

**Muskoka Watershed Council
Community Round Table – Integrated Watershed Management (IWM)**

Minutes

Date: May 11, 2022

Location: Zoom

Attendees:

Kevin Trimble (Chair)	Deborah Martin-Downs	Peter Sale
Don Macintosh	John Nemeth	Caleb Timmerman
Jade Turmelle	Michael Walmsley	Patricia Arney
Stephen Fahner	Justin Bremner	Kathleen Lamb
Geoff Ross	Carolyn DuBois	Tom O'Callaghan
Jo-Anne Goodwin	Diane Wiber	Daryle Moffatt
Penny Thomas		

District of Muskoka Staff:

Glenn Cunnington, Project Manager, Water Strategy

Alana Perez, Integrated Watershed Management Program Coordinator

Cassie Emms, Program Communications Specialist

1. Welcome, Opening Remarks

Kevin Trimble opened the meeting with a land acknowledgment, then noted a change in the agenda to allow Geoff Ross to provide an update on CRT membership.

2. Review and approval of minutes from April 13, 2022

Minutes were approved with the exception that John Nemeth was omitted from attendees, and Deborah Martin-Downs clarified that her question concerned if the District asked the Province to continue to fund the IWM program. Cassie Emms will make the appropriate corrections.

3. CRT Membership

Geoff Ross announced that all of those who expressed interest from the open invitation in December 2021 have agreed to participate on the CRT. However, there are still some sectors that are not represented. Geoff has begun to reach out to the missing sectors, and acknowledge Diane Wiber, the interim agricultural sector representative, to fill that gap.

Geoff asked the CRT to let him know if they know someone who can represent a missing sector. Kevin added that the CRT mission and mandate should be reiterated at the beginning of each meeting as the CRT memberships evolve.

4. District of Muskoka Project Updates

Glenn Cunningham provided an update on the District of Muskoka projects in regards to the consultation schedule. Glenn suggested that the consultations occur every other Wednesday for continuity purposes. The proposed schedule is:

Wednesday May 25 at 4 PM: Watershed Health Indicators – Consultation
Wednesday June 8 at 4 PM: Public Access Inventory – Consultation
Wednesday June 22 at 4 PM: Erosion Survey - Consultation
Wednesday July 13 at 4 PM: Water Quality Indicators - Consultation
Wednesday July 27 at 4 PM: Watershed Health Indicators – Sharing project results

Daryle Moffatt asked about what time commitment required by CRT members to provide effective input. Glenn indicated that consultants are looking for real-time feedback during the meeting time. There is no requirement to review materials ahead of time, but the CRT could review the scope of work emailed on April 29. Prior to consultation, the consultant will provide an overview of the project including project limitations. One project may require the completion of a survey.

5. Presentation: Why we need IWM in Muskoka

Peter Sale provided a comprehensive review of why IWM is needed in Muskoka, given that the watershed is facing growing pressures on the environment, and that the area is not immune to climate change. With these two factors, ecological resilience, biodiversity and habitat is declining.

Peter explained that when we examine the long history of the Earth's climate, it has varied over time, however until relatively recently (human civilization), the climate has become more unpredictable. This is due to growing greenhouse gas emissions and rising temperatures. Climate change will change the nature of waterways, forests, and will affect all species differently. Climate change poses risks to our health, and also our economy. Ultimately, a changing climate makes environmental management challenging. Peter reiterated that a changing climate has unavoidable consequences, but if we adapt, we will be able to manage those consequences so that the watershed will continue to be an amazing place to live.

Peter described that the watershed is best ecological scale to manage our adaptation to climate change, as well as flooding and development pressures including our waterfronts.

A brief question and answer period and discussion lead by Kevin followed.

6. Reaffirmation of the CRT mandate

Moved by John Nemeth, seconded by Patricia Arney.

THAT the Muskoka River Watershed Community Round Table will continue toward a collaboration of participating partners representing 13 area municipalities, 4 upper tier municipalities, local indigenous communities, business sector leaders, NGOs and residents which will endorse an action plan that includes a shared vision for the future of the watershed, common issues, recommendations on potential future governance and next steps towards watershed-based management (for land use, infrastructure, water management, and climate change).

7. Next Steps and Adjournment

The first consultation is on May 25. The next regular CRT meeting is on June 8, 2022.

Kevin suggested that at the next meeting, the CRT discuss a strategy to approach municipal councils, and develop a terms of reference for the CRT.