



Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Date: August 6, 2020

Time: 10:04 am

St. Clair Conservation Authority Administrative Office

Present: Alan Broad, John Brennan, Pat Brown, Terry Burrell, Joe Faas, Chair; Larry Gordon, Vice Chair; Aaron Hall, Frank Kennes, Brad Loosley, Kevin Marriott, Mark McGill, Netty McEwen, Dan McMillan, Steve Miller, Frank Nemcek, Mike Stark

Regrets: Andy Bruziewicz, Betty Ann MacKinnon, Lorie Scott, Jerry Westgate

Staff Present: Ashley Fletcher, Administrative Assistant/ Board Coordinator; Brian McDougall, General Manager

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and gave a brief explanation for the call of an in-camera meeting. Concerns were voiced by Directors Mike Stark and John Brennan that an item within the agenda did not necessitate for an in-camera session. It was discussed and agreed upon that matters related to Planning, Regulations and Drainage would be discussed in an open session, and that personnel-related matter would be discussed in-camera.

It was requested that each Director declare a conflict of interest at the appropriate time, on any item within this agenda in that a Director may have pecuniary interest.

BD-20-61

Miller – McMillan

“That the Board of Directors adopts the agenda for the meeting, as amended.”

CARRIED

BD-20-62

Burrell – Marriott

“That the Board of Directors go in-camera at 10:04 a.m. to discuss personnel information with the General Manager and Administrative Assistant/ Board Coordinator remaining.”

CARRIED

BD-20-63

Burrell – Brown

“That the Board of Directors rise and report at 10:54 a.m.”

CARRIED

- **Concerns specific to the speed in which planning applications are being handled**
 - Calls related to planning and applications for development are being received at a higher rate than normal, while staffing in this department is currently at 50%

- Several Board Members have contacted the planning department in attempt to expedite applications
- **Concerns specific to Drainage Regulations**
 - Director's shared concerns that have been brought forth by Municipal staff and drainage engineers regarding lack consistency, development delays and overly arduous regulations
 - Directors report that the above issues have resulted in a lack of trust and tarnished reputation for the Conservation Authority
 - General Manager, Brian McDougall offered the following points for clarification:
 - The 15 day turn-around rate for complete submitted development applications is still in effect, but is being affected by staffing issues in the planning department
 - Staff have a responsibility under the Act to protect wetlands (including potentially unmapped wetlands) and all specific details are brought to the Regulations Committee for review
 - Direction to ignore any aspect within the Act increases liability risk to the Board
 - The Drainage Act does not necessarily reflect the realities of today's environment, as storms are now more frequent and exceeding what was once thought of as a 'significant'
- **Staffing issues within the planning department**
 - Manager of Planning, Dallas Cundick resigned in February. This position is being filled on a temporary basis by the Regulations Coordinator, Melissa Deisley and Planning Ecologist, Sarah Hodgkiss
 - Planner, Erica Ogden resigned in March. This position has recently been filled by Laura Biancolin
 - The position of Planning Department Clerk (maternity leave contract) has been advertised and at the time of meeting remains unfilled
 - Regulations Officer, Michelle Gallant has announced her retirement effective Friday, August 7, 2020. This position is currently advertised and at the time of meeting remains unfilled
 - Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the hiring process has suffered delays, however staff are working diligently to fill these positions as quickly as possible

The floor was made open for discussion. The following points of solution were discussed:

- With the upcoming return from parental leave of Biologist Kelli Smith, the responsibility of drainage regulations will return to her as previously undertaken
- Staff have contacted partner Conservation Authorities to enquire whether temporary assistance is available, however many CA neighbours are experiencing similar staffing and volume challenges

- Former SCRCA Planner, Erica Ogden who is currently working with the Mississippi Valley Conservation Authority has been providing assistance with advisory services when possible
- Staff outside of the planning department are taking time to assist where possible by returning calls, taking messages and processing payments
- Directors suggest contacting the Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority to discuss possible assistance on a temporary basis
- Management is encouraged to investigate the possibility of a department service review in order to identify gaps in efficiency
- Additional safety measures, such as masks and cubicle dividers, are being introduced within the office to promote the possibility of having more staff working within the office and with greater regularity
- Directors are asked to forward complaints or concerns on behalf of their respective Municipalities to the attention of General Manager, Brian McDougall. It is preferred that such comments are received by August 31, 2020 in order for staff to compile and provide response

Director's Comments:

Several directors expressed issue with the requests from the Conservation Authority to install silt fencing around certain drains, as it is increasing the cost and time for such work. Concerns were raised that the additional requirement was brought to their attention without any prior consultation or board discussion. Directors have questioned whether silt fencing is part of our policy and if so, whether this requirement can be changed or better defined. General Manager, Brian McDougall to provide report at the September 17, 2020 Board of Directors meeting.

BD-20-64

Burrell – Loosley

“That the Board of Directors requests a report compiling the Drainage and Development issues brought forth by Municipalities at the September 17, 2020 Board of Directors Meeting and further that written responses to such concerns are provided by staff.”

CARRIED

BD-20-65

McMillan – Burrell

“That the meeting be adjourned”

CARRIED

Joe Faas
Chair

Brian McDougall
General Manager