

Meeting Record

DRCC Public Advisory Council & EPI Work Group

Wednesday, April 18th 2017 – 4:30-6:30pm
Windsor Airport Conference Room, Windsor, ON

1. Welcome, introductions, approval of agenda

Tom called the meeting at 4:32pm with round table introductions (*see Meeting Attendance – Appendix A*). A motion to approve the agenda was made by Gord, seconded by Pearl and was approved by consensus.

2. Review of January 18, 2017 Meeting Record and Action Items

Tom reviewed the action items from the January 18th, 2017 meeting. Claire noted that all actions were completed.

ACTION ITEM: Gina to share all upcoming conferences regarding Great Lakes and AOCs with Alison Turner. Done.

ACTION ITEM: Claire to request prices from both Cineplex and Lakeshore Cinemas and determine date for film screening. Done.

ACTION ITEM: Claire and Gina to communicate with the EPI and PAC about film screening event details once finalized. Done.

3. DRCC Update since January 2017

Claire and Gina provided an update on RAP initiatives since January 2017. They noted that ECCC will continue monitoring Tree Swallows this spring/summer for the Bird and Animal Deformities and Reproductive Success BUI at four sites along the Detroit River where nest boxes are installed. Coastal wetlands along the river will be monitored again for water quality, vegetation, marsh birds and invertebrates to inform the Degradation of Fish and Wildlife Populations and Loss of Fish and Wildlife Habitat BUIs. The Canadian Wildlife Service has also installed automatic recording units (ARUs) in coastal wetlands to record frogs and secretive marsh birds.

Claire noted that the DRCC has completed a draft of the Restrictions on Dredging Activities assessment report, which she'll be presenting to the group shortly and it will be posting for public comment on the DRCC website. She also noted that a draft of the Degradation of Benthos assessment report has been completed, which is being reviewed by agency experts. She noted that the annual work plan is being completed and the Pathway to Delisting document will be updated and presented to the SIC and general public for the June Detroit River Evening.

4. Restrictions on Dredging Re-designation Report presentation

Claire presented the Restrictions on Dredging Re-designation report with a reminder of the re-designation and delisting process. The presentation is *Appendix B* of this meeting record.

Key Discussion Points

Councillor Hilary Payne asked about the status all of the beneficial use impairments, and what timelines the DRCC is looking at for completing all actions. Claire gave an overview of the RAP progress and the BUIs that have already been re-designated. She noted that we still have some challenging BUIs to address in the next 5-10 years, such as Degradation of Fish and Wildlife Populations, Loss of Fish and Wildlife Habitat and Restrictions on Fish Consumption. Claire stressed the importance of the PAC providing comments on assessments when there is an opportunity to do so and providing input to the RAP process.

Elaine Price asked whether the high water levels have been affecting dredging. Claire said she didn't know but could ask the Canadian Coast Guard. Pearl noted her concern that contaminants could be re-suspended into the water column during dredging. Claire said that in locations where they are dredging specifically to remove highly contaminated sediments, they do have equipment and methods to reduce re-suspension. In this case, because the contamination is so low, they likely aren't required to do this but she said she could ask whether any water quality monitoring takes place before and after a dredge cycle.

Derek Coronado noted that contaminated sediment from Canada is being disposed of in an American facility but the assessment is unilateral. He also noted that, while the report states that open water disposal is discouraged, it isn't completely restricted. Claire reiterated that open water disposal it is not an option for Detroit River sediment because it exceeds quality standards. However, the Canadian Coast Guard is looking at other options for beneficial re-use of the material in hopes that we can align some of their goals (the safe disposal of the dredged material) with the Habitat Work Group's goal of creating aquatic habitat. Claire noted that she'd keep the group informed about this as additional details arise.

ACTION ITEM: Claire will circulate the draft Restrictions on Dredging Assessment Report to the PAC for review and requested they provide their comments in writing by June 7 2017. As well, she will set up a page on the DRCC website with all relevant information for public comment and share through all communication networks.

5. PAC Update since January, 2017

Tom provided updates to the group on the following items.

a) US budget cuts to EPA/GLRI

Tom noted that the new Trump Administration initially proposed to reduce the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) budget from \$300 million to \$10 million. Since the original proposal, this has been adjusted to only a 30% cut. The budget is still waiting approval, with many Great Lakes states in opposition of the cuts. Tom said he sent a letter to Scott Pruitt, who is the incoming Administrator to the EPA, with copies to Prime Minister Trudeau, and US Senators Gary Peters and Debbie Stabenow. This letter is included as *Appendix C* in the meeting record.

Councillor Hilary Payne noted that, while the group should be concerned and vigilant, we should wait until the final budget is prepared as the current administration has shown wandering commitments thus far.

b) Ojibway Shores

Tom provided a brief update to the group, and confirmed that no recent action has taken place regarding the fate of the Ojibway Shores property. Derek also mentioned that the proponents

competing for the contract to build the Gordie Howe Bridge have to produce an overall community benefit component. He suggested that Ojibway Shores might be included as a community benefit component.

c) Bruce Nuclear Waste Disposal

Derek Coronado provided an update on the Bruce Nuclear disposal site. In 2015, the Joint Review Panel of the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency (CEAA) recommended proceeding with the OPG project proposal to have a disposal facility at their Bruce site for all of Ontario with the exception of spent nuclear fuel. The proposal suggested burying it 600+m underground and 1km away from the facility. In 2016, there were many questions from the new ECCC Minister who wanted OPG to provide additional information, and solicit public comments on the OPG response to the Minister's questions. The CEA and public considered the comments provided by OPG and found them to be lacking detail. As a result, there are 23 key issues that must be addressed by the OPG. Steve M. also noted there are endangered species issues with regard to the selected site.

6. EPI Project Update since January 2017

a) Twin Oaks clean up, Earth Day, Tranby Park (I. Naisbitt)

Ian Naisbitt provided an update to the group on the recent Little River cleanup with Caesars CodeGreen, the City of Windsor, Lil' Reg and the DRCC. He noted there were over 50 volunteers who collected 8 tonnes of debris from the area, and the event was covered by CTV Windsor, CBC and the Windsor Star.

Pete Thomas suggested developing a dumping prevention program to raise the issue to City Council. This could include raising the fines for illegal dumping and rewarding those who put in the tip. Other ideas included putting a city-owned dumpster at the barriers along Munich Court or a camera to catch some of the larger illegal dumps.

ACTION ITEM: Claire and Tom to draft a report for Hilary Payne to present to City Council regarding concern of illegal dumping at the new city park at Twin Oaks. The report should outline the issue and include a list of suggestions that the council can review to help support a decision.

Ian invited the PAC and EPI to participate in the DRCC/ERCA Earth Day event along the Little River. There will be 2,205 trees to plant, and the event is expected to host over 1,000 people. He also invited the group to participate in planting 200 trees at Tranby Park on May 6th 2017.

Update on outreach 2016/17 EPI Projects

Gina provided a brief update to the group regarding some of the new EPI projects that are being developed. The Asset Map/ ESRI Story Map is underway, and the DRCC is working with ERCA to figure out the software logistics with ERCA. Gina noted she reached out to the team that developed Michigan Sea Grant's 3D model of the Detroit River, and is waiting to hear pricing and timelines to potentially have one created. Ian suggested including Peche Island in the 3D model, and Pearl suggested asking the University of Windsor if they are able to also provide a model to compare pricing. Claire noted that the Ojibway Nature Centre is pulling together all of the pieces for their new displays. The Detroit River section will be assembled over the next couple of months.

7. New projects for 2017/18

Gina reminded the PAC and EPI of the DRCC Communications Plan while making connections to some of the projects that are on the go, such as the Degradation of Benthos re-designation process and some

upcoming events. Claire also presented the 2017/18 proposed DRCC budget to the Work Group. This presentation is included in *Appendix D* of this meeting record.

Some new items for the 2017/18 year include developing a 5 minute video with drone footage highlighting Detroit River projects. As well, Family Fishing Day will be hosted by the DRCC along with additional partners such as the Windsor Sportsmen's Club and the City of Windsor on July 8th 2017.

Key Discussion Points

Patricia McGorman suggested creating a video that highlights biodiversity within a tributary, to show the impacts/issues and what life is living there that needs protection. The messaging here can include stewardship and how the three sub-watersheds can impact the Detroit River. Elaine Price suggested getting in touch with the film studies classes with the school board to find out whether was can make this into a class project.

Several EPI members also expressed interest in trying to host Peche Island Day again this year. Claire noted the struggles we've had getting boats with enough capacity to assist but said she was still trying to contact charters to help.

Ian also suggested installing 'Keep Your River Clean' signs at the Twin Oaks site and others in sub-watersheds. Claire mentioned the double sided sign is about \$1,000 with help from the City of Windsor to install them. Andy mentioned that through previous conversations, locations have been identified in LaSalle.

ACTION ITEM: Andy to follow up with Claire and share information about potential 'Keep Your River Clean' sign locations on Turkey Creek.

ACTION ITEM: Claire to talk to Kate Arthur (ERCA) to find out if she's been able to check on the trees previously planted at Windsor Airport.

8. Next Meeting and Meeting Adjournment

Tom adjourned the meeting at 6:34pm and noted that the next meeting would likely be in the fall.

9. Upcoming Detroit River and Community Events

- Recycling Day at Devonshire Mall – April 22
- Earth Day – April 23, Malden Park and Little River site
- DRCC Steering and Implementation Committee Meeting teleconference – April 26
- Caesar's Windsor CodeGreen display – April 29
- Forest Ontario Planting – Tranby Park, May 6
- Eau Canada 150 – Canoeing events in 4 DR locations, Sunday June 4
- Detroit River Evening – Location TBD, Wednesday June 21
- Detroit River Family Fishing Day – Location TBD, tentatively July 8

Appendix A. – Attendance

Tom Henderson	PAC Chair
Ian Naisbitt	Little River Enhancement Group, PAC/EPI Chair
Gord Harding	PAC Co-Chair
Pete Thomas	Canadian Auto Workers (PAC/EPI)
Pearl Bradd	PAC/EPI
Councillor Hilary Payne	City of Windsor
Derek Coronado	Citizens Environmental Alliance (EPI/PAC)
Steve Marks	Essex County Field Naturalists' Club (EPI/PAC)
Naresh Manku	PAC/EPI
Patricia McGorman	PAC/EPI
Andy Paling	Essex County Field Naturalists' Club, Friends of Canard River, (EPI/PAC)
Daniel St. Dennis	Caesars Windsor, PAC/EPI
Elaine Price	PAC/EPI
Claire Sanders	DRCC
Gina Pannunzio	DRCC

Gina Pannunzio prepared this meeting record.