

Hamilton Region Conservation Authority

Minutes

Board of Directors Meeting

September 3, 2026

Minutes of the Board of Directors meeting held on Thursday, September 3, 2026 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	
Craig Cassar	Elise Copps
Lisa DiCesare	Susan Fielding
Wayne Terryberry	Alex Wilson
Maureen Wilson	

Graham Reid – Foundation Chair

REGRETS: Matt Francis, Mike Spadafora

STAFF PRESENT: Madolyn Armstrong, Jonathan Bastien, Carissa Bishop, Lisa Burnside, Lindsey Darling, Marlene Ferreira, Scott Fleming, Liam Fletcher, Brandon Good, Ethan Goodale, Matt Hall, Saumya Madan, Amanda Martin, Lesley McDonell, Scott Peck, Scott Sheppard, Sandra Winner

OTHERS: None

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

that a Confidential Verbal Update relating to a property matter will be added to the agenda as item 12.3.

BD12, 3664

MOVED BY: Craig Cassar

SECONDED BY: Maureen Wilson

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 – July 2, 2026
- 5.3. Approved – April 9, 2026 Conservation Advisory Board Minutes – for receipt only
- 5.4. Approved – June 25, 2026 Budget & Administration Committee Minutes – for receipt only
- 5.5. Correspondence from the City of Hamilton with respect to 2027 Operating Budget Submission for the Hamilton Conservation Authority, dated July 6, 2026
- 5.6. Correspondence from Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency to Conservation Authority's GMs/CAOs, with respect to Announcement of Project Executives for regional consolidation, dated July 15, 2026
- 5.7. Correspondence from Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency to Conservation Authority's Board Chairs with respect to the roles of CAOs/GMs during the regional consolidation process, dated July 15, 2026
- 5.8. Correspondence from Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency to Conservation Authorities, Mayors and Heads of Council with respect to Transition Committees, dated July 30, 2026
- 5.9. Correspondence from Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency to Western Lake Ontario Regional Conservation Authority with respect to introduction of the Project Executive, Jacqueline Johnson, dated August 14, 2026

6. Foundation Briefing

Graham Reid, Chair of the Foundation reported that summer is traditionally a quieter period for the Foundation, and this year followed that pattern. From July 1 to August 31, a total of \$44,863 was received in donations. This brings the fiscal year-to-date fundraising total to \$2,380,100 which is 100% of the annual fundraising goal.

Gift highlights include:

- \$10,000 from the Invasive Species Action Fund. This is the first installment of a recent grant that is supporting the implantation of the Hemlock Woolly Adelgid management plan for the Dundas Valley Conservation Area.
- \$5,000 from the Hamilton Community Foundation grant in support of bus transportation subsidies for Westfield's Education program
- \$5,100 in tribute gifts
- \$2,750 in corporate volunteer gifts

The Foundation is celebrating it's 50th anniversary this fall. A fun, family-friendly open house celebrating 50 years of local land conservation will take place at the Dundas Valley on Saturday October 3rd from 11 am – 2 pm.

BD12, 3665

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

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

- 9.1. Budget & Administration Committee – August 27, 2026
(Recommendations)

9.1.1 BA 2624 HCA 2027 Draft Budget

Susan Fielding provided highlights of the draft budget indicating the budget reflects

a continuation of all programs and services in addition to addressing year-three priorities of the HCA's Strategic Plan. The operating budget contains a 3.7% increase to municipal Levy and is balanced in part by significant self-generated revenue from the conservation areas.

The capital budget holds the \$2 Million block funding from the City of Hamilton for special projects and major maintenance. It is bolstered by \$2.8 Million from grants and reserves to support the work of the Satfleet Wetland Project, including construction of the third wetland and initiation of design work on the fourth wetland.

Scott Fleming provided a presentation of the draft Budget to members and answered their questions.

BD12, 3666

**MOVED BY: Susan Fielding
SECONDED BY: Craig Cassar**

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

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

THAT the 2027 Draft Operating and Capital Budgets, as presented, be endorsed for approval and;

That staff be directed to circulate to our participating municipalities for comment.

CARRIED

9.1.2 BA 2625 2027 Fee Schedule

Susan Fielding provided an overview of the staff report indicating 2027 fee increases are intended to contribute self-generated revenue while remaining generally modest in nature. Focused changes to select fees include: no increase to the Annual Membership Program; one dollar increase to nightly camping at Fifty Point and Valens Conservation Areas; modest increases to pavilion and cabin rentals and a one dollar increase to the per-person daily admission fee.

Fees for the review of planning applications and issuance of development permits will remain at 2026 levels in accordance with provincial fee freeze direction, and no increase is proposed for 2027.

BD12, 3667

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

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

THAT effective January 1, 2027, HCA staff be directed to implement the revised fee schedule contained in the report.

CARRIED

**9.2 Conservation Advisory Board – August 13, 2026
(Recommendations)**

9.2.1 CA 2616 Final Devil's Punchbowl Conservation Area Master Plan for Approval

Wayne Terryberry brought forward the staff report indicating that the Master Plan will guide the development and operations of the conservation for the next 10 years.

Madolyn Armstrong provided a brief presentation on the Plan for members, noting that the scope of the Master Plan was expanded due to the purchase of the Devil's Punchbowl Market property in July of 2022. This acquisition allows for the creation of the SC-5 wetland as well as the opportunity to create a visitor hub, improving visitor experience.

BD12, 3668

**MOVED BY: Wayne Terryberry
SECONDED BY: Elise Copps**

THAT the Conservation Advisory Board recommends to the Board of Directors;

THAT the Conservation Advisory Board recommends to the Board of Directors;

THAT this report and accompanying Master Plan of June 2026 be received as information for project background and general understanding; and further

THAT the Devil's Punchbowl Conservation Area Master Plan of June 2026 be approved; and further

THAT staff be directed to submit the Devil's Punchbowl Conservation Area Master Plan to the NEC and the MNR for final approval.

CARRIED

9.2.1 CA 2617 Water Quality and Habitat Improvement Program: Financial Assistance Guidelines Revisions

Wayne Terryberry brought forward the staff report outlining the adjustments to the

guidelines included updating funding caps to match the average cost of projects in addition to including projects that were listed but didn't have their own category, such as invasive species management. Improvements were also made to streamline the application process and the program's communication methods.

BD12, 3669

MOVED BY: Wayne Terryberry

SECONDED BY: Craig Cassar

THAT the Conservation Advisory Board recommends to the Board of Directors;

THAT the revised *Water Quality and Habitat Improvement Program: Financial Assistance Guidelines* (July 2026) be adopted.

CARRIED

10. Other Staff Reports/Memoranda

10.1. Appointment of Officers Under the Conservation Authorities Act

Liam Fletcher brought forward the staff report to approve the appointments of three staff members under Section 30.1, under the *Conservation Authorities Act* for the purposes of enforcing the *Conservation Authorities Act* and related regulations within the HCA's conservation areas.

BD12, 3670

MOVED BY: Lisa DiCesare

SECONDED BY: Craig Cassar

THAT the HCA Board of Directors appoint the staff identified in Attachment A as Officers under Section 30.1 of the *Conservation Authorities Act*, for the purposes of enforcing the *Conservation Authorities Act* and related regulations, as well as the *Trespass to Property Act*, as more specifically identified in Attachment A.

CARRIED

10.2. ERO #026-0740, with respect to Proposed Regulations under the Conservation Authorities Act – Appointment of members to Regional Conservation Authorities

Lisa Burnside provided an overview of the staff report in which public comments are sought with respect to how municipalities will be represented on the new regional conservation authority boards. It is proposed to use a population-based formula. Based on this formula, the Western Lake Ontario Regional Conservation Authority would have 16 members, consisting of the following:

- 4 from Peel Region;

- 3 from Halton Region;
- 3 from Niagara Region;
- 3 from the City of Hamilton and,
- 1 each from Wellington, Haldimand and Dufferin Counties

The new regional board will see the HCA move from a stand-alone board to a much larger regional board representing 7 municipalities. Staff support this formula as a starting point as it provides every municipality with a voice and a provides a consistent approach across the province. Additionally, once the Regional Board is operating the regulation allows municipalities to revisit the Board structure, taking geographic, watershed and other interests into consideration.

BD12, 3671

MOVED BY: Wayne Terryberry

SECONDED BY: Susan Fielding

THAT the Board of Directors receive Environmental Registry of Ontario (ER) Posting #026-0740 regarding appointment of members to regional conservation authorities as information and that it be submitted as formal comments to the province of Ontario.

CARRIED

10.3. ERO #026-0740, with respect to Proposed Regulations under the Conservation Authorities Act – Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency Board Member Ineligibility

Lisa Burnside provided an overview of the report, in which public comments are sought with respect to persons who are ineligible to sit on the OPCA Board. These include: registered lobbyists, current CA board members, current CA officers or senior staff. Staff agree with the guidelines but also suggested that in order to be an effective Board, members selected should have a balanced mix of governance experience, professional expertise and conservation authority sector knowledge. Additionally, it's recommended that the Province provide clear direction on the respective roles of OPCA and the regional conservation authority boards to help prevent duplication of efforts.

BD12, 3672

MOVED BY: Maureen Wilson

SECONDED BY: Susan Fielding

THAT the Board of Directors receive Environmental Registry of Ontario (ERO) Posting #026-0740 regarding Ontario Provincial Agency Board Member Ineligibility as information and direct that it be submitted as formal comments to the province of Ontario.

CARRIED

10.4. Cootes to Escarpment EcoPark System MOU Renewal

Lisa Burnside brought forward the staff report requesting a 5-year extension to the EcoPark system agreement. The collaborative partnership supports continued work toward the shared vision of connecting and permanently protecting natural lands from Cootes Paradise through to the Niagara Escarpment. Partners include: the Royal Botanical Gardens, Bruce Trail Conservancy, Hamilton Naturalist Club, McMaster University, Halton Region, Cities of Burlington and Hamilton and Conservation Halton.

BD12, 3673

**MOVED BY: Lisa DiCesare
SECONDED BY: Elise Copps**

THAT the Board of Directors authorize the Chief Administrative Officer to execute the “Letter of Agreement to extend the Memorandum of Understanding regarding the Cootes to Escarpment EcoPark System from 1 January 2027 through 31 December 2031”.

CARRIED

10.5. Watershed Conditions Memorandum

Jonathan Bastien presented a summary of the memorandum, noting that during the period of June 22nd to August 24th 2026, there were no significant watercourse flooding events, and no Lake Ontario shoreline flooding events. However, one storm (July 27th to 29th) warranted issuing messages and additional monitoring of watercourse conditions.

Currently, there are no observations, reports, or expectations of significant watercourse flooding, localized watercourse flooding of low-lying areas that typically flood during higher water levels, or significant water safety concerns.

There are currently no significant rainfall events (+20 mm in a day) forecasted for the watershed over the next 2 weeks. There are currently no significant Lake Ontario shoreline flooding events forecasted over the next 2 weeks.

BD12, 3674

**MOVED BY: Alex Wilson
SECONDED BY: Maureen Wilson**

THAT the memorandum entitled Watershed Conditions Report be received.

CARRIED

10.6. Conservation Areas Experiences Update

Brandon Good reported that HCA Conservation Areas had a successful summer season, with solid visitation across camping, boating, day use, recreation, and programming. The Learn to Fish program, run with the Ministry of Natural Resources, drew over 300

participants across 12 days. The Outdoor Education Summer Day Camp also saw strong attendance, and Westfield Heritage Village had a successful season highlighted by events like Milk and Honey. HCA continues to support community events including the BRIGHT Run and Ancaster A.M. Autumn Stroll.

Wild Waterworks and Lakeland Pool wrapped up their season on Labour Day.

Staff are now shifting to fall operations across all Conservation Areas. The reservation system at Spencer Gorge begins on September 26th to help manage visitation during the popular fall colour season.

BD12, 3675

MOVED BY: Wayne Terryberry

SECONDED BY: Elise Copps

THAT the memorandum entitled Conservation Areas Experiences Update be received.

CARRIED

11. New Business

11.1. Motion regarding HCA Public Waterfront Safety Practices

Brad Clark requested, in light of tragic water-related events that occurred this summer across the province, staff be directed to review the HCA's waterfront safety practices at conservation areas where water activities are permitted. Staff would report back to the Board on any changes, enhancing measures and/or practices to be implemented for the 2027 operational season.

BD12, 3676

MOVED BY: Brad Clark

SECONDED BY: Lisa DiCesare

WHEREAS the Hamilton Conservation Authority is committed to providing safe and responsible access to its conservation areas through appropriate practices, measures, and public information to support informed decisions regarding waterfront safety; and

WHEREAS the Board recognizes the value of periodically reviewing these practices to ensure they continue to reflect current conditions and best practices in waterfront safety management;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT staff be directed to review the Authority's existing waterfront safety practices at Valens Lake, Christie Lake and Fifty Point Conservation

Areas and report back to the Board on changes, enhancements, or additional measures to be considered for the 2027 operational season.

CARRIED

12. In-Camera Items

BD12, 3677

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

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

CARRIED

During the *in-camera* session, one personnel and two property matters were discussed.

12.1. Confidential Report – BA/Aug 01-2026 (Personnel Matter)

Susan Fielding brought forward the staff report and answered members' questions.

BD12, 3678

**MOVED BY: Susan Fielding
SECONDED BY: Craig Cassar**

THAT the Confidential Report – BA/Aug 01-2026 be approved and remain in camera.

CARRIED

12.2 Confidential Memorandum – BD/Sept 01-2026 (Property Matter)

Lisa Burnside brought forward the confidential memorandum on a property matter and answered members' questions.

BD12, 3679

**MOVED BY: Wayne Terryberry
SECONDED BY: Susan Fielding**

THAT the Confidential Memorandum – BD/Sept 01-2026 be received and remain in camera.

CARRIED

12.3 Confidential Verbal Update – BD/Sept 02-2026
(Property Matter)

Scott Peck provided a Verbal Update on a property matter and answered members' questions.

BD12, 3680

MOVED BY: Wayne Terryberry
SECONDED BY: Lisa DiCesare

THAT the Confidential Verbal Update – BD/Sept 02-2026 be received and remain in camera

CARRIED

BD12, 3681

MOVED BY: Wayne Terryberry
SECONDED BY: Craig Cassar

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, October 1, 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 was adjourned.

Scott Fleming
Digitally signed by Scott Fleming
Date: 2026.10.05 14:25:52 -04'00'

Scott Fleming
Secretary-Treasurer