

Board Meeting Highlights

November 27, 2020

Announcements:

- a) Chair Emmerson advised that Mayor Bath-Hadden, LSRCA's representative from the Township of Brock, recently announced that due to some health issues, she is taking a leave of absence. Chair Emmerson sent best wishes to Mayor Bath-Hadden on behalf of the Board on a speedy recovery.
- b) Chair Emmerson was pleased to announce that Rob Baldwin, currently General Manager, Planning & Development and Watershed Restoration Services, has been named the Authority's next CAO effective January 1, 2021, upon the retirement of the current CAO Mike Walters.

Presentations:

a) Stormwater Optimization Study Update

General Manager, Integrated Watershed Management, Ben Longstaff, along with a Tracy Patterson, a consultant with Freeman Associates, provided an update on the Stormwater Optimization Study, also known as the Equitable Responsibility for Transformational Design: Optimization of stormwater management within the East Holland River watershed. This study was formed in response to growing challenges in stormwater management. The East Holland River was selected as the pilot watershed to test the hypothesis that improved environmental outcomes can be realized at lower capital and operating costs via a systemic, watershed-based approach to stormwater management planning that includes siting centralized and distributed infrastructure on both publicly-owned and privately-owned properties. Funded by Federal grants, watershed municipalities, Lake Simcoe Conservation Foundation, and Sustainable Technology Evaluation Program partners, the study began in 2018. Project stages included: (1) formation of advisory committee and model selection; (2) watershed characterization and data compilation; (3) current state model development and calibration; (4) future state model development and screening; (5) future state simulations to test study principles; (5) reporting and communications.

The study was able to demonstrate that (i) optimization modeling will lead to more cost effective SWM strategies; (ii) most cost effective SWM strategies are achieved when private and public lands are considered; and (iii) most cost-effective strategies are achieved when stormwater is planned and managed at a watershed rather than jurisdictional scale. In addition, immediate opportunities to improve stormwater planning and management within the East Holland River were identified.

Technical and non-technical study reports are currently being finalized and will be available in early December. These reports will outline the study methodology, study findings and will make a series of recommendations.

To view this presentation, please click this link: [Stormwater Optimization Study](#)

For more information on the stormwater optimization study, please contact Ben Longstaff at b.longstaff@lsrca.on.ca

b) Response to Bill 229

Chief Administrative Officer, Mike Walters, provided an overview of the changes to the Conservation Authorities Act and the Planning Act as outlined in the Provincial Bill 229, Protect, Support and Recover from COVID-19 (Budget Measures), 2020. In 2018, the Province began a review of Conservation Authority operations, following which Bill 108, More Homes, More Choice Act was introduced, and Schedule 2 specifically amending the Conservation Authorities Act with the following three key goals in mind: to improve consistency and transparency of the programs and services that conservation authorities deliver; to provide additional oversight for municipalities and the province; and to streamline conservation permitting and land use planning reviews to increase accountability, consistency, and transparency.

Conservation authorities have demonstrated willingness to work with the Province and have since been working to meet these expectations by: adopting consistent By-Laws by December 2018; implementing best management practices regarding governance and administration; voluntarily reducing timelines for issuance of permits based on the previous Conservation Authority Liaison Committee requirements; initiating client centric service training and monitoring protocols to document improvements in service delivery, and attending a series of consultation sessions with the Minister and provincial staff.

Additionally, Conservation Ontario, on behalf of all 36 conservation authorities, has been consistently trying to engage the Province to clarify their concerns and discuss a path forward for conservation authorities to work collectively to achieve the Province's desired outcomes.

Unfortunately, the amendments introduced in Schedule 6 of Bill 229 show no regard for these efforts, do not reflect the discussions during consultations, and would seem ill conceived containing several unintended consequences which either conflict with other existing pieces of legislation and/or are counterproductive to their stated objectives. In fact, none of the recommendations put forth by conservation authorities have been considered in the amendments, including long awaited tools to assist with permitting and enforcement. Simply put, the changes will not achieve the objectives of the Province, objectives that all 36 Conservation Authorities share. Rather, many are potentially contrary leading to increased red tape, additional costs to taxpayers, and placing Ontario's residents and environment at risk.

The proposed changes significantly diminish our ability to protect Ontario's environment and ensure people and property are safe from natural hazards by not being able to apply

watershed-based decisions on new development. Additionally, the unintended consequences associated with amendments to permitting will ultimately create more red tape, delays, disruption, and costs which would need to be borne by the taxpayer.

The outcomes are contrary to the Province's goals and plans for economic recovery as is the decision to repeal enforcement tools previously considered. Without these tools our Authority cannot meet the intent of the Conservation Authorities Act and effectively enforce Section 28 of Ontario Regulation 179/06. Inadvertently the result is that violators will benefit from our limited ability resulting in further environmental degradation and risk to people and property.

Finally, the significant changes to governance involving the 'Duty to Members' section of the Conservation Authorities Act that would have municipal representatives on conservation authority Boards act in the interests of their own municipality rather than the conservation authority's interests is fundamentally flawed.

To view this presentation, please click this link: [Bill 229, Schedule 6 Proposed Amendments](#).

Correspondence and Staff Reports:

There were no correspondence items or staff reports for this meeting.

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