

3. Approval of Agenda

The Chair requested any additions or deletions to the agenda. There were none.

BD12, 3112

MOVED BY: Cynthia Janzen

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 – October 6, 2022
- 5.3. Level Two Low Water Condition, declared as of October 19, 2022

Item 5.4 was brought out of the consent agenda requesting comments from staff.

- 5.4. Email from the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry re. MNRF proposals in support of More Homes Built Faster: Ontario's Housing Supply Action Plan 2022-23, dated October 25, 2022

The members brought the email from MNRF regarding Bill 23, the *More Homes Built Faster Act*, out of the consent agenda for discussion. Lisa provided the members with a high-level explanation of major areas of the proposals and the potential impacts to HCA in general.

Major areas of the proposed legislation:

- Streamlining Conservation Authority (CA) permits
- Focusing CA role in planning reviews
- Freezing CA fees related to planning and development proposals, as well as for permits
- Identifying CA lands suitable for housing

- Changes to Ontario's natural heritage system and Ontario Wetland Evaluation System

There was a lengthy discussion on the proposed legislation. The members expressed considerable concern at the implications of the changes and passed a motion to endorse the following key points to be sent to our municipal partners:

- Proposed changes should take into account a watershed based approach to balance growth with the environment and public health and safety.
- CAs should continue with the ability to review and comment on natural heritage in permitting and planning applications and retain responsibility for Natural Hazard approvals to ensure safe development.
- We request continued collaboration with the Province in regard to the proposed changes and support Conservation Ontario's call to engage with the established multi-stakeholder Conservation Authorities Working Group (CAWG) that helped guide the Province in its implementation of the last round of changes to the *CA Act*.
- Municipalities should retain the option to enter into MOUs with CAs for municipally requested advisory services.
- Permit CAs to work towards cost recovery targets so that development pays for development.
- The Province should recognize the importance of CA lands and ensure clear policies to protect them.

The board also directed staff to include these key points in a letter to the Province, copying local MPPs, as well as directing the CAO to publish an Op Ed to local media.

BD12, 3113

MOVED BY: Jim Cimba

SECONDED BY: Brad Clark

THAT the following key points regarding the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry proposals in support of More Homes Built Faster: Ontario's Housing Supply Action Plan 2022-23 be sent to HCA's member municipalities:

- **Proposed changes should take into account a watershed-based approach to balance growth with the environment and public health and safety.**
- **CAs should continue with the ability to review and comment on natural heritage in permitting and planning applications and retain responsibility for Natural Hazard approvals to ensure safe development.**
- **We request continued collaboration with the Province in regard to the proposed changes and**

support Conservation Ontario's call to engage with the established multi-stakeholder Conservation Authorities Working Group (CAWG) that helped guide the Province in its implementation of the last round of changes to the *CA Act*.

- Municipalities should retain the option to enter into MOUs with CAs for municipally requested advisory services.
- Permit CAs to work towards cost recovery targets so that development pays for development.
- The Province should recognize the importance of CA lands and ensure clear policies to protect them; and further,

CARRIED

6. Foundation Briefing

Jennifer Stebbing reported on the following:

Donations

The Foundation received a total of **\$14,718** in donations from October 1st to October 31st, 2022. They break down as follows:

- \$6,051 to the Foundation's Area of Greatest Need Fund
- \$3,000 proceeds from a Friends of Westfield fundraising event in support of the Westfield Locomotive 103 Restoration Fund
- \$2,750 to the Tribute Tree Fund

The remaining \$2,917 was directed to various projects, including the Dundas Valley, Dundas Valley Trails, and Land Securement Funds. This brings our fiscal year-to-date fundraising total to **\$712,674**, which is 86% of their goal.

The Friends of Westfield annual Chinese Dinner fundraiser returns on Saturday, November 19, at the Rockton Fairgrounds. This year's event will raise funds for the locomotive restoration at Westfield Heritage Village. Tickets and information are available on the Friends of website.

BD12, 3114

**MOVED BY: Susan Fielding
SECONDED BY: Dan Bowman**

THAT the Foundation Briefing be received.

CARRIED

7. Member Briefing

There was none.

8. Business Arising from the Minutes

There was none.

9. Reports from Budget & Administration Committee and Conservation Advisory Board

There were none.

10. Other Staff Reports/Memoranda

10.1. 2023 Operating Budget

Scott Fleming presented the proposed operating budget for next year. The goals of the budget are:

- 1) Engage in those initiatives identified as important in HCA's 2019-2023 Strategic Plan
- 2) Limit the municipal levy increase to be no more than 2%
- 3) In areas of uncertainty, budget conservatively to mitigate risk
- 4) Operate on a cash neutral basis (Break-Even)

Significant expenses noted include a 3.5% COLA increase for staff and a casual wage increase of \$0.25/hr above minimum wage, ongoing inflation, IT network and computer infrastructure modernization, corporate climate change initiatives, two additional staff for Watershed Management Services to support permit and plan review service targets and one additional staff member for the Hamilton Mountain Conservation Areas.

Revenues are expected from a 2% increase to municipal levy, the full Confederation Beach Park management fee as it is assumed both WWW and Lakeland will be operating, revenues from permit and planning fee increases and modest Conservation Area fee increases, Conservation Area day use admissions, and membership pass sales as well as continued strong demand for camping and Valens cabins coming on line in 2023.

It was also noted that HCA will be embarking to complete a new strategic plan with the current plan reaching its conclusion at the end of 2023.

BD12, 3115**MOVED BY: Susan Fielding
SECONDED BY: Cynthia Janzen****THAT the 2023 Operating Budget, as presented, be approved by the Board of Directors.****CARRIED****10.2. Biodiversity Action Plan**

Mike Stone brought forward a report on a local collective effort to address the pressing concern of species and habitat biodiversity protection and enhancement. A Biodiversity Working Group, comprised of local agencies and environmental organizations, has been formed. Staff sought endorsement from the Board of Directors to participate on the working group and for its work toward developing a Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) for Hamilton. It is expected the BAP will be finalized in 2023 and will be brought back to the Board of Directors for approval.

BD12, 3116**MOVED BY: Dan Bowman
SECONDED BY: Brad Clark****THAT the Board of Directors endorse the development of a Biodiversity Action Plan; and further****THAT staff be directed to continue to work with the Biodiversity Working Group to support the on-going development of a Biodiversity Action Plan; and,****THAT staff be directed to provide the final approved Biodiversity Action Plan subsequent to City of Hamilton approval in 2023 for HCA Board of Directors consideration and approval.****CARRIED****10.3. Request for Proposal – Saltfleet Conservation Area Wetland Design (SC-5)**

Scott Peck presented the results of the request for proposal for the design of the third wetland for the Saltfleet Conservation Area. Only one submission was received from Water's Edge Environmental Solutions Team. Water's Edge completed the design work for the previous two Saltfleet wetlands and has extensive experience in natural channel and wetland design. Staff were satisfied the quote submitted was reasonable and within expected range, and therefore recommended the proposal be accepted at the quoted cost.

There was discussion regarding any additional measures that could be undertaken to improve the number of submissions. Scott advised that a number of companies familiar to HCA downloaded the package but did not submit proposals. Staff expect companies are experiencing high workloads due to Covid.

BD12, 3117

**MOVED BY: Clark
SECONDED BY: Cynthia**

THAT the proposal for the Wetland Design - Saltfleet Conservation Area Wetland Restoration Project submitted by Water's Edge Environmental Solutions Team be accepted at a cost not to exceed \$ 186,862.08 plus HST.

CARRIED

10.4. Watershed Conditions Report

Jonathan Bastien presented a summary of the memorandum, noting there has been no recent significant watercourse or Lake Ontario shoreline flooding events. Current flows are at to slightly above base flow conditions, however current and average monthly flows in October have been significantly below the long-term averages. The Lake Ontario mean daily water level is currently approximately 25cm below average for this time of year.

The Christie Lake water levels are well below the preferred summer operating levels and are within preferred winter operating levels. Staff continue to actively monitor and manage reservoir levels and dam outflows from Christie Lake. Levels in Valens Lake have been moderately decreasing over the last week during the ongoing annual winter drawdown of the reservoir.

There are currently no significant rainfall events forecasted for the watershed for the next two weeks. No significant Lake Ontario flooding is expected.

Due to worsening conditions, the Hamilton Low Water Response Team (LWRT) declared a Level 2 Low Water Condition for the entire HCA watershed. The watershed had been in a Level 1 Low Water Condition since July 28th. The declaration was accompanied by a request for a 20 percent voluntary reduction in normal water use.

The LWRT will continue to review and discuss further as drought can carry on through the winter.

BD12, 3118

**MOVED BY: Dan Bowman
SECONDED BY: Jim Cimba**

THAT the memorandum entitled Watershed Conditions Report be received.

CARRIED

10.5. Specific Agreement with the Haudenosaunee Wildlife and Habitat Authority

Bruce Harschnitz presented a summary of the report recommending HCA enter into a three-year agreement with the Haudenosaunee Wildlife and Habitat Authority for the annual deer harvest. The recommendation was approved. The harvest is scheduled to take place only on weekdays excluding Fridays between November 7 and December 1, 2022, inclusive for 2022. The agreement extends to 2023 and 2024 for the same locations only on weekdays excluding Fridays between November 6 to December 7, 2023 and November 4 to December 5, 2024 inclusive.

BD12, 3119

**MOVED BY: Cynthia Janzen
SECONDED BY: Dan Bowman**

THAT the Board of Directors approve the attached agreement allowing for a deer harvest in an area of Dundas Valley Conservation Area as identified on Schedule 'A', and generally bounded by Martin Road to the east, Jerseyville Road to the south, Paddy Green Road to the west, and Powerline Road to the north and; as identified on Schedule 'B' and generally bounded by 50 metres into HCA lands between Weir's Lane to the east, the CN rail line to the north, the lot line of private properties along the south and west only on weekdays excluding Fridays between November 7 and December 1, 2022, inclusive for 2022 and further,

THAT the agreement extends to 2023 and 2024 for the same locations only on weekdays excluding Fridays between November 6 to December 7, 2023 and November 4 to December 5, 2024 inclusive.

CARRIED

10.6. Conservation Areas Experiences Update

Bruce Harschnitz provided a verbal update, highlighting a follow up on Board direction from the September meeting to undertake trail improvements between Grant Boulevard to McMaster University, advising the members that CAPSS staff

have completed the work and staff have observed trail users taking advantage of the enhanced access.

The Spencer Gorge reservation system continued to manage visitation to the Greenville area during the Fall colours. There was a higher than normal volume of traffic in the area over the Thanksgiving weekend, with the continued closure of the Highway 8 hill and return of the Rockton World's Fair likely contributing to the situation. Staff continue to work with municipal partners for increased signage and enhanced parking enforcement in the area. Staff will continue to work on marketing and communications strategies to promote the reservation system. HCA's other areas, as well as destinations across the province, also saw high visitation due to the optimal weather this Fall colour season.

Westfield Heritage Village hosted its first ever Halloween Pumpkin Party using the reservation system. The event was well attended and reported on by local media.

Staff are now shifting to winterizing operations, including the boat lift at Fifty Point. The Road to Hope Marathon is being held at Confederation Beach Park this weekend. Appreciation by Councillor Esther Pauls was expressed for staff involved in hosting this event.

BD12, 3120

MOVED BY: Brad Clark

SECONDED BY: Susan Fielding

THAT the verbal update on the Conservation Areas Experiences be received.

CARRIED

11. New Business

The members inquired about the status of the repairs to the Devil's Punchbowl viewing platform. Matt Hall advised that temporary repairs to the guardrail were undertaken to allow the safe reopening on the majority of the viewing platform. Staff are working closely with the engineers and a local steel fabricating company to design and tie in the new guard. Staff are hopeful installation will be complete later this month and able to fully reopen then, if not, in early December. In addition, armour stones have now been placed to prevent vehicles from being able to leave the parking lot and reach the platform to prevent any similar incidents in the future.

12. In-Camera Items

There were none.

13. Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Board of Directors will be held on Thursday, December 1, 2022 at 7:00 p.m.

14. Adjournment

On motion, the meeting adjourned.



Scott Fleming
Secretary-Treasurer