



Muskoka

WATERSHED COUNCIL

Minutes

Friday, May 27, 2022

1:00 pm

Zoom Online Meeting

Present

Peter Sale (Chair)

Allen Edwards

Kathleen Hedley

Pete LeMoine

Michael Peppard

Patricia Arney

Andrew Fyfe

Neil Hutchinson

Daryle Moffatt

Kevin Trimble

Chris Cragg

Jo-Anne Goodwin

Jess Lario

David Parsons

MWC Staff

Samantha Hastings

Christy Doyle

Rebecca Willison

DMM Staff

Cassie Emms

Glenn Cunnington

Alana Perez

Presenters

Barry Davidson

Westwind Forest Stewardship Inc.

Guests

Caroline Konarzewski

David Pink

Esther Giesbrecht

Welcome

MWC Chair Peter Sale called the meeting to order at 1:05 pm with an Indigenous Land Acknowledgement. He commended the volunteers stepping up to assist with giving MWC presentations to municipal councils and manning MWC booths at upcoming events.

Confirmation of Minutes

MOTION

THAT the minutes of the Muskoka Watershed Council meeting dated March 25, 2022 be approved.

CARRIED (by Consent)

Peter recognized Samantha Hastings, Commissioner of Community and Planning Services, on the occasion of her retirement from the District of Muskoka. Samantha has been an important liaison between DMM and MWC for almost 20 years and Peter thanked her, on behalf of the members of MWC, for her support and wished her well on her retirement.

Presentation

MECP Forest Restoration Project – *Barry Davidson, General Manager of Westwind Forest Stewardship Inc.*

The Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks, through the Muskoka Watershed Advisory Group, invited Westwind Forest Stewardship Inc. to submit a proposal to organize and carry out a terrestrial project on private land within the Muskoka River Watershed. Westwind has developed a pilot project to remove beech understories (due to beech bark disease) and plant other species. In concert with these on-the-ground treatments, Westwind will also provide community engagement and educational activities with the assistance of a communications consultant.

One of the key items in the project is to develop a small Project Team with representation from local organizations, including MWC, to develop site selection criteria and select sites. The Project Team will also discuss community engagement options.

Barry is requesting an MWC member to sit on the Project Team. Patricia Arney and Daryle Moffatt expressed interest in doing this.

Following a question and answer period, Peter thanked Barry for his presentation.

Official Plan Reviews

Both the Township of Muskoka Lakes and the Township of Seguin are in the middle of Official Plan (OP) reviews and the Township of Lake of Bays will be starting their OP review next year. MWC released a document last December with recommended policies to include in official plans (<https://www.muskokawatershed.org/wp-content/uploads/OP-Policies-Dec2021.pdf>).

MWC would like to provide input into all local official plans and a sub-committee may need to be struck to do this. Patricia noted that OPs are not easy to review without being aware of some of the background. Patricia noted that it was previously decided to provide general recommendations to municipalities instead of commenting specifically on each OP. However, Peter's recollection is that we would still try to respond specifically, as well.

Mike Peppard suggested that MWC rely on the municipal councillors on MWC to flag issues as they already have to do a deep dive on their respective OPs. MWC can then respond to those flagged issues.

Kevin Trimble noted that a watershed management plan might make this more feasible but that an IWM plan won't happen until the future. Until then, MWC should comment as resources allow.

Andrew Fyfe noted that it's useful to have a third party like MWC review OPs to provide a different perspective. In addition to providing constructive feedback, MWC should also mention what they are doing well.

At a minimum, Patricia would like to see MWC reiterate the watershed lens presented in the generic document during OP reviews.

The Seguin OP comments on the latest draft are due by the end of June, which doesn't leave much time to draft some high-level comments.

Allen Edwards would welcome comments from MWC, as a Township of Muskoka Lakes Councillor. The perspective would help balance the comments received from other interest groups.

Kevin noted that we should reiterate to municipalities that we are not suggesting adding an additional layer of regulations and approvals when we suggest looking at development at a watershed level.

The sub-committee looking at the Seguin OP should have an initial discussion with Daryle to learn some background information and where MWC should focus.

Peter will send an email out to MWC members to recruit volunteers to help develop comments for each of the OP reviews. Andrew Fyfe is interested.

Project Updates

- **MWC Governance** – Peter Sale reported that the Operating Procedures document is in the process of being revised to align with our new by-laws, led by David Parsons.
- **Community Round Table** – Kevin Trimble reported that the CRT met this week and that membership is expanding. CRT information is included in the MWC update being given at local municipal council meetings and he noted that it is being well received. The June 8th CRT meeting will feature a presentation by Barb Veale.
- **Strategic Planning** – Pete LeMoine reported that he and Geoff Ross are co-chairing the Strategic Plan Sub-committee and that they are reviewing the information collected by Karen Maxwell. They have created four documents for review by the Directors. Chris Cragg, Bet Smith, Kate Monk and David Parsons are all involved with the Sub-committee. A facilitated workshop will be held mid-September. More participants on the Sub-committee are welcome.
- **Algae Monitoring Program** – Peter Sale reported that the Algae Sub-committee will be meeting in early June to finalize the annual report and agree on the 2022 monitoring program. The plan is to have volunteers monitoring by late June, including some new lake associations.
- **Communications** – Pete LeMoine reported that materials were developed and released by MWC volunteers for three awareness days recently: Endangered Species Day (Jess Lario) and World Bee Day (Bet Smith) on May 20th and World Turtle Day (Jo-Anne Goodwin) on May 23rd. GBB has offered up to 3 articles to be included in the SOTB report.
- **Membership Sub-committee** – Pete LeMoine and Mike Peppard are co-chairing the sub-committee to recruit new members.

Partner Updates

- **District of Muskoka** – Christy Doyle reported on staffing changes at the District. Glenn Cunningham is the new Manager of Watershed Programs and Cassie Emms has taken a Planner position. Peter thanked Glenn and Cassie and wished them luck in their new roles.

- **Township of Muskoka Lakes** – Allen Edwards reported that the Township is developing a tree preservation by-law and a site alteration by-law. He noted that he will be asking for native plants to be requested during the site plan control process on waterfront properties moving forward.
- **Seguin Township** – Daryle Moffatt reported that Seguin Township recently hired a new staff member to focus on environmental initiatives.

New Business

- **Great Muskoka Paddling Experience** – Peter Sale reported that the event will take place as a virtual race again this year but volunteers with boats are needed to watch the paddlers on the river. He suggested getting a couple of boats with MWC volunteers and a sign to help promote MWC.

Next MWC Meeting

Friday, June 17th at 1:00 pm. This meeting will include MWC's Volunteer Appreciation Lunch and will be held in person at the Lake of Bays Community Centre in Baysville.

Adjournment

Peter Sale adjourned the meeting at 3:05 pm.