

Board Meeting Highlights

June 25, 2021

Announcements:

- a) Chair Emmerson welcomed new Board member, Deputy Mayor Joe Gough, who has been appointed to represent the Township of Ramara. Board members and Executive Leadership Team members introduced themselves and welcomed Deputy Mayor Gough to the Board.
- b) CAO Rob Baldwin advised that with the recent Provincial cabinet shuffle, there are two new ministers within the conservation authorities' portfolio: namely, Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks David Piccini, and Minister of Northern Development, Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry Greg Rickford. He also advised that changes to the Provincial conservation authorities working group are not anticipated.
- c) General Manager, Integrated Watershed Management, Ben Longstaff, advised that due to the very dry spring, we entered into a Level 1 low water response condition in June. As a result, a Low Water Response Team has been formed with representation from all watershed municipalities, Provincial agencies, Trent Severn Waterways, and First Nations. The first meeting takes place virtually on July 7th to ensure a coordinated response as required.
- d) Lake Simcoe Conservation Foundation Executive Director, Cheryl Taylor, provided an update on upcoming events; namely, the 32nd Annual Conservation Dinner taking place on September 22nd; the Dalton Hicks 3rd Annual Golf Tournament on August 25th, and the Chairman's Golf Tournament on August 19th. More information on these events can be found through this link: <https://www.lakesimcoefoundation.ca/events>

Deputations

Ms. Claire Malcolmson shared concerns with the proposed Bradford Bypass on behalf of the Rescue Lake Simcoe Coalition and Eco Justice. She noted these groups feel the environmental assessment is outdated and the need exists for a complete review and update to the environmental assessment, as well as an examination of alternatives before any construction begins. They feel there are many information gaps that need to be explored before this project should proceed.

CAO Baldwin explained that Provincial highways are exempt from the conservation authorities' regulations, and the Authority has committed to a voluntary project review should we be asked to provide it. The Authority will provide input on the science if and as requested.

At the request of Board members, a staff report will be prepared for the September 2021 meeting based on the information that the Authority has available at that time. More information on the Bradford bypass can be found through this link: [Bradford Bypass](#)

Presentations:

a) 2022-2024 Strategic Plan Project

Communications Specialist, Melissa Rosato, and Project Lead on the Authority's 2022-2024 Strategic Plan provided an update on its progress, noting that typically the Authority's strategic plan is outsourced to a consultant and work begins prior to the expiry of the existing plan. With the many obstacles and financial constraints faced in 2020, the decision was made for this work to be completed in-house by our communications department. She noted that steps completed at this point include background research and program planning completed September 2020; situation analysis, which is a summary of our strengths, challenges, and opportunities, derived from all staff input, completed March 2021; and vision, mission values statements completed May 2021. Currently in progress are the goals, strategic objectives and success indicators, with a list of high-level goals and strategic objectives that are well aligned being the expected outcome. Still to be actioned is the validation and prioritization of strategic objectives (September 2021), as well as the launch and implementation planning anticipated for fall of 2021.

Ms. Rosato outlined the process of staff engagement by way of department stars who help guide their colleagues through the process and staff consultation to ensure all staff participation. She invited Board members to participate by way of a Board workshop to be held in late August, with a survey option available for those who are unable to attend.

It is expected the Strategic Plan will be finalized in 2021 and launched for implementation in 2022. This timing fits nicely with the new leadership focus of the Authority's CAO, Rob Baldwin, as well as the timing around the changes to the *Conservation Authorities Act* and subsequent regulation. To view this presentation, please click this link: [2022-2024 Strategic Plan Update](#). For more information on the Authority's Strategic Plan process, please contact Melissa Rosato at 905-895-1281, ext. 120 or m.rosato@lsrca.on.ca.

b) 2021 Afforestation Program Update

Manager, Forestry and Greenspace Services, Philip Davies, provided an update on the Authority's 2021 spring planting program and ongoing initiatives to increase forest and canopy cover across the watershed, noting that Forestry staff deliver tree and shrub planting services to watershed landowners through the annual spring and fall programs. With the cancellation of the 2020 spring planting program, fulltime employees utilizing new safety protocols were able to plant 1,800 trees on six sites through the annual fall program. The average for the annual fall program is 2,600 trees, which is less than the annual spring program average of 42,000 trees.

During the 2021 spring planting season, Forestry staff worked with 25 landowners to plant over 49,500 trees across the watershed despite pandemic related challenges and restrictions. These planting projects were completed with the support of our municipal program partners including York Region's Grow Your Legacy Planting Program and Simcoe County's Simcoe Trees Program, as well as funding partners including the Lake Simcoe Conservation Foundation and Forests Ontario's 50 Million Trees Program. The annual Do-It-Yourself Planting Program, which sells seedlings directly to landowners for planting on their properties, was very successful in large part due to build-up of demand following the 2020 cancellation, and accordingly 103 landowners collected over 13,600 trees at the pick-up event, our largest distribution to date. Restoration staff also completed 13 projects including planting over 6,500 trees, shrubs and herbaceous plants.

He went on to note that Forestry staff continually seek opportunities with landowners, municipal partners, as well as neighbouring conservation authorities, to increase forest and canopy cover in the watershed to support natural heritage cover restoration and expansion objectives. To view this presentation, please click this link: [Afforestation Program Update](#). For more information on the Authority's Afforestation program, please contact Philip Davies at 905-895-1281, ext. 321 or p.davies@lsrca.on.ca.

c) 2022 Budget Assumptions

General Manager, Corporate and Financial Services/CFO, Mark Critch, provided a presentation on the Authority's 2022 Budget Assumptions, noting that budget assumptions set clear direction for budget targets; enable staff to work with municipal funding partners to secure preliminary budget approvals; allow staff to build the 2022 budget and reduce re-work; provide the Board of Directors the opportunity to influence the general direction of the budget; and strengthen the advocacy role of Board members at their respective municipal budget presentations. Standard budget assumptions include that the Authority recognizes and incorporates the challenges being faced by municipal funding partners in the budget development. Other budget assumptions are that rental property surplus goes to Asset Management reserve to fund future asset management work; Foundation revenue continues to be used for education and projects and we continued to watch for challenges related to donations; any interest Income above budget assumption goes to surplus, reserves are used for pilot projects or one-time purchases, and the Authority continues to respect the taxpayer and understand the context of budget requests.

GM Critch reviewed the governing principles in the budget recommendations, such as inflation and COLA which are in line with local comparators, adjusting for municipal funding challenges, municipal targets are used where feasible; a 1% investment toward achieving strategic priorities is recommended to be deferred until 2023, and asset management funding will be addressed in a financial strategy being tabled in the fall, but a small placeholder is included in

2022 budget. He also noted that for the third year in a row there are no new fulltime employees included in the budget unless they are fully funded by grants.

He shared the financial impacts of funding targets as well as the various COLA rates scenarios and asked the Board for endorsement of the following 2022 budget assumptions:

1. Inflation: Up to 2.00% (2021 Budget: 2.00%)
2. COLA for staff: Up to 2.00% (2021 Budget: 1.00%)
3. Infrastructure levy for Asset Mgmt.: 0.50% increase on capital funding only
4. Investment in Strategic Priorities: 0.00% (2021: 0.00%)
5. No additional FTE's in 2022, unless they are fully funded from grants and/or fees
6. General and Special Operating Levy: Up to 1.00% (2021: 1.00%)
7. Special Capital Levy: Up to 1.70% (2021 Budget: 1.00%)

Next steps for the 2022 budget include:

- Board approved budget assumptions will be used to develop 2022 Budget;
- Preliminary budgets will be shared with municipalities, ensuring coordination with municipal budget cycles;
- An on-line financial update for municipal funding partners will be hosted in Fall;
- Efficiencies and cost savings to support the 2022 Budget will continue to be sought;
- Predictive information from 2021 Forecast will be used to develop 2022 Budget; and
- 2022 Budget presentations to funding partners will begin in the fall/winter.

To view this presentation, please click this link: [2022 Budget Assumptions](#). For more information on the Authority's 2022 Budget Assumptions, please contact Mark Critch at 905-895-1281, ext. 297 or m.critch@lsrca.on.ca.

Correspondence and Staff Reports:

Correspondence

The Board received a letter from the Township of Ramara dated June 18, 2021 regarding the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority.

2022-2024 Strategic Plan Project

The Board received Staff Report No. 29-21-BOD regarding the ongoing development of the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority's 2022-2024 Strategic Plan.

2021 Afforestation Program Update

The Board received Staff Report No. 30-21-BOD regarding an update on the Authority's Afforestation program.

2022 Budget Assumptions

The Board approved Staff Report No. 31-21-BOD regarding the recommended budget assumptions for the 2022 fiscal year.

Conservation Authorities Act - Phase 1 Consultation Guide Comments

The Board received Staff Report No. Staff Report No. 32-21-BOD regarding Provincial Bill 229 Regulatory Proposal Consultation Guide and approved Comments Letter for submission to the Environmental Registry of Ontario ahead of the June 27, 2021 deadline.

Conservation Ontario's Governance Accountability and Transparency Initiative

The Board received Staff Report No. 33-21-BOD regarding Conservation Ontario's Governance Accountability and Transparency Initiative and endorsed the three key actions developed by the Conservation Ontario Steering Committee to update Administrative By-laws, to report proactively on priorities, and to promote/demonstrate results. The Board directed staff to work with Conservation Ontario to implement these actions and to identify additional improvements and best management practices.

KD03 Sunnidale Road Stormwater Pond Retrofit Project

The Board received Staff Report No. 34-21-BOD regarding the City of Barrie's KDO3 Sunnidale Road Stormwater Pond Retrofit Project and approved funding for the project through the Authority's Offsetting Cash in Lieu funds from Water Balance and Lake Simcoe Phosphorus Offsetting as outlined in the report.

Confidential Human Resources Matter

The Board endorsed Confidential Staff Report No. 35-21-BOD regarding a confidential human resources matter.

Amendments to Permit under O. Reg 179/06 and Pursuant to Subsection 28.0.1 of the Conservation Authorities Act (Ministerial Zoning Order) for 2639025 Ontario Inc. Oro Station Automotive Innovation Park

The Board received Staff Report No. 36-21-BOD regarding Amendments to Permission (Permit OP.2021.027) under O. Reg 179/06, Pursuant to Subsection 28.0.1 of the Conservation Authorities Act (Ministerial Zoning Order) for 2639025 Ontario Inc. Oro Station Automotive Innovation Park and approved the amended conditions to the permission as outlined in the report be approved including that the permit be valid for a period of sixty (60) months. The Board authorized the Authority's Chief Administrative Officer to execute the agreement as required by the Conservation Authorities Act.

For more information or to see the full agenda package, visit [LSRCA's Board of Directors' webpage](#).