



Minutes

Friday, January 31, 2020
1:00 pm

Council Chambers – District Municipality of Muskoka
70 Pine Street, Bracebridge

Present

Kevin Trimble (Chair)	Patricia Arney	Javier Cappella
John Cooper	Allen Edwards	Lou Guerriero
Caroline Konarzewski	Pete LeMoine	Karen Maxwell
Michael Peppard	Geoff Ross	Aaron Rusak
Peter Sale	Bet Smith	

Staff

Christy Doyle	Rebecca Willison	Carley Rennie
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Community

Terry Glover	Alison Brownlee	Lili Davis-Burchat
Jim Griffin	Jacque Godard	Keith Somers

Welcome

Kevin Trimble called the meeting to order at 1:05 pm with roundtable introductions

Confirmation of Minutes

MOTION by John Cooper, seconded by Karen Maxwell

THAT the minutes of the Muskoka Watershed Council meeting dated November 29, 2020 be approved.

CARRIED

MWC Position Paper on Integrated Watershed Management

Kevin provided an overview of the process to draft the MWC paper on Integrated Watershed Management, distributed with the agenda. He noted that the process began before the flood event in 2019. Kevin then opened the discussion by asking for any comments. Pete LeMoine was happy to see seven recommendations put forward and congratulated the authors. Geoff Ross also thanked the authors and acknowledged the amount of effort need to put together a document like this.

Don Furniss feels that the paper is light on the economic aspect and noted that Minister Yurek stressed the economy when forming the Muskoka Watershed Advisory Group. Don would like ensure that we have adequately addressed the human aspect. Kevin responded that the proposed IWM is meant to be fully integrated and include community/social considerations. Peter Sale noted that what MWC is proposing is very ambitious and looks at more than just the management of water, but also our activities, decisions around development and conservation, etc. From a scientific point of view, IWM is probably the only way we can manage our environment given all of the stresses placed on Muskoka and the paper is an attempt to articulate what this would look like.

Patricia Arney's greatest concern is how to implement IWM. She noted that there is push back on another layer of government to fund and to regulate (similar to a conservation authority), but that a plan like this should bring together a number of provincial ministries and other organizations. How do we get all the stakeholders to sit around the table? What kind of group should it be? A conservation authority? DMM? A completely new organization? Kevin responded that the paper outlines the need for a new body with the mandate to implement IWM. Peter noted that the paper discusses both collaborative systems and top-down systems. Collaboration takes more effort and is contrary to how government is currently set up, but could result in more participation.

Kevin and Peter will review the paper before it is sent to MWAG to ensure that Don's comment is incorporated.

Pete questioned why there is an eight year wait on full implementation in Recommendation #4. Peter responded that a number of factors were taken into consideration, including municipal council terms and Official Plan cycles.

Next Steps - The IWM paper is meant to make a case to get the dialogue started in the community about IWM in Muskoka. The paper will be the foundation of MWC's submission to the Muskoka Watershed Advisory Group and will be presented to Area Municipalities. It was suggested that MWC start a roundtable to begin the development of IWM by pulling the right parties together and starting a dialogue.

MOTION by Geoff Ross, seconded by Pete LeMoine

THAT the position paper titled "The Case for Integrated Watershed Management in Muskoka" dated January 2020 be approved, submitted to the Muskoka Watershed Advisory Group for their consideration, and posted to the MWC website.

CARRIED

A cover letter will be included with the position paper referring to the white paper as the main submission, but the cover letter will also include additional considerations, including other MWC programs (like algae monitoring), highlighting the need for the Dorset Environmental Science Centre (for all of Ontario), and maintaining the infrastructure we have in Muskoka to monitor water quality (through DMM, DESC, etc).

Ceremony for Outgoing Chair

Kevin Trimble offered some comments on his term as MWC Chair. He noted that it was a large undertaking over the past two years, but that it was extremely rewarding. He appreciated the passion shown by members. He gave a special thanks to Christy Doyle and the MWC staff, and to RiverStone Environmental for allowing him the time to carry out MWC tasks. Christy thanked Kevin for his dedication over the past two years and noted that she learned much from him. Patricia Arney highlighted some of Kevin's major accomplishments over the past two years and presented him with a certificate of appreciation and some gifts.

Election of Officers

Christy Doyle replaced Kevin as Acting Chair for the purpose of electing the new Chair.

- Election of Chair

MOTION by Karen Maxwell, seconded by Michael Peppard

THAT Geoff Ross be nominated for the position of Chair.

CARRIED

MOTION by Karen Maxwell, seconded by Aaron Rusak
THAT nominations for the position of Chair be closed.

CARRIED

Geoff Ross was elected as Chair by acclamation.

- Election of Vice-chair

MOTION by Don Furniss, seconded by Pete LeMoine
THAT Karen Maxwell be nominated for the position of Vice-chair.

CARRIED

MOTION by Mike Peppard, seconded by Aaron Rusak
THAT nominations for the position of Vice-chair be closed.

CARRIED

Karen was elected as Vice-chair by acclamation.

Karen offered some remarks and noted that she is looking forward to her new role at MWC. Geoff noted the high bar Kevin set in his term as Chair and thanked him for guiding MWC over the past two years. Geoff then replaced Christy as Chair for the remainder of the meeting.

Updates & New Business

- Executive Committee – Christy Doyle reported that the committee met prior to the MWC meeting to discuss the IWM paper, review and approve the 2020 budget and contemplate the workplan for 2020. Geoff Ross noted that the convergence of incorporation and the strategic plan may provide revised by-laws later this year.
- Working Group Initiatives – Pete LeMoine reported that the next meeting is scheduled for April 16th.
 - Road Salt - Christy Doyle reported that MWC has developed some outreach materials around road salt.
 - Algae – Peter Sale plans to hold a sub-committee meeting in late winter to determine next steps. The pilot program will likely continue in the same fashion in 2020. He noted that the data has not been analyzed yet.
 - Communications – Pete is looking for more help writing articles. How can we reach out to people who don't know or don't care that their actions are impacting the environment?
- Strategic Planning Initiative – Karen Maxwell provided a brief overview of the Strategic Plan process and noted that the Sub-committee will be meeting next week. Three audiences have been identified and will be targeted for surveys: MWC members, thought leaders, and the newsletter list (past MWC members, interested people, etc). 10-question surveys will be developed for each audience that will collect information for a SWOT analysis. Geoff acknowledged the huge amount of work that Karen has done so far on the Strategic Plan.
- Muskoka Summit on the Environment – Peter Sale reported that the 2020 MSE is taking place on Saturday, October 17th at the Rene Caisse Theatre in Bracebridge. The theme is Creating Climate-Resilient Communities and the Organizing Committee is currently booking speakers. Peter encouraged all MWC members to promote the event to their respective organizations.
- Township of Muskoka Lakes – Allen Edwards reported that the interim control by-law for Minett expires soon and that they have received the final report from the Minett Steering Committee. The Township plans to meet with the owners of the development before submitting an Official Plan amendment.

- Township of Lake of Bays – Mike Peppard reported that they are looking at combining their two by-laws.
- District of Muskoka – Christy Doyle reported that the Floodplain Mapping project is going to the District Council for its review on February 18. The Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit has been contacted by DMM and MWC on the issue of communications around algae blooms, though SMDHU has postponed the meeting until they have first met with provincial staff.
- Muskoka Conservancy – Aaron Rusak reported that they are gearing up for their volunteer monitoring season with some training sessions. He noted that more volunteers are welcome to participate.

Next MWC Meeting

Friday, February 28th beginning at 1 pm in the Pine Room at the District of Muskoka administration building in Bracebridge.

Adjournment

Geoff Ross adjourned the meeting at 2:25 pm.