



Grand River Conservation Authority Minutes – CA Act Regulations Committee

Date: November 10, 2022
Time: 3:00 p.m.
Location: GRCA Zoom Virtual Meeting
Members Present: John Challinor II, Susan Foxtan, Michael Harris, Helen Jowett, Chris White
Staff: Samantha Lawson, Karen Armstrong, Sonja Radoja, Eowyn Spencer

1. Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 3:01 p.m.

2. Certification of Quorum

Confirmed with 4 Members present at the time of certification.

3. Chair's Remarks

None.

4. Review of Agenda

Moved by: John Challinor

Seconded by: Helen Jowett

THAT the agenda for the Conservation Authorities Act Regulations Committee Meeting be approved as circulated.

Carried.

5. Declarations of Pecuniary Interest

None.

6. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Moved by: Susan Foxtan

Seconded by: Helen Jowett

THAT the minutes of the previous Conservation Authorities Act Regulations Committee Meeting held on September 13, 2022 be approved as circulated.

Carried.

7. Reports:

M.Harris joined the meeting at 3:10 p.m.

S.Lawson advised the Committee that on October 25, 2022, the government released *More Homes Built Faster: Ontario's Housing Supply Action Plan 2022-23*. Along with the plan, *Bill 23 – the More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022*, was introduced and the province is seeking feedback on the changes proposed under the legislation. Two of the registry postings are requesting comments by November 24, 2022, and as the General Membership does not meet until November 25, 2022, this Committee has been authorized to review and approve GRCA staff comments for submission.

7.1. GM-11-22-87 - ERO 019-6160 - Proposed Updates to the Ontario Wetland Evaluation System

- The province is looking at removing duplication and streamlining processes with respect to the Ontario Wetland Evaluation System; a tool used to delineate wetlands, and recognize those that meet defined criteria as provincially significant.
- S.Lawson provided an overview of GRCA concerns and comments as detailed in the report highlighting key areas of concern, such as: removal of wetland complexing, greater responsibility for municipalities, and removing the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry as the governing ministry.
- Additional concerns were noted, such as an increased responsibility for municipalities to approve matters, a lack of defined responsibility for record-keeping and data-sharing, and potential impact on tax exemption of certain GRCA conservation lands through the Conservation Land Tax Incentive Program (CLTIP).
- The Committee shared concerns, noting the significant impact on conservation authorities and the lack of clarity with respect to clearly identifying roles and responsibilities for municipalities, and the potential impact to taxpayers.
- H.Jowett inquired about the potential use of LIDAR for designating wetlands, and S.Lawson explained the current practice, which includes on-site inspection and air photo interpretation where appropriate.
- J.Challinor commented that there could be significant resource challenges and financial implications to CAs and municipalities.
- The Committee agreed with GRCA comments as provided in the report, and added that additional time to review and comment should be requested.
- The Committee supported the report as written, understanding that some minor amendments related to grammar and formatting may be made prior to submission.

Moved by: John Challinor

Seconded by: Susan Foxtan

THAT Report Number GM-11-22-87 – ERO No. 019-6160- Proposed Updates to the Ontario Wetland Evaluation System be submitted to the Environmental Registry Ontario;

AND THAT Report Number GM-11-22-87 – ERO No. 019-6160- Proposed Updates to the Ontario Wetland Evaluation System be circulated to the General Membership at the November 25, 2022 meeting to be received as information.

Carried.

7.2. GM-11-22-88 - ERO 019-6141 - Legislative and regulatory proposals affecting Conservation Authorities to support the Housing Supply Action Plan 3.0

- Through Bill 23, additional legislative and regulatory updates are proposed that relate to directly to Conservation Authorities.

- S.Lawson provided a detailed overview of GRCA comments as written in the report, with a focus on three key areas of concern: adding an enabling provision that will shift the regulatory authority from CAs onto municipalities, removing the ability for municipalities to enter into agreements with CAs to provide input on natural hazards under a number of prescribed pieces of legislation; and adding legislation to allow Ministers to implement a freeze on CA fees.
- S.Lawson explained in detail the concerns related to these areas, and further noted concerns with a lack of clarity under the proposed changes, and anticipated challenges for municipalities should the legislation pass as proposed, including budget impacts and overall efficiency of processes.
- The Committee discussed the comments and shared concerns related to municipal responsibility and areas of expertise related to the impact of development on natural hazards, additional workloads and lack of resources which may ultimately impact bottom lines of municipalities and conservation authorities.
- As part of the comments being submitted, the GRCA is requesting that the province re-engage the working group that provided comments under phase 1 of the regulatory updates.
- The Committee agreed with GRCA comments as provided in the report, and added that additional time to review and comment should be requested.
- The Committee directed staff to circulate both of the reports presented on this agenda to all MPPs within the Grand River watershed at the time it is submitted to the province. Some grammatical corrections may also be made to this report.
- S.Lawson added that the proposed update regarding the disposition and severance process for CAs shifts the approval responsibility to CA Boards as opposed to the governing ministry.

Moved by: John Challinor

Seconded by: Susan Foxton

THAT Report Number GM-11-22-88 – ERO No. 019-6141- Legislative and regulatory proposals affecting Conservation Authorities to support the Housing Supply Action Plan 3.0 be submitted to the Environmental Registry Ontario;

AND THAT Report Number GM-11-22-88 – ERO No. 019-6141- Legislative and regulatory proposals affecting Conservation Authorities to support the Housing Supply Action Plan 3.0 be circulated to the General Membership at the November 25, 2022 meeting to be received as information.

Carried.

8. Discussion Items:

8.1. Joint Letter Template for CA Submissions to Bill 23 & Conservation Ontario Submission

- Conservation Ontario provided a copy of their submission to the province, as well as a form letter drafted to be edited for specifics and distributed to the Premier, appropriate Ministers, and watershed MPPs. The Committee agreed that the letter is in line with the key points as presented in GRCA comments, and directed staff to send the correspondence under signatures of this Committee.

8.2. Status of Municipal Engagement

- Samantha provided a brief update on municipal engagement related to the Transition Plan required under O.Reg 687/21. The GRCA hosted two webinars in early October to share information on category two programs and services, and an

overview of the process to engage municipalities in discussions related to MOUs for said programs. Initial meetings will be scheduled in the new year. GRCA staff have refined costs allocated to the various categories in the Inventory of Programs and Services and an updated version of the Inventory will be brought to the Board in December, along with the quarterly progress report due to MNRF by January 1, 2023.

9. Other Business

None.

10. Next Meeting

At the Call of the Chair

11. Adjourn

The Committee adjourned at 3:30 p.m.