



Muskoka

WATERSHED COUNCIL

Minutes

Friday, January 19, 2024
1:00 pm
Council Chambers (District of Muskoka) & Zoom

Present (In-person)

Peter Sale (Chair)
Peter Johnston
Michael Peppard

Patricia Arney
Don Macintosh
Aaron Rusak

Andrew Fyfe
David Parsons
Kevin Trimble

Present (Zoom)

Nancy Alcock
Chris Cragg (@ 1:50 pm)
Jess Lario

Susan Boudreau (@ 2:30 pm)
Joan Frain
Cathy Oakden

John Cooper
Jo-Anne Goodwin

MWC Staff

Rebecca Willison

DMM Staff

Glenn Cunningham *

Guests

Will Barbour
Susanne Gossage *

Preston Nielsen *
Rupert Kindersley (@ 1:50 pm) *

Deborah Frame *

* Attended by Zoom

Welcome

MWC Chair Peter Sale called the meeting to order at 1:05 pm. Patricia Arney provided an Indigenous Land Acknowledgement. Peter noted that the AGM is on February 23rd and he encouraged everyone to attend in person.

Confirmation of Minutes

MOTION

Moved by Andrew Fyfe, seconded by Peter Johnston

THAT the minutes of the Muskoka Watershed Council meeting dated November 24, 2023, be approved.

CARRIED

Business Arising from the Minutes

- None.

Presentation

Monitoring Prairie Warblers – Aaron Rusak, Protected Areas Manager, Georgian Bay Land Trust

Aaron spoke about the [Georgian Bay Land Trust's](#) new monitoring program for Prairie Warblers, which are a rare species of bird that is found along coastal Georgian Bay and in a few other small pockets in Ontario. Last summer, the GBLT conducted MOTUS tagging on Prairie Warblers in Georgian Bay to understand the territory size and habitat requirements of the species, as well as to track its migratory movements. During his presentation, Aaron shared some results of the project and what it might mean for the species.

After Aaron answered some questions, Peter thanked Aaron for his excellent presentation.

Committee Updates

- **IWM Community Roundtable** – Kevin Trimble reported that registration for the municipal IWM conference is going well. IWM work is being done by a number of Committees of MWC, including the CRT, Fundraising, and Communications. The IWM conference is the start to getting all local municipalities to the table to help develop a IWM plan. The other component is to educate the public so they can help advocate the powers-that-be to implement IWM. A Terms of Reference and workplan for 2024 are being developed. Peter invited all MWC members to attend the CRT meetings.
- **Communications Committee** – Peter Sale reported that the State of the Watershed article series continues to be published on MuskokaRegion.com. The seventh article in the series was just submitted for publication. Peter requested that MWC members engage with MWC's social media content to help increase the reach.
- **Finance Committee** – In Daryle Moffatt's absence, Peter Sale reported that the MWC budget for 2024 was finalized by the Board of Directors at the board meeting on January 18th. The financial statements for 2023 were also approved by the Board and will be presented to MWC at the AGM in February. Peter acknowledged all the work Daryle does as Treasurer for MWC.
- **Fundraising Committee** – Peter Sale noted that additional members are needed for the Committee.
- **Membership Committee** – Michael Peppard reported that a new member was approved by the Board yesterday. Mike will be reaching out to all members that have their term expiring at the AGM to see if they want to continue. The new Onboarding Package will be sent to all MWC members before the AGM. He noted that newer members also need to fill out a Member Consent Form. Peter encouraged all members to send a bio and photo to Rebecca for inclusion on the website.

Program Updates

- **Algae Monitoring Program** – Peter Sale reported that the 2023 data has all been submitted by participating organizations and analysis of the data and drafting of the annual report is now underway. There is one new lake that would like to join the program this year, and there is room for a couple more to join, as well. Peter would like some MWC volunteers to help assess the algae data collected to date.
- **Doug Cross Stewardship Recognition Program** – Rebecca Willison reported that the registration period is open until January 31st and she encouraged members around the table that belong to non-profit organizations to apply.
- **Love Your Lake** – Rebecca Willison reported that there are applications submitted for three lakes to participate in the 2024 Love Your Lake program. There may be room for additional lakes so interested lake associations should submit their application soon. A request for Canada Summer Jobs funding was submitted by the District on behalf of MWC to support hiring two staff this summer to carry out the program.

Partner Updates

- **District of Muskoka** – Councillor Michael Peppard reported that the District has completed its study on how municipalities can reduce their greenhouse gas emissions and money has been set aside in the District budget to fund this.
- **Town of Huntsville** – Nancy reported that a temporary position related to climate change and the environment has been extended for another year. Huntsville's new strategic plan has identified climate change and the environment as one of its pillars and they are working with Lakeland Networks to install EV charging stations.
- **Andrew Fyfe** – reported that the City of Orillia seems to be moving towards a less environment-friendly stance – it is no longer a member of SSEA and appears less responsive to the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority. Peter noted that we are likely to see a backslide in environmental alternatives while there is a concern about keeping taxes low.
- **Town of Gravenhurst** – Councillor Peter Johnston noted that several Gravenhurst Councillors and two staff are attending the IWM conference.
- **Climate Change Presentation** – Peter Johnston's presentation on climate change and the environment is now widely available on the library websites. The presentation encourages people to push politicians and governments to act. He is working on a second lecture that will focus on things we can do to slow down and mitigate climate change.

New Business

- Kevin Trimble noted that there are very few public works people registered for the IWM conference and suggested that MWC consider holding another IWM workshop targeted to public works staff.

Next MWC Meeting

MWC's next meeting is scheduled for Friday, February 23rd at 1 pm in the Community Room at the Paramedic Station/Fire Hall, located at 225 Taylor Road in Bracebridge. This meeting will also be the Annual General Meeting and will feature a presentation on land protection by Amanda Porter from the Muskoka Conservancy.

Adjournment

Peter Sale adjourned the meeting at 3:00 pm.