

Hamilton Region Conservation Authority

Minutes

Board of Directors Meeting

December 4, 2025

Minutes of the Board of Directors meeting held on Thursday, December 4, 2025 at 6:00 p.m., at the HCA main office, 838 Mineral Springs Road, in Ancaster, and livestreamed on YouTube.

PRESENT: Brad Clark – in the Chair

Elise Copps

Susan Fielding

Alex Wilson

Lisa DiCesare

Wayne Terryberry

Maureen Wilson

REGRETS: Jeff Beattie, Craig Cassar, Matt Francis, Mike Spadafora

André Chabot – Foundation Chair

STAFF PRESENT: Nancy Arnold, Lisa Burnside, Gord Costie, Marlene Ferreira, Scott Fleming, Liam Fletcher, Brandon Good, Rob Gray, Matt Hall, Nicole Karbusicky, Amanda Martin, Stacey McConnell, Scott Peck, Mike Stone, Erich Talbot, Jaime Tellier, Sandra Winninger

OTHERS: Justin Silvia (Conservation Halton)

1. Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone present. HCA's Indigenous Land Acknowledgement was read.

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. Lisa Burnside indicated an Addendum was circulated, which included two items:

- Under number 8, Business Arising from the Minutes, Environmental Registry Posting 025-1257 - Proposed Boundaries for the Regional Consolidation of Ontario's Conservation Authorities, which will appear 8.2 on the agenda
- Under number 12, In-Camera Items, Confidential Memorandum – BD/Dec 03-2025, (Legal matter), will appear as 12.3 on the agenda

BD12, 3563

**MOVED BY: Susan Fielding
SECONDED BY: Lisa DiCesare**

THAT the agenda be approved, as amended.

CARRIED

4. Delegations

There were none.

5. Consent Items for Applications, Minutes and Correspondence

The following consent items were adopted:

- 5.1. Permit Applications Summary Report
- 5.2. Approval of Board of Directors Minutes – November 6, 2025
- 5.3. Approval of Board of Directors Minutes – Special Meeting, November 25, 2025
- 5.4. Approved – September 18, 2025 Budget & Administration Committee Minutes – for receipt only
- 5.5. Correspondence regarding Bill 68/ ERO Notice 025-1257 related to amendments to the Conservation Authorities Act, items labeled a to e.

6. Foundation Briefing

André Chabot, Chair of the Conservation Foundation, reported The Foundation has raised a total of \$22,263 in donations from November 1st to November 30th, 2025. This brings the unofficial total for the fiscal year to \$1,116,681, exceeding the fundraising goal of \$847,300 by 32%. This is due to larger major gift commitments from new corporate partners for Saltfleet Conservation Area. Some gift highlights include:

- \$5,000 from a family foundation in support of trails maintenance
- \$11,000 from our fall fundraising appeal

- \$588 in CAMIS donations

2025 Highlights:

Thanks to the fundraising success and the generosity of donors, the Foundation has granted approximately \$1,000,000 back to HCA to support various projects, including:

- The Saltfleet Wetland and Restoration Project
- The Outdoor Environmental Education Program
- Land Acquisition
- Basadinna Indigenous Signage project in the Dundas Valley
- Capital Improvement projects including the 50 Point Fishing Platform, as well as the Valens Lake Lookout Tower.
- Trail improvement projects including work in the Dundas Valley and Christie Lake

Councillor Clark thanked the Foundation; the Board and staff, for their hard work this year and in exceeding their fundraising goal.

BD12, 3564

MOVED BY: Alex Wilson

SECONDED BY: Elise Copps

THAT the Foundation Briefing be received.

CARRIED

7. Member Briefing

7.1. Saltfleet Conservation Area Wetland Project – Progress Update

Scott Peck provided an overview of the Saltfleet Wetland project, indicating, the purpose of the project was to create a new conservation area in the east end of Hamilton as well as to provide natural hazard attenuation, protecting residents in lower Stoney Creek from watercourse flooding. He indicated that the first wetland was completed in 2022 and since that time, nature has embraced the area: both flora and fauna have taken hold in the new conservation area. The second wetland will be completed this fall and construction on the third wetland, is expected to begin in 2027. The Board indicated their appreciation for this project and its impact on the local community as well as having an impact on climate change.

BD,12 3565

MOVED BY: Wayne Terryberry

SECONDED BY: Lisa DiCesare

THAT the Member Briefing be received.

CARRIED

8. Business Arising from the Minutes

8.1. Motion in response to Bill 68/ERO from HCA Board of Directors

The proposed motion, which was crafted with input from Board members was read. Discussion occurred; concerns regarding the short consultation process as well as frustration regarding the Province's reasoning for the amendments to the Conservation Authorities Act were expressed.

Lisa Burnside advised that staff would share the Board position in a more public friendly version on HCA's digital platforms (website, social media and to our passholders and Foundation) as part of the communication plan.

BD12, 3566

**MOVED BY: Susan Fielding
SECONDED BY: Elise Copps**

THAT the Board of Directors approve the Motion regarding Bill 68/ERO

CARRIED

8.2 Environmental Registry Posting 025-1257 – Proposed Boundaries for the Regional Consolidation of Ontario's Conservation Authorities

The proposed comments for the ERO 025-1257 were reviewed. There was significant discussion regarding the proposed amalgamation of conservation authorities with multiple concerns raised. Additionally, a comparison was drawn between this proposed amalgamation and the amalgamation that formed the New City of Hamilton, noting it was an expensive and controversial process. Clarification occurred that Conservation Foundations are separate entities from conservation authorities and won't be amalgamated; there are still unanswered questions on what their focus would be in the new regional model.

BD12, 3567

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

THAT the comments as detailed in Appendix A of the report titled "ERO Posting 025-1257 – Proposed Boundaries for the Regional Consolidation of Ontario's Conservation Authorities dated December 4, 2025 be approved; and further,

THAT HCA staff be directed to submit the approved comments to the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks.

CARRIED

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

9.1. Budget & Administration Committee – November 20, 2025 (Recommendations)

9.1.1 BA 2541 HCA Reserves Policy

Susan Fielding provided an overview of the staff report indicating that the Policy establishes financial guidelines and controls for the creation, management and use of HCA's financial reserves and reserve funds.

Additionally, the report noted that as the Fifty Point Wetland Project has been fully completed and all related expenditures finalized, staff recommended that this reserve be closed and the remaining \$85,977.72 be transferred to the Saltfleet Conservation Area Wetland Restoration Project Reserve, to support ongoing restoration.

BD12, 3568

**MOVED BY: Susan Fielding
SECONDED BY: Lisa DiCesare**

THAT the Budget & Administration Committee recommend to the Board of Directors:

THAT the HCA Reserves Policy, dated November 2025, as appended to this report, be approved; and further

THAT the Fifty Point Wetland reserve be closed and unused balance of \$85,977.72 be transferred to the Saltfleet CA Wetland Restoration Project reserve.

CARRIED

9.1.2 Project Technical Advisory Committee – Insurance

Susan Fielding provided an overview of the staff report, indicating that the Committee (PTAC) provides assistance to staff by reviewing and approving funding applications for the Hamilton-Halton Watershed Stewardship Program. The report contained the list of current members to be recognized for insurance purposes.

BD12, 3569

**MOVED BY: Susan Fielding
SECONDED BY: Elise Copps**

HCA the Budget & Administration Committee recommends to the Board of Directors:

THAT the Project Technical Advisory Committee members be submitted for annual insurance coverage purposes.

CARRIED

There weren't any reports from the Conservation Advisory Board.

10. Other Staff Reports/Memoranda

Reports to be Approved

10.1. Final HCA 2026 Budget

Lisa Burnside presented the report and indicated that the \$20.7M budget document was circulated to the City of Hamilton and Town of Puslinch for comment; none were received. It was noted that in addition as part of the draft budget, the Board requested special funding from the City of Hamilton to support HCA's land acquisition program. However, given the long-term nature of the special land acquisition funding request – and uncertainty regarding future priorities under a potential Western Lake Ontario Regional Conservation Authority – three options were developed for Board consideration before finalizing the budget regarding the special funding to either proceed, table and revisit or request redirection to a city fund. After a lengthy discussion an amendment was proposed to withdraw the special land acquisition funding request until a future date, with Councillor Alex Wilson wishing to be recorded as opposed. The motion to approve the HCA's 2026 budget was passed, as amended.

BD12, 3570

**MOVED BY: Lisa DiCesare
SECONDED BY: Brad Clark**

THAT to withdraw, until a future date, the special land acquisition funding request to the City of Hamilton from the HCA's 2026 budget

CARRIED

Recorded Vote

In favour

**Brad Clark
Elise Copps
Lisa DiCesare
Susan Fielding
Wayne Terryberry
Maureen Wilson**

Opposed

Alex Wilson

BD12, 3571**MOVED BY: Lisa DiCesare
SECONDED BY: Brad Clark**

THAT the 2026 draft budget be formally and finally approved in accordance with the Conservation Authorities Act and Ontario Regulation 402/22, and that the Board direct staff to table the special land acquisition funding request (Option 2 as outlined in the report) and revisit the request in a future budget year once there is greater clarity regarding the Province's proposed regional consolidation.

CARRIEDMemorandums to be Received10.2. Watershed Conditions Report

Scott Peck provided an overview of the memorandum indicating that there were no significant watercourse flooding events, no significant watercourse water safety concerns, and no Lake Ontario shoreline flooding events.

BD12, 3572**MOVED BY: Elise Copps
SECONDED BY: Alex Wilson**

THAT the Memorandum entitled Watershed Conditions Memorandum be received.

CARRIED10.3. Conservation Areas Experiences Update

Brandon Good presented a summary of the memorandum, highlighting progress on construction of the new campground at Valens Lake Conservation Area, completion of the accessible fishing bridge at Fifty Point Conservation Area, installation of wayfinding signs at Christie Lake and Spencer Gorge Conservation Areas and the Christmas programs occurring at Westfield Heritage Village Conservation Area.

BD12, 3573**MOVED BY: Susan Fielding
SECONDED BY: Lisa DiCesare**

THAT the memorandum Conservation Areas Experiences Update be received.

CARRIED

11. New Business

There was none.

12. In-Camera Items

BD12, 3574

**MOVED BY: Susan Fielding
SECONDED BY: Lisa DiCesare**

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

CARRIED

During the *in-camera* session, one personnel matter, one land matter and one legal matter and one were discussed.

12.1. Confidential Report – BD/Dec 01-2025 (Personnel Matter)

Marelene Ferriera provided a summary of the report regarding a personnel matter and answered the members' questions.

BD12, 3575

**MOVED BY: Alex Wilson
SECONDED BY: Susan Fielding**

THAT the confidential report entitled BD/Dec 01-2025 be approved and remain in camera.

CARRIED

12.2 Confidential Memorandum BD/Dec 02-2025 (Land Matter)

Scott Peck reviewed the confidential memorandum and answered members' questions.

BD12, 3576

**MOVED BY: Alex Wilson
SECONDED BY: Wayne Terryberry**

THAT the confidential memorandum entitled BD/Dec 02-2025 be received and remain in camera.

CARRIED**12.3 Confidential Memorandum BD/Dec 03-2025**
(Legal Matter)

Lisa Burnside provided an overview of the confidential memorandum and answered members' questions.

BD12, 3577**MOVED BY: Wayne Terryberry**
SECONDED BY: Elise Copps**THAT the confidential memorandum entitled BD/Dec 03-2025 be received and remain in camera.****CARRIED****BD12, 3578****MOVED BY: Maureen Wilson**
SECONDED BY: Susan Fielding**THAT the Board of Directors moves out of closed session.****CARRIED****13. Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Board of Directors will be held on Thursday, February 5, 2026 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