

MEETING RECORD

DRCC Public Advisory Council & EPI Work Group

Wednesday, September 21st – 4:30-6:30
Ojibway Nature Centre, Prairie Room, Windsor, ON

1. Welcome, Introductions & Approval of Agenda

Tom called the meeting to order at 4:35 and introduced Gina Pannunzio, the Acting RAP Coordinator, along with the other attendees. Tom welcomed new attendees, Dan St. Denis from Caesars Windsor and Carl Maiolani, Membership Secretary of the Essex County Field Naturalists' Club and Friends of Ojibway Prairie Board Member. He also welcomed Mary Bohling, a member of the U.S. Detroit River PAC and Sarah Baldo, former DRCC RAP Assistant.

DRCC EDUCATION & PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT WORK GROUP

2. EPI Update since April 27, 2016

Caroline Biribauer explained that the EPI workgroup is largely responsible for the hands-on activities that take place in the watershed, such as cleanups and plantings. Most activities are concentrated in the spring and fall.

- a) Plantings and Cleanups – Five events took place in the spring. The five events included: the Lil' Reg 25th anniversary planting, the Earth Day planting, a bioremediation project with Steve Green, an outdoor classroom at Holy Name Elementary, and a cleanup at Twin Oaks. ERCA is actively searching for a new Earth Day planting location and is open to suggestions from the group. The initial planting phase of the bioremediation project is complete. The Twin Oaks cleanup was completed in partnership with employees from Caesars Windsor (CodeGreen).

All of the trees to be planted this fall will arrive on Friday, September 23rd. The fall planting schedule is shorter than the spring schedule. There are eight projects in total, three of which will take place in the Detroit River watershed. On October 1st, TD Tree Days Community Tree Planting will take place at Twin Oaks and 300 trees will be planted. Chrysler is holding their annual fall planting on October 16th along the Grand Marais Drain; native grasses and wildflowers will be incorporated. Lastly, a planting will take place at Gesstwood Camp and Retreat Centre, located within the Canard River watershed. The Gesstwood planting is funded by EcoAction, Ducks Unlimited Canada and the DRCC. It will take place on October 13th and will involve planting a riparian buffer around a newly created wetland. Dave inquired about the possibility of planting more trees at Ford's Essex Engine Plant. Caroline said it was possible, but that they would have to approach her, due to access issues.

- b) Signs – Gina Pannunzio discussed signs when giving her update (see item 4e).

PUBLIC ADVISORY COUNCIL

3. PAC Update since April 27, 2016

- a) Ojibway Shores – Tom Henderson provided an overview of Ojibway Shores to the group, beginning with the spring of 2013 when the CEO of the Windsor Port Authority (WPA) approached City Council and announced that they were going to clear the 33-acre property along the Detroit River. A week prior to the WPA's public open house, the WPA attended a PAC meeting and presented their plans. Phil Roberts also presented, offering the WPA a counter-proposal. Unfortunately, the WPA were not swayed. The public open house was held on July 3rd, 2013 at Mackenzie Hall. Media garnered a lot of attention, through social media and The Windsor Star's interview with Tom. Approximately 200 people attended the public open house, to oppose the clear-cutting of Ojibway Shores, and environmental groups met

with the WPA that afternoon. Following the public open house, the WPA set up security at Ojibway Shores and started to clean up the area. The public was also invited to visit the property and the WPA allowed two BioBlitzes to take place on the property (one in 2014 and one in 2015).

Tom later attended a Windsor-Detroit Bridge Authority meeting and proposed that Ojibway Shores be protected as compensation for the destruction that the creation of the bridge will cause. Tom has also talked to Brian Masse, the MP representing Windsor West, about protecting Ojibway Shores. Several weeks ago, David Cree (CEO of WPA) and Amanda Gellman (PR) invited Tom to present his views on the WPA, and he accepted. Tom thanked the WPA for allowing the public to access Ojibway Shores and tried to further educate David and Amanda about the ecological and environmental benefits that the property provides. Tom commended the WPA for moving their headquarters to Old Sandwich Town and for the shoreline work and cleanup efforts that they have been involved with. Although Tom mentioned all of the positive work the WPA has been involved with, he also urged the WPA to do more, and protect Ojibway Shores. He quoted the letter he received from Marc Garneau, Minister of Transport, in February which stated that the WPA is responsible for managing Ojibway Shores. Tom feels optimistic that Ojibway Shores will one day be protected, although the site is still marked as a viable industrial site on the WPA's website. In the past, Tom has spoken with John Hartig about protecting Ojibway Shores and John suggested trying to secure funding from Ducks Unlimited and the North American Wetlands Conservation Council (Canada). Tom passed these suggestions along the Brian Masse and the WPA. Tom also mentioned that it is important to remember that the First Nations have a land claim on Ojibway Shores. Tom and Derek Coronado (Citizens Environmental Alliance – CEA) attended a Windsor-Detroit Bridge Authority focus group and Kettle Point First Nations was in attendance.

Patricia McGormann mentioned that \$1.5M has been set aside by the City of Windsor for the purchase of environmentally significant lands, and wondered if this could be used to purchase Ojibway Shores. Andy Paling asked if a letter should be sent to the City of Windsor to encourage the use of the \$1.5M to purchase Ojibway Shores but Tom advised against it because at the moment the issue is strictly between the federal government and the WPA. Andy Paling asked if there are other environmental areas we should be focusing on and Patricia suggested the creation of a focus group. Patricia wondered if some of the funds could be used to control phragmites. Mike Walsh questioned if there was merit in writing to Brian Masse in support of purchasing Ojibway Shores.

Motion – That DRCC PAC Chair, Tom Henderson, write a letter to MP Brian Masse in support of the purchase of Ojibway Shores from the Windsor Port Authority. Moved by Mike, Seconded by Naresh Pal Manku. Carried.

ACTION: Tom Henderson will write a letter to Brian Masse, on behalf of the PAC, in support of the purchase of Ojibway Shores from the WPA.

Derek asked about the status of the Essex County Field Naturalists' report, on the biodiversity at Ojibway Shores. He thinks the report could be instrumental in the fight to protect Ojibway Shores.

ACTION: Sarah Baldo will e-mail Jesse Gardner-Costa, President of the Essex County Field Naturalists' Club, about the status of the Ojibway Shores report. done

- b) Kennette Property – Tom provided some background information on the Kennette property, explaining that Francis Kennette owns a 15-acre riverfront property adjacent to Ojibway Shores. At one point, Mr. Kennette believed the federal government would purchase it as part of the bridge plaza. Negotiations fell through and he decided to build a deep water dock. He secured the necessary permits to do so and the CEA was able to track down the permit obtained from the DFO. The permit has expired but can be renewed indefinitely. Construction was not permitted to take place during the spawning season, which ended in July, but since then, no work has taken place. Ken asked about the letter Tom wrote to DFO on behalf of the PAC, regarding the dangerous precedence that is being set. Tom could not recall receiving

a response. Sarah looked into the matter following the meeting and, through e-mail correspondence and a previous meeting record, determined the letter had not been written. Derek mentioned that Mr. Kennette does not have a compensation program in place yet because the City refused to work with him. Mr. Kennette promised Tom and Dave Munro a tour but has not yet followed through.

- c) Herb Gray Parkway Compensation Lands Report – Dave Munro has been in conversation with Said Mohamed, a botanist working for Amec Foster Wheeler, regarding the Herb Gray Parkway compensation lands. Said provided Dave with a very good tour of the compensation lands and provided him with a map, which Dave shared with the group. He explained that less compensation lands had been secured than previously believed. Most of the compensation lands are located between Matchette Road and Malden Road. A small portion of the lands are publicly accessible; the remaining lands are blocked off to the public by a fence. As a taxpayer, Dave argued that more of the lands should be publicly accessible. Steve Marks explained that the fence is in place to protect the newly established habitats from human disturbance, primarily, ATV use. Dave is hoping a compromise can be reached, where highly sensitive areas are protected but greater public access is permitted in other areas. Pete Thomas suggested modifying the fencing so that it allows walking access but excludes ATVs. Steve informed the group that walking allowances are made in many areas. Mike explained that there is a process. First, the compensation lands had to be secured and the habitat established. Next, scientists must examine the lands and identify areas that are too sensitive for public use. Lastly, areas appropriate for public use should be identified and made accessible. Mike commended Dave on the work he has done and encouraged him to keep up the good work. Further discussion is slated to take place regarding publicly accessible areas within the compensation lands.

4. DR-RAP Assistant Update

- a) Peche Island Day – Peche Island Day will not take place this fall due to a lack of boats and insufficient time to organize the event. Gina is hopeful that the DRCC can work with existing partners to come up with an alternative event in the spring, as there has been a lot of interest in Peche Island Day.
- b) DR-World Rivers Day Celebration – The DRCC is looking for volunteers to help with the DRCC tent at the DR-World River Day Celebration, as well as with the cleanup and event logistics. The event will take place on Saturday, September 24th, the day before World Rivers Day. The event is being run by the DRCC, the WPA and Windsor Adventure Inc. The public is invited to McKee Park to have lunch, learn about the river and the DRCC, and participate in the cleanup. Additionally, the recent redesignations of the Beach Closings and Degradation of Aesthetics BUIs will be announced and celebrated. After lunch, Windsor Adventure Inc. will talk about river recreation and attendees will be able to participate in kayak demonstrations.
- c) Detroit River Evening – The 2015-16 Detroit River Evening will take place on Wednesday, October 26th at GLIER, from 6:00-8:00 or 6:30-8:30. Gina will confirm the details once they are established. She will be able to dedicate more time to planning the Detroit River Evening after World Rivers Day.
- d) Annual Report – The annual report is in its final draft stages and will be distributed at the Detroit River Evening. It will also be available on the website.
- e) 2016/17 Outreach Projects – Gina reviewed the priorities that were identified at the EPI meeting in March: asset map, interactive model of the Detroit River, and signage at the Ojibway Nature Centre, and City of Windsor signage. The asset map will tell the story of three decades of progress, outline DR projects, and be made available online. The model will be a 3-D display that displays similar information as the asset map and can be used at outreach events. The signage at Ojibway will showcase the DR and

the DRCC would be able to provide input and guidance. The City of Windsor signage will be placed at the Lakeview Park Marina, across from Peche Island. Gina wanted to confirm that the priorities should remain the same. Pearl asked about the photos provided at an earlier EPI meeting, when the ideas were pitched to the EPI. Tom Preney (City of Windsor) and Danielle Breault-Steubing (ERCA) may have some of the photos. Carl asked if the Ojibway signage would be displayed in the public area at the Ojibway Nature Centre. Sarah said it would, and that it would include a large mural.

ACTION: Gina and/or Sarah will find the photos used to pitch the outreach projects at the EPI meeting in March, and Gina will re-share the photos with the group.

ACTION: Gina will provide an update at the next EPI/PAC meeting on the status of 2016/17 outreach projects.

5. Meeting Adjournment & Next Meeting

The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for December 7, 2016, from 4:30 p.m. to 6:40 p.m, location TBD. Riverdance Park in LaSalle was mentioned as a possible meeting place. Tom adjourned the meeting at 6:05.

Following the meeting, Derek mentioned that a review of the Environmental Bill of Rights is currently underway, and that it hasn't been reviewed since 1993, when it was enacted. The Environmental Commissioner of Ontario will be touring the province to talk about the review, and will be in Windsor on October 13th and 14th. A presentation will take place on October 13th and there will be meetings with environmental groups on October 14th. The CEA is in the process of setting up the itinerary and finalizing details. The presentation will likely take place at the Ojibway Nature Centre. Derek circulated postcards to be filled out and dropped off at the CEA for mailing. The messaging on the postcards urged for the strengthening of Ontario's Environmental Bill of Rights.

ACTION: Derek Coronado will provide details of the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario's visit to Windsor on October 13th and 14th, and Gina will distribute the information and include it in the October newsletter, if received in time. done

Mary invited everyone to attend the Detroit River US PAC meetings and offered to circulate the information.

ACTION: Mary Bohling will circulate the details of the next Detroit River US PAC meeting to the EPI/PAC.

Meeting record prepared by S. Baldo.

APPENDIX 1

Attendance

Tom Henderson PAC Chair
Caroline Biribauer EPI Co-Chair (*arrived at 4:41*)

Mary Bohling
Pearl Bradd
Derek Coronado
Rick Coronado
Gord Harding
Sandra Kok (teleconference – *joined at 4:37*)
Carl Maiolani
Naresh Pal Manku
Steve Marks
Patricia McGorman (*arrived at 5:17*)
Dave Munro
Andy Paul (*arrived at 5:37*)
Andy Paling
Dan St. Denis
Pete Thomas
Mike Walsh

Resources:

Sarah Baldo ERCA
Gina Pannunzio Acting RAP Coordinator