

# **Hamilton Region Conservation Authority**

## **Minutes**

### **Board of Directors Meeting**

**November 2, 2023**

Minutes of the Board of Directors meeting held on Thursday, November 2, 2023 at 6:00 p.m., at the HCA main office, 838 Mineral Springs Road, in Ancaster, and livestreamed on YouTube.

**PRESENT:**

|                                  |                               |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>Brad Clark – in the Chair</b> |                               |
| <b>Jeff Beattie</b>              | <b>Craig Cassar</b>           |
| <b>Lisa DiCesare</b>             | <b>Susan Fielding</b>         |
| <b>Matt Francis</b>              | <b>Brian McHattie - Webex</b> |
| <b>Mike Spadafora</b>            | <b>Wayne Terryberry</b>       |
| <b>Alex Wilson</b>               | <b>Maureen Wilson - Webex</b> |

**Jennifer Stebbing – Foundation Chair**

#### **REGRETS:**

**STAFF PRESENT:** Jonathan Bastien, Lisa Burnside, Grace Correia, Gord Costie, Scott Fleming, Matt Hall, Bruce Harschnitz, Scott Peck, Mike Stone, Jaime Tellier, Jeffrey Tweedle, Fionnula Wade, and Nancy Watts

**OTHERS:** Media – Richard Leitner

#### **1. Call to Order**

The Chair called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone present.

#### **2. Declarations of Conflict of Interest**

The Chair asked members to declare any conflicts under the Board's Governance Policy. There were none.

#### **3. Approval of Agenda**

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

**BD12, 3260**

**MOVED BY: Craig Cassar  
SECONDED BY: Matt Francis**

**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 5, 2023
- 5.3. Letter from the Mayor of the City of Hamilton to Premier Doug Ford and Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry regarding Council resolution to reverse changes to the Conservation Authorities Act and Ontario Wetland Evaluation System, dated September 28, 2023
- 5.4. Green Party of Ontario Media Release – Ontario Greens support calls for probe into wetland evaluation changes, dated October 2, 2023
- 5.5. Letter from Auditor General of Ontario to HCA regarding HCA resolution requesting an investigation of the processes and recent changes to the Ontario Wetland Evaluation System and Conservation Authorities Act, dated October 10, 2023
- 5.6. Letter from Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority re Board resolution to endorse HCA resolution to reverse changes to the Conservation Authorities Act and Ontario Wetland Evaluation System, dated October 27, 2023

There was discussion regarding responses to the Board resolution requesting the Auditor General investigate the processes and recent changes to the Ontario Wetland Evaluation System and Conservation Authorities Act and to the Province to reverse the changes.

The Auditor General's Value for Money Audit on Climate Change Adaptation: Reducing Urban Flood Risk, November 2022 was noted in the Auditor General's response letter. There was discussion regarding the recommendations from the report relative to the recent legislative changes. The overall conclusion of the report was that the MNRF has made little progress in protecting wetlands and over 70% of Ontario's wetlands are unevaluated. Staff are to distribute the report to members for their reference. Staff were requested to resend the Board resolution to local MPPs directly, rather than as a copy only. A decision was made to hold an education session relating to Government Relations to guide the Board in this regard.

## 6. Foundation Briefing

Jennifer Stebbing reported on the following:

The Foundation received a total of **\$14,139** in new donations from October 1<sup>st</sup> to October 31<sup>st</sup> 2023. They break down as follows:

- **\$10,000** in support of the Fifty Point Wetland project
- **\$2,514** to our Area of Greatest Need Fund
- **\$600** to the Trail Development Fund

The remaining **\$1,025** was directed to various projects, including the Westfield 103 Locomotive, Tribute Trees and Environmental Education Fund. This brings the fiscal year-to-date fundraising total to **\$793,821**, which is 96% of the goal.

The Fall appeal was recently mailed out to past donors and supporters. Members were asked to consider donating to the Foundation this year.

**BD12, 3261**

**MOVED BY: Jeff Beattie  
SECONDED BY: Matt Francis**

**THAT the Foundation Briefing be received.**

**CARRIED**

## 7. Member Briefing

There was none.

## 8. Business Arising from the Minutes

8.1. 2024 Budget Follow-up Information on Stewardship and Water Quality

Scott Fleming presented a summary of the memorandum. Appreciation was expressed at being able to see the funding allocated to each subject area.

**BD12, 3262**

**MOVED BY: Wayne Terryberry  
SECONDED BY: Lisa DiCesare**

**THAT the memorandum entitled 2024 Budget Follow-up Information on Stewardship and Water Quality be received.**

**CARRIED**

**8.2. Information Report on Proposed Enbridge Gas Inc. & ArcelorMittal Dofasco Natural Gas Pipeline**

Mike Stone presented a summary of the memorandum and answered the members' questions.

Detailed mapping of the preferred route which identifies watercourse crossings was requested. Mike advised the maps are from the environmental report and are high level given the large geographical area. The watercourses to be crossed are primarily Battlefield Creek and Red Hill Creek. The environmental report will be available on the OEB website once approved. Staff will send mapping of the watercourses along the preferred route to the Board once that is made available.

Staff interpretation is that the preliminary preferred route is the least impactful route, for areas of interest to the Conservation Authority.

The purpose and process for integrity digs to evaluate the condition of the pipeline and undertake identified maintenance was clarified. HCA's role in providing a permit is required when an integrity dig location or access is within an area that is regulated for development. It was noted that the results of integrity digs can be made available to staff, however generally only pertain to the condition of the pipeline itself.

The Ontario Energy Board (OEB) process was discussed. The proposal may or may not require a public hearing. There may be future opportunity for HCA to provide input into the OEB process. HCA's regulatory requirements will be addressed through the permitting process for the watercourse crossings once the project moves toward a detailed design phase.

There was discussion on HCA's role with regard to natural gas pipelines. Comments on the pipeline proposal and recommending consideration of alternative fuel sources could be sent from the Board of Directors. It was noted that historically staff have commented on pipelines as part of the regulatory process, particularly in regard to natural hazards and natural heritage.

**BD12, 3263****MOVED BY: Susan Fielding  
SECONDED BY: Matt Francis****THAT the memorandum entitled Information Report on Proposed Enbridge Gas Inc. & ArcelorMittal Dofasco Pipeline be received.****CARRIED****8.3. Staff Update on Additional Watershed Condition Reporting**

Scott Peck presented a summary of the memorandum and answered the members' questions.

Scott clarified HCA protocols for reporting anomalies in water quality data to the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks and City of Hamilton Spills Action Centres.

HCA's approach to open data was discussed. Scott advised that a proposal for HCA to move toward providing open data was recently reviewed by senior staff and will be moving forward in 2024 and 2025. It will be a progressive launch of different datasets as the project unfolds.

Staff committed to a summary report of 2023 to be brought forward in February 2024 as we transition to this new annual report to the Board.

**BD12, 3264****MOVED BY: Brian McHattie  
SECONDED BY: Alex Wilson****THAT the memorandum Staff Update on Additional Watershed Condition Reporting be received.****CARRIED**

Maureen Wilson left the meeting.

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

There were none.

**10. Other Staff Reports/Memoranda**

### 10.1. HCA Corporate Climate Change Priorities & Budget Allocations

Fionnula Wade presented a summary of the report and answered the members' questions.

Partnership with the City of Hamilton for this initiative was discussed. HCA is well positioned in our partnership with the City of Hamilton. The City of Hamilton was consulted during our strategy development. HCA is a member of the Bay Area Climate Change Committee, for which the City of Hamilton is a resource.

The scope and funding of for HCA's climate change initiatives were discussed. HCA conducted research into climate initiatives by other Conservation Authorities when developing our strategy and continue to review and comment on others' activities. Our projects are aligning with the efforts of others. Staff are confident we will be able to address a number of issues with the funding allocation. We will continue to pursue grants and ask for funding as needed.

There was discussion about the urgent need to try to contribute to the mitigation of threats associated with climate change. Additional preliminary work is needed to identify and target our next initiatives and costs. This work will inform the budget request.

HCA is focused on improving our existing facilities. Accreditations or certifications may result from the work but are not the focus of the efforts. Staff are tracking usage of utilities and petroleum products to reduce our greenhouse gases. It was noted the percentage of overall GHG reductions from undertaking the recommended actions would be helpful.

A Fleet policy and decarbonization guidelines will be coming forward to the Board in 2024. Alternative fuel sources for vehicles were discussed. The electric vehicle is a pilot for HCA, and we will also consider hydrogen fuelled vehicles in the future. There are a number of additional priorities for 2024 that will be the focus of HCA's Sustainability Committee and include advocating for improvements to staff day to day activities.

Staff to redistribute HCA's Corporate Climate Change Strategy to all Board members for their reference. Members are requested to submit any questions directly to the CAO to forward to staff.

**BD12, 3265**

**MOVED BY: Wayne Terryberry  
SECONDED BY: Craig Cassar**

**That the Board of Directors endorse the five (5) climate change priorities and budget allocations identified in this report; and**

**That the Board of Directors approve the use of \$75,000 from the Climate Change Reserve account for the construction of the EV charging stations.**

**CARRIED**

10.2. Watershed Conditions Report

Jonathan Bastien presented a summary of the memorandum and answered the members' questions.

The process for monitoring and consulting on the flows for salmon spawning in Lower Spencer Creek were clarified. Various internal and external stakeholders consult on timing and the desired flows and levels in the creek and engineering staff adjust the dam operations to balance. The process is documented each year for reference, however varies each year and is dynamically adjusted. The potential to manage dam operations for other type of fish was also discussed. Dam operations can be adjusted to mimic typical Fall water flow conditions and can prolong higher flows in Spring, both to assist spawning.

Opportunities for knowledge sharing with other Conservation Authorities that are managing dam operations for ecological functions downstream were noted.

**BD12, 3266**

**MOVED BY: Susan Fielding  
SECONDED BY: Jeff Beattie**

**THAT the memorandum entitled Watershed Conditions Report be received.**

**CARRIED**

10.3. Conservation Areas Experiences Update

Gord Costie presented a summary of the memorandum, noting the close of the Spencer Gorge reservation system for the year with the end of the Fall colour season and a reservation service review by CAB in 2024. He also advised the members of the upcoming deer harvest in the Dundas Valley, in partnership with the Haudenosaunee Wildlife Habitat Authority, and highlighted the opening of the new trail system at Westfield Heritage Village. There are now 6.7kms of trails at Westfield. He thanked all staff involved in the design and construction of the trails. He also acknowledged staff for the careful and safe lift out of 200 boats at Fifty Point.

**BD12, 3267**

**MOVED BY: Lisa DiCesare  
SECONDED BY: Matt Francis**

**THAT the memorandum entitled Conservation Areas Experiences Update be received.**

**CARRIED**

## **11. New Business**

The Chair advised that policies direct the Chair and Vice Chair to undertake an annual review for the Chief Administrative Officer each year. Members were asked to send any comments privately via email directly to the Chair or vice Chair in this regard.

## **12. In-Camera Items**

**BD12, 3268**

**MOVED BY: Susan Fielding  
SECONDED BY: Jeff Beattie**

**THAT the Board of Directors moves *in camera* for matters of law, personnel and property.**

**CARRIED**

**During the *in camera* session, two personnel matters were discussed.**

### **12.1. Confidential Report – BD/Nov 01-2023 (Personnel Matter)**

Wayne Terryberry provided a summary of the report regarding a personnel matter.

**BD12, 3269**

**MOVED BY: Wayne Terryberry  
SECONDED BY: Lisa DiCesare**

**THAT the confidential report entitled BD/Nov 01-2023 be received and remain in camera and only the names of the citizen appointments be announced.**

**CARRIED**

### **12.2. Confidential Report – BD/Nov 02-2023 (Personnel Matter)**



Lisa Burnside presented a summary of the report regarding a personnel matter and answered the members' questions.

**BD12, 3270**

**MOVED BY: Matt Francis  
SECONDED BY: Jeff Beattie**

**THAT Confidential Report entitled BD/Nov 02-2023 be received and remain in camera**

**CARRIED**

**BD12, 3271**

**MOVED BY: Craig Cassar  
SECONDED BY: Matt Francis**

**THAT the Board of Directors moves out of closed session.**

**CARRIED**

Following the in-camera portion of the meeting, a resolution approving the appointment of three new citizen representatives to HCA's Conservation Advisory Board (CAB) was read. This brings the membership up to the maximum 8 citizen members. The following citizens were appointed to CAB under the current terms of reference:

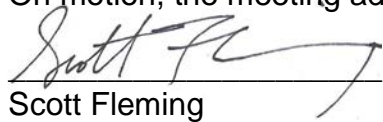
Elise Copps  
Jamie Freeman  
Noah Stegman

### **13. Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Board of Directors will be held on Thursday, December 7, 2023 at 6:00 p.m. at the HCA Main Administration Office – Woodend Auditorium, 838 Mineral Springs Road, Ancaster, Ontario.

### **14. Adjournment**

On motion, the meeting adjourned.



Scott Fleming  
Secretary-Treasurer

