



Minutes

Friday, May 29, 2020

1:00 pm

Zoom Online Meeting

Present

Geoff Ross (Chair)
Rob Attfield
Paul Dinner
Richard Lammers
Daryle Moffatt
Peter Sale

Nancy Alcock
Javier Capella
Allen Edwards
Pete LeMoine
Michael Peppard
Kevin Trimble

Patricia Arney
John Cooper (@ 1:45 pm)
Caroline Konarzewski
Karen Maxwell
Aaron Rusak

Staff

Christy Doyle
Carley Rennie

Rebecca Willison

Samantha Hastings

Welcome

Geoff Ross called the meeting to order at 1:05 pm by welcoming everyone to the first ever virtual MWC meeting.

Confirmation of Minutes

MOTION

THAT the minutes of the Muskoka Watershed Council meeting dated February 28, 2020 be approved.

CARRIED (by consent)

Project Updates

- **Integrated Watershed Management** – Kevin Trimble reported that little has been done regarding IWM since the paper was submitted to the Muskoka Watershed Advisory Group in light of the restrictions due to the pandemic. As a municipal councillor, Nancy Alcock found the IWM paper very interesting and will be proposing that Huntsville Council support it. MWC may be invited to give a presentation to Huntsville.
- **Muskoka Watershed Advisory Group** – Patricia Arney reported that MWAG is on track to submit their report to the Provincial government only slightly later than originally scheduled in May. MWAG members have been reappointed for another two-year term.
- **Communications** – Pete LeMoine reported that articles continue to be published in the Metroland newspapers, mostly online but with some in print as well. Five articles have been published since the pandemic began and several more articles are ready for publication. Daryle Moffatt suggested that MWC write an article about the suspension of the Lake Partner Program and other environmental monitoring initiatives this summer. Following some discussion, it was agreed that MWC should help raise awareness about the importance of environmental monitoring and citizen science and encourage the government to resume these programs as soon as it is feasible to do so.

- **Strategic Plan** – Karen Maxwell reported that the initiative has been largely put on hold during the pandemic. Online surveys have been developed through Survey Monkey for each of the three target audiences, likely for release in late summer.
- **Website Redesign** – Karen Maxwell has undertaken a review of content on the current website and has found that the majority of it is still relevant, good information that should be included in the new website. She noted that the original budget for the website has been increased in order to ensure that the new website is accessible to AODA Level AA standards. The website will also be moved from a .org domain to .ca. The website designer has developed a new home page that Karen feels is clean, clear, and user-focussed. The new website is scheduled to be released in July.
- **Algae Monitoring Program** – Peter Sale reported that the Algae Monitoring Program has been suspended for 2020 due to the pandemic. The final report for the 2019 pilot program is nearing completion. The Sub-committee plans to continue the pilot project in 2021.
- **Muskoka Summit on the Environment** – Peter Sale reported that the MSE Organizing Committee recently met and officially decided to postpone the Summit until fall 2021. The Committee is looking at ways to keep interest in the summit alive over the next year by developing some online content.
- **Township of Muskoka Lakes Official Plan Review** – Geoff Ross would like to see MWC become more proactive in providing input into the development of Municipal Official Plans, including the current OP review in the Township of Muskoka Lakes. It was noted that with nine watershed municipalities, it can become very time consuming to comment on all OP reviews. MWC could reduce the time required for each OP review by also developing a paper that outlines what we would like to see included in all official plans. Karen Maxwell volunteered to assist with the development of this paper. The IWM paper would also be worthwhile as input to OPs. A letter will be sent to the Township of Muskoka Lakes expressing MWC's interest in participating in their OP review.
- **Summer Programming** – Christy Doyle reported that despite COVID-19, MWC is still able to carry out the Natural Edge shoreline re-naturalization program this summer. Funding has been received from the Canadian Wildlife Federation and Watersheds Canada to offer 15 shoreline re-naturalization starter kits to interested shoreline property owners. MWC is still waiting to hear if we are successful in acquiring Canada Summer Job funding for the Love Your Lake program. MWC will be hosting our first webinar on June 3rd with a presentation on WaterScapes III by Andrew McCammon from the Ontario Headwaters Institute. If the webinar goes well, MWC will be looking for opportunities to host more webinars over the coming year.

Partner Updates

- **Township of Lake of Bays** – Mike Peppard reported on Lake of Bays' efforts to implement a Community Planning Permit in the Township. His comments were clarified at the September 2020 MWC meeting to reflect that LOB is continuing the process to replace the zoning and permitting system currently in place for all of their lands (waterfront, rural and community areas) with a Community Planning Permit System.
- **Seguin Township** – Daryle Moffatt reported that the Integrated Community Energy and Climate Action Plans (ICECAP) committee is moving forward with conducting a greenhouse gas inventory for the Georgian Bay Biosphere region. Seguin is also undertaking an official plan review, and they are working with GBBR to develop a benthic monitoring program.
- **Township of Muskoka Lakes** – Allen Edwards reported that the interim control bylaw for the Minett area has been extended to August. He expressed concern that a "unit" no longer refers to a bedroom but rather a cottage, greatly increasing the amount of development possible on a property.

- **Town of Huntsville** – Nancy Alcock reported that the Huntsville is considering implementing a Community Planning Permit System similar to what the Township of Lake of Bays uses. Nancy will be asking the Town of Huntsville to support MWC's paper on integrated watershed management.
- **District of Muskoka** – Samantha Hastings reported that the District has been working hard through its various social services programs during the pandemic to support the community and deal with urgent day-to-day issues.
- **Muskoka Conservancy** – Aaron Rusak reported that the Conservancy has cancelled most of its events for 2020 but will be holding their AGM on June 13th using Zoom. The Conservancy has acquired two new properties in the Gravenhurst area.
- **Westwind Forest** – Javier Capella reported that staff are all working from home, but that local sawmills and others in the forest industry are up and running and following physical distancing protocols.

New Business

- **Muskoka Steamships and Discovery Centre** – A new exhibit on sustainability is being developed for the Muskoka Discovery Centre and MWC has been invited to support the project and participate on the steering committee. MWC members were in favour of participating and a letter acknowledging this will be sent next week.
- **Clean Tech Intern** – Christy announced that MWC's intern, Carley Rennie, has concluded her contract. Christy thanked Carley for her efforts over the past six months to move a number of MWC projects forward. Other MWC members echoed Christy's remarks thanking Carley and wishing her well.

Next MWC Meeting

September, date TBD.

Adjournment

Geoff Ross adjourned the meeting at 2:25 pm.