

BD12, 2761

**MOVED BY: Santina Moccio
SECONDED BY: Jim Cimba**

THAT the agenda be approved.

CARRIED

4. Delegations

There were none.

5. Consent Items for Applications, Minutes and Correspondence

The following consent items were adopted:

- 5.1. Applications – Development, Interference with Wetlands, Alterations to Shorelines and Watercourses
- 5.2. Approval of Board of Directors Minutes – February 6, 2020
- 5.3. Approved October 10, 2019 Conservation Advisory Board Minutes – for receipt only
- 5.4. Approved February 13, 2020 Conservation Advisory Board Minutes – for receipt only
- 5.5. Letters (13) from Municipalities in Support of Conservation Authorities and Rejecting Requests for and Exit Clause in the Conservation Authorities Act
- 5.6. Letters (11) of Appreciation and Support for the Board of Directors regarding the February 6, 2020 resolution related to the Enbridge Gas Inc. easement request
- 5.7. Email from Ontario Federation of Agriculture to Conservation Ontario regarding Conservation Authorities consultations, dated March 6, 2020
- 5.8. Emails (2) from Jeff Laskey and Mark Osborne regarding Spencer Gorge Operations

6. Member Briefing

- 6.1. Coronavirus

Lisa Burnside presented a summary of the chronology of events surrounding the Coronavirus pandemic and decisions made by HCA, including directives to staff, event cancellations and facilities closures. It was emphasized that HCA's overriding goal in all actions taken to-date were to keep staff, volunteers and the public safe and help minimize the spread of the COVID-19 virus. Lisa also provided a detailed overview of how HCA is currently operating. The Board was advised that HCA has extended the closure of the conservation areas until April 30, 2020, and that staff will continue to monitor developments as well as provincial and public health recommendation and reassess on an ongoing basis. The members were also notified that HCA has suspended all programs and events in the conservation areas until May 25, 2020, aligning with the City of Hamilton's suspension of programs, and will be further reviewed at that time. The implications of the extended closure and suspension of programs and events were also noted.

Operational issues related to Wild Waterworks and Fifty Point Marina were discussed. It was noted that many of HCA's conservation areas may be able to start seasonal operations at a later date, however that Wild Waterworks is more complex. The facility has a short summer period of operation, from mid-June to Labour Day. The operation can delay opening until July but would lose a key long weekend if not open for Canada Day and needs to see 100,000 guests to recover operating costs. April 30th was determined as a realistic date for making a decision about opening Wild Waterworks for its summer season.

The members inquired about staff monitoring of areas where people are accessing the conservation areas despite the closures. Gord Costie advised that all areas are gated and/or sign posted as closed. Staff are monitoring and enforcing the closures when they encounter people.

Unique operating challenges for Fifty Point Marina were also discussed. Gord Costie advised that staff are developing an operational plan for the marina to resume activities, if permissible. Staff are consulting with nearby marinas for comparisons. The operations plan will be forwarded to the CAO and Board Chair for their review. Councillor Clark suggested a communications plan accompany the operations plan. Guidelines for boaters may require consultation with the Province and City of Hamilton for details regarding acceptable uses of boats.

BD12, 2762

**MOVED BY: Esther Pauls
SECONDED BY: Susan Fielding**

THAT the Board of Directors approve

THAT HCA communicate to our annual membership pass holders that current valid membership passes will be extended past the current expiry date by the time period our conservation areas remain closed.

CARRIED**7. Business Arising from the Minutes****7.1. Letter of Support for Conservation Authorities**

At the February meeting, it was suggested the HCA Board of Directors may pass a resolution requesting a letter of the support from the City of Hamilton for Conservation Authorities. The member were advised that since then, the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority has coordinated a request to the City of Hamilton from all four Conservation Authorities within the City's boundaries.

8. Reports from Budget & Administration Committee, Conservation Advisory Board, and the Foundation**8.1. Conservation Advisory Board – February 13, 2020****8.1.1. Resolution Number CA2004 from Conservation Advisory Board Minutes February 13, 2020 - Visitor Safety at Dundas Peak**

Maria Topalovic presented a summary of the report. The members discussed rescue situations that have occurred at this site and others in the City of Hamilton. There was also discussion regarding the challenge of balancing the natural beauty of the site and visitor safety. Lisa Burnside advised that HCA has observed changes in the number and behaviour of visitors in recent years. Overall, rope rescues in the City have decreased, however rescues at the gorge have continued. Matt Hall answered the members' questions about the cost, strength, and height of the fencing.

BD12, 2763**MOVED BY: Maria Topalovic
SECONDED BY: Santina Moccio****THAT the Conservation Advisory Board recommends to the Board of Directors:****THAT “Visitor Safety Management Option #1 – Fencing” be endorsed for implementation at the Dundas Peak, and be installed as soon as practical.****CARRIED**

8.1.2. Resolution Number CA 2005 from Conservation Advisory Board Minutes February 13, 2020 - Westfield 2020 Accession and Deaccession List

Due to an administrative error, the lists were not appended to the report in the agenda package. Therefore, the item was tabled until the next meeting when the lists can be reviewed.

BD12, 2764

**MOVED BY: Jim Cimba
SECONDED BY: Maria Topalovic**

THAT the report be tabled until the next meeting when the lists can be reviewed.

Brad Clark was recorded as opposed.

CARRIED

8.2. Conservation Advisory Board – March 12, 2020

8.2.1. Resolution Number CA2014 from Conservation Advisory Board Minutes March 12, 2020 - Valens Lake Conservation Area Master Plan

Due to the comprehensive nature of the subject, the Chair suggested a motion to table this item until a meeting when a staff presentation can be given.

BD12, 2765

**MOVED BY: Maria Topalovic
SECONDED BY: Susan Fielding**

THAT the report be tabled until such a time as a meeting can be held in person when a staff presentation can be delivered

CARRIED

8.2.2. Resolution Number CA2015 from Conservation Advisory Board Minutes March 12, 2020 - Spencer Gorge 2020 Operations

In light of the Conservation Area closures, and the inability to have effective delegations via teleconference as two Greenville residents had requested through the Chair, it was suggested this item be table until a meeting can be held in person. Staff were directed to continue to work to obtain permits from the Ministry of Transportation for signage on Highway 5 and planning for the deployment of a pilot ticketed reservation system.

BD12, 2766**MOVED BY: Santina Moccio
SECONDED BY: Jim Cimba****THAT the report be tabled until such a time as a meeting can be held in person; and****THAT Staff be directed to continue with obtaining permits from the Ministry of Transportation for signage along Highway 5 and planning for the deployment of a pilot ticketed reservation system.****CARRIED**

8.2.3. Resolution Number CA2016 from Conservation Advisory Board Minutes March 12, 2020 - Project Technical Advisory Committee

Maria Topalovic presented a summary of the report.

BD12, 2767**MOVED BY: Maria Topalovic
SECONDED BY: Tom Jackson****THAT the Conservation Advisory Board recommends to the Board of Directors:****THAT to meet annual insurance coverage requirements, the responsibilities of the Project Technical Advisory Committee for the Hamilton and Halton Watershed Stewardship Programs be approved as identified in this report; and further****THAT the members on the Project Technical Advisory Committee be appointed for a three-year term, from April 1st, 2020 to March 31, 2023.****CARRIED**

8.3. Foundation Chairman's Remarks

Margaret Reid reported on the following:

Donations

We received a total of **\$5,304** in donations from February 1 to March 23. They break down as follows:

- \$2,000 for the Hamilton Watershed Stewardship Program
- \$1,392 to be used as needed
- \$1,240 for Westfield Heritage Village

The remaining \$672 came in donations for Land Securement, Plantings, Outdoor Environmental Education, Dundas Valley Trails and General Trail Development.

This brings our **Fiscal Year-to-Date (Dec 1, 2019 to March 23, 2020) total to \$127,778.**

In light of current circumstances, we don't anticipate a lot of donation activity in the short term, but a \$50,000 commitment from the Greenbelt Foundation was recently confirmed to support wetland work in the Saltfleet Conservation Area.

9. Other Staff Reports/Memorandums

9.1. Release of HCA 2019 Annual Report

Lisa presented the 2019 annual report, highlighting the collaborative effort by staff to create the document and the accomplishments of staff toward implementing the first year of the five-year strategic plan. The members commended staff on the report.

9.2. Current Watershed Conditions as of March 24, 2020

Scott Peck presented a summary of the memorandum. Water levels in area watercourses remain slightly elevated, typical for this time of year. The Lake Ontario water level is 75.21 masl. The water level is approximately 53cm above average for this time of year, 16cm below the record high for this time last year, and approximately 71cm below last year's historic peak of 75.92 masl. Staff expect the higher levels will remain.

The Christie Lake reservoir is slightly below the normal winter levels. The lower water level facilitated repairs to the dam gates. The water levels will be brought up to seasonal levels later in the spring.

There are no observations, reports, or expectations that significant watercourse flooding, significant public safety concerns, shoreline flooding, or active significant shoreline erosion are occurring currently.

BD12, 2768**MOVED BY: Chad Collins
SECONDED BY: Santina Moccio****THAT the memorandum entitled Current Watershed Conditions as of March 24, 2020 be received as information.****CARRIED****9.3. Upcoming HCA and Partner Events**

There were no upcoming events to report due to the COVID-19 related closure of the Conservation Areas.

The members thanked the Chair for his leadership and efforts to make the decisions needed to close the conservation areas and to respond to media and public inquiries. The Chair commended staff for their contributions to the response as well as the Vice-Chair and the Emergency Operations Centre and Hamilton Public Health for their assistance.

10. New Business

There was none.

11. In-Camera Items for Matters of Law, Personnel and Property

There were none.

12. Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Board of Directors will be held on Thursday, May 7, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. The location is to be determined.

13. Next Meeting Adjournment

On motion, the meeting adjourned.



Neil McDougall
Secretary-Treasurer