline for her presentation.

MWC Working Group

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, March 28th from 2-4 pm in the Birch Room at the District of Muskoka administration building offices. Geoff Ross highlighted the current projects.

- Hydrology Sub-committee – *Kevin Trimble*
The Hydrology Sub-committee held its first meeting on March 14th. The Sub-committee members plan to hold monthly meetings moving forward. They are considering a two-pronged approach – one is technical and involves communication (technical and non-technical people needed) and the second is to get basic information out to the public about what hydrology is. etc (information campaign). Volunteers are needed to help.

- **Road Salt Working Committee – Christy Doyle**
A Smart About Salt workshop is being held on March 26th for municipal staff and contractors. Public awareness and research initiatives will be undertaken by the Working Committee.
- **2019 Muskoka Stewardship Conference – Christy Doyle**
MWC's "Your Watershed: Connecting the Drops" Muskoka Stewardship Conference has been confirmed for Friday, April 26th in Huntsville at the Active Living Centre. Registration is now open, and the speakers' roster has been confirmed.
- **Algae Sub-committee – Peter Sale**
The Algae Sub-committee met on March 18th. They have a plan in place for 2019 to carry out pilot projects on four lakes to trial equipment and methods. Project methodology is being finalized. A training workshop will be held in early June and equipment is being ordered. A successful pilot project may mean opening the program up to other interested lake associations in future years.

Updates & New Business

- **Township of Algonquin Highlands** councillor Lisa Barry reported that Algonquin Highlands is undergoing a septic reinspection program and the report on the first year of the four year project indicates a 61% rate for functioning systems with minor fixes for most of the rest. The AH Environment Committee has created a joint committee with the other three Haliburton municipalities to coordinate efforts and create joint initiatives. They want to start a repair café with youth and libraries and are supporting an initiative to reduce the use of bottled water.
- **Town of Gravenhurst** councillor Sandy Cairns reported that Gravenhurst has an active environmental committee and Sandy plans to bring forward updates to MWC as they arise. Pete LeMoine also sits on the GR Environment Committee.
- **LOBA** – Caroline Konarzewski reported that the Lake of Bays Association has posted invasive aquatic species signs at all boat launches on the lake. LOBA is developing an "adopt-a-dock" program where volunteers will raise awareness at launch points.
- **Executive Committee** – Kevin Trimble reviewed what the overall responsibilities of the Executive Committee are. MWC is moving forward with incorporation and will be carrying out a strategic review over the course of the year.
- **FMW** – Debbie Vernon reported that Friends of the Muskoka Watershed has a new office located at 126 Kimberley Street in Bracebridge. Dr. Shakira Azan has returned to lead the Ash Muskoka project and FMW is still recruiting ash donors.

Adjournment

Kevin Trimble adjourned the meeting at 2:55 pm.