



Grand River Conservation Authority Minutes - General Membership Meeting

Date: August 23, 2024
Time: 9:30 am
Location: Hybrid Meeting
Members Present: Bruce Banbury, Christine Billings, Gino Caputo, John Challinor II, Brian Coleman, Doug Craig, Jim Erb, Susan Foxtton, Guy Gardhouse, Gord Greavette, Lisa Hern, Colleen James, Daniel Lawrence, Dave Miller, Sandy Shantz, Rob Shirton, Jerry Smith, Shawn Watters, Chris White, Kari Williams, Pam Wolf
Regrets: Ken Yee Chew, Kevin Davis, Mike Devine, Natasha Salonen, Alex Wilson
Staff: Samantha Lawson, Karen Armstrong, Beth Brown, Krista Bunn, Brandon Heyer, Murray Lister, Katelyn Lynch, Sonja Radoja, Lisa Stocco, Mark Anderson, Benjamin Cheng, Shari Dahmer, Cameron Irvine, Mitch Jewson, Megan Kitchen, Eowyn Spencer, Sonja Strynatka

1. Call to Order

C.White welcomed Members to the meeting and advised that Vice-Chair Susan Foxtton will be acting Chair for this meeting, as he is unable to attend in person today.

The Meeting was called to order by the Chair at 9:34 a.m.

2. Certification of Quorum

The Secretary-Treasurer certified quorum with more than half of the Members present. A total of 21 Members attended the meeting.

3. Chair's Remarks

The Chair welcomed the Members and made the following remarks:.

- The annual AMO conference was held in Ottawa earlier this week and was attended by many of our Board members on behalf of their respective municipalities.

4. Review of Agenda

24-119

Moved By Brian Coleman

Seconded By Rob Shirton

THAT the agenda for the General Membership Meeting be approved as circulated.

Carried

5. Declarations of Pecuniary Interest

There were no declarations of pecuniary interests made in relation to the matters to be dealt with.

6. Minutes of the Previous Meetings

24-120

Moved By Jim Erb

Seconded By Kari Williams

THAT the minutes of the General Membership Meeting of June 28, 2024 be approved as circulated.

7. Business Arising from Previous Minutes

The Chair provided an update on the delegation in June by Jerry Demianiw regarding his property and concerns with development constraints. In this instance, staff were able to complete further review, and using information from the landowner, the development constraints can now be refined. Staff will continue to work with the landowner on any future proposals.

8. Hearing of Delegations

8.a Susan Watson - Re: Agenda items 12a (By-law) and 12e (Acquisition and Disposition Policies)

- Susan Watson addressed the Board to share concerns regarding the proposed changes to the Administrative By-law with respect to the time limits for delegations, in particular noting that shortening the length of time for all delegations to a total of ten minutes will hinder public input on matters of concern.
 - K.Armstrong clarified that the current practice is to provide ten minutes per speaker, and the proposed change is to permit five minutes per speaker, and ten minutes per group of three or more. There is no total time limit for all delegations.
 - There was brief discussion regarding the wording, and it was confirmed that the item is listed later in the agenda for discussion.
- Susan Watson also addressed the Board with concerns regarding the Land Disposition and Acquisition Policies as proposed on this agenda. The delegation noted that it seems there has not been sufficient consideration of conservation of green spaces, natural habitats, public input, and original sources of funding received for the purchase of any lands to be considered as surplus to the needs of the conservation authority.
 - Staff confirmed there is a report later in the agenda and requested that discussion be held until the staff report on the policies has been considered.
- The Chair thanked the delegation, who then exited the meeting.

8.b Phil Pothen - Re: 12e (Acquisition and Disposition Policies)

Phil Pothen was absent during the call for delegations and the Chair permitted his speaking time to be occur during the Reports portion of the meeting.

9. Presentations

There were no Presentations.

10. Correspondence

10.a Kim Charlesworth - Land Inventory (June meeting)

10.b Fraser Gibson - Land Inventory (June report)

10.c Kai Reimer-Watts - Land Inventory (June report)

10.d Halton Region - 2025 Budget Direction

10.e Bryan Duross - Degradation of a navigable waterway and destruction of sport fishery (Report, and GRCA response with past staff report)

- P.Wolf provided some input on this correspondence item, noting that the person who wrote the correspondence felt there was no discussion related to the long-term impacts of closing off the sluice gates at Parkhill dam.
- Board members discussed the correspondence and K.Lynch responded to questions on behalf of staff, noting the following:
 - Two factors impact the sediment buildup above Parkhill dam: upstream sediment supply, and closing the low-level sluice ways which would have removed the pathway for sediment to travel downstream.

- The decision was made to close the sluices as part of a jury recommendation following an inquest into two deaths at Parkhill dam in the interest of public safety.
- Parkhill is a run-of-the-river dam with historic mill uses and is no longer used for that purpose. As it is not used for flood control or ice mitigation, sediment build-up is not a risk to the function of the dam.
- The Board directed staff to bring a report back to a future meeting that provides information on the sediment buildup at Parkhill, and to identify the GRCA's role in such matters.

10.f Liz - Enhancing River Safety Awareness & Signage

- D.Miller inquired about the concerns raised in the correspondence items related to river safety and asked that staff speak to the roles and responsibilities of river safety.
- K.Lynch provided the following information:
 - Transport Canada issues approvals for works such as dams or booms on navigable waterways. Dam owners are responsible for infrastructure in the water and are required to comply with legal requirements for signage, booms and buoys for Transport Canada approval. The GRCA is not responsible for reviewing, approving, or permitting dam and dike-related signage on non-GRCA properties.
 - Education on water safety is a very important aspect of the GRCA's environmental education program. Staff provide educational resources on dam hazards and water safety at events and to school groups on an ongoing basis. Information is also shared regularly through social media.
 - There was a suggestion to consider adding QR codes linked to river conditions at access points along the Grand River. A high number of access points are not owned or operated by the GRCA, which restricts the GRCA's ability to provide any signage at those locations.
 - Members of the public and local outfitters are encouraged to sign up on the GRCA website to receive flood messages which include information about water levels.
- D.Miller suggested that staff could reach out to local outfitters to ensure they are aware that they can sign up to receive these notifications.
- The Board directed staff to bring a report back to a future meeting related to options for supporting improved safety for recreational activities on the river.

10.g Carol Thorman - Enhancing River Safety Awareness & Signage

10.h Amy Haertel (Letter, photos, email, and GRCA response) - Enhancing River Safety & Signage

10.i Alex Latta - Land Inventory (June report)

10.j Bryan Duross - Additional information submitted following GRCA response (see agenda item 10e)

24-121

Moved By Daniel Lawrence

Seconded By John Challinor II

THAT Correspondence from Kim Charlesworth, Fraser Gibson, Kai Reimer-Watts, and Alex Latta regarding the Conservation Land Inventory, and from Halton Region regarding the 2025 budget direction, and from Bryan Duross regarding his report on the Grand River above Parkhill Dam, and from Liz (surname unknown), Amy Haertel, and Carol Thorman regarding enhancing river safety and signage be received as information.

Carried

11. 1st and 2nd Reading of By-Laws

See agenda item 12a.

12. Reports:

12.a GM-08-24-67 - GRCA Administrative By-law Update

- K.Armstrong noted the proposed changes related to delegation speaking times, and confirmed that the intent of the proposed change is to allow each individual delegation five minutes to speak and/or present, and to permit registered groups of three or more individuals to a maximum of ten minutes.
- There was some discussion amongst the Board with respect to the allotted time permitted to delegations, and there was consensus that five minutes is a sufficient amount of time to present a point in relation to agenda items.
- There was further discussion that the language in the by-law can be clarified to ensure the speaking times are clear.
- It was also noted that additional speaking times, or any other changes related to delegate presentations, can be amended by the Chair with consent from the Board. The change to the limitation is to ensure all delegations can address the Board as requested, and to be respectful of the length of meetings.
- K.Armstrong identified that guidance on the number of Vice-Chairs is required. The second vice-chair position was eliminated by the Board in 2013, however, in 2018 when the by-law was significantly amended, the language was updated to allow a second vice-chair to be elected if the Board chose to do so.
- There was some discussion, and it was noted that the second vice-chair position was initially eliminated due to the decreased governance support required for a smaller number of committees, and to save honorarium expenses. There was general agreement to reduce the number of vice-chairs back to one, with the change to be implemented for the next election of officers (January 2025).
- K.Armstrong confirmed that the direction to staff is to reduce the permitted speaking time for delegations, to clarify the wording in the delegation section of the by-law, and to remove references to a second vice-chair.

21-123

Moved By Brian Coleman

Seconded By John Challinor II

THAT By-law 2-2024 be read a first and second time;

AND THAT staff be directed to make amendments based on discussion at the meeting.

Carried

12.b GM-08-24-71 - Cash and Investment Status

24-124

Moved By Jerry Smith

Seconded By Shawn Watters

THAT Report Number GM-08-24-71 – Cash and Investment Status – July 2024 be received as information.

Carried

Delegation 8.b Phil Pothen - Re: 12e (Acquisition and Disposition Policies)

- Phil Pothen was absent during the call for delegations and the Chair permitted his speaking time to be moved.
- Phil Pothen joined the meeting to speak to the Board about concerns with the Land Acquisition and Disposition Policies. Mr.Pothen identified himself as legal counsel for environmental defence, and noted concerns with how the policies comply with relevant legislation. Mr.Pothen asked that the Board consider retaining legal counsel to complete a line-by-line review of the policies, and to address his concern about what can be declared as surplus, and where that information is mandated.

- The Chair thanked the delegation and reiterated that discussion will be held until the staff report is considered. Mr.Pothen exited the meeting.

12.c GM-08-24-72 - Financial Summary

There were no comments or questions regarding this item.

24-125

Moved By John Challinor II

Seconded By Bruce Banbury

THAT the Financial Summary for the period ending July 31, 2024 be approved.

Carried

12.d GM-08-24-65 - Quarterly Permits issued under Ontario Regulation 41/24

There were no comments or questions regarding this item.

24-126

Moved By Brian Coleman

Seconded By Gord Greavette

THAT Report Number GM-08-24-65 – Permits Issued under Ontario Regulation 41/24 be received as information.

Carried

12.e GM-08-24-70 - Land Acquisition and Disposition Policies

- S.Lawson discussed the draft policies and provided further detail on each, noting the following:
 - The Land Acquisition and Disposition Policies are regulatory deliverables under O.Reg. 686/21. Many other conservation authorities have also completed their policies in accordance with the regulation.
 - The Land Disposition Policy is new, and incorporates current practice in accordance with regulatory requirements, changes to the regulation, as well as provincial guidelines. The Acquisition Policy was approved in 2003 and has been updated also to ensure compliance with current regulations.
- Board members asked questions regarding the responsibility for wildlife and species at risk on certain properties and if that consideration falls within GRCA jurisdiction, and sources of funding received to purchase properties under section 39 of the Conservation Authorities Act.
- S.Lawson responded to questions, noting that GRCA's considers provincial interests such as wetlands, forests, and some areas of natural and scientific interests (ANSI). In terms of funding sources, when section 39 lands are disposed of, the revenue is required to be allocated to the Land Sale Reserve which is controlled by the province. No portion of sales can be earmarked for a specific municipality, as the Land Sale Reserve has specific purposes for which it can be accessed for use across the watershed. However, if there is required flood related maintenance specific to one municipality, the GRCA may be required to impose a special levy, which could be alleviated by provincial permission to use this reserve fund.
- P.Wolf added that may wish to consider the delegation's request to seek legal review of the policy.
- In response to a question from D.Miller, S.Lawson confirmed there is a requirement to review the policy in five years.

24-127

Moved By Pam Wolf

Seconded By Christine Billings

THAT approval of the Land Acquisition and Land Disposition Policies be deferred.

Defeated

C.Billings requested that the recommendation be considered as separate motions, and the Chair agreed to the request seeing no concerns from other Board members.

24-128

Moved By John Challinor II

Seconded By Rob Shirton

THAT the Grand River Conservation Authority approve the Land Acquisition Policy.

Carried

24-129

Moved By John Challinor II

Seconded By Rob Shirton

THAT the Grand River Conservation Authority approve the Land Disposition Policy.

Carried, 4 opposed

12.f GM-08-24-66 - Draft Conservation Areas Strategy

- Megan Kitchen provided a presentation on the draft Conservation Areas Strategy, which is being developed as part of the requirements under Ontario Regulation 686/21.
- The presentation included an overview of the development of the strategy and highlighted its intended purpose.
- The strategy provides a framework to help guide decision-making and direct programs and resources with respect to GRCA-owned lands and provides future direction and actions to meet the objectives of the strategy.
- This draft strategy will be open for public comments until October 4. Staff will distribute notification letters to watershed municipalities and Indigenous Band Councils, and two information sessions will be held virtually in September. Registration information is available on the GRCA website.
- The Chair thanked staff for the presentation, and there were no questions or comments.

24-130

Moved By Jerry Smith

Seconded By Pam Wolf

THAT Report Number GM-08-24-66 – Draft Conservation Areas Strategy be received as information;

AND THAT the Grand River Conservation Authority direct staff to undertake public consultation on the draft Strategy;

AND THAT the Grand River Conservation Authority send a letter to participating municipalities, Six Nations of the Grand River, and the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation to advise them of the consultation period for the draft Strategy.

Carried

12.g GM-08-24-69 - City of Guelph Well Monitoring Agreement

There were no comments or questions regarding this item.

24-131

Moved By Brian Coleman

Seconded By Christine Billings

THAT the Grand River Conservation Authority enters into an agreement with the City of Guelph for the construction, operation, and maintenance of monitoring well(s) located on PIN(s) 711790199 and 711790004 within the Township of Guelph/Eramosa, County of Wellington.

Carried

B.Coleman exited the meeting at 11:10 a.m.

12.h GM-08-24-68 - July 2024 Flood Event

- K.Lynch provided a presentation on the July 2024 flood event, and thanked V.Taleban and flood operations staff for putting the presentation together.
- The presentation highlighted various aspects of the flood event that spanned several days in mid-July and provided a visual overview of the several storm cells that carried precipitation across the watershed. The initial rains were remnants of Hurricane Beryl, which were quickly followed by active cellular thunderstorms and resulted in a significant amount of rainfall in a short period of time.
- Throughout the event, from July 9 to July 16, the GRCA issued 6 flood messages.
- Board members thanked staff for the presentation and inquired about reservoirs in the Ayr and Paris areas, and commented on the unusual amount of rain, climate change, and climate resilience in storm surges.
- K.Lynch responded to questions, noting that the possibility of reservoirs throughout the Grand River watershed has been assessed, and reservoirs around Paris/Ayr for flood mitigation are currently not under consideration. It was also noted that flood reservoirs have an operational rule curve in relation to storage and release of precipitation, and modelling of various scenarios can demonstrate the capacity of the flood storage at major reservoirs.
- S.Lawson added that GRCA systems and procedures can mitigate flooding but do not prevent it, and reservoirs and dams are managed to help augment flows as needed. The Reservoir Operations Policy has been in review as part of the regulatory deliverables and will be coming to a future Board meeting for review and approval.

24-132

Moved By Sandy Shantz

Seconded By Bruce Banbury

THAT Report Number GM-08-24-68 – July 2024 Flood Event be received as information.

Carried

12.i GM-08-24-73 - Current Watershed Conditions

There were no comments or questions regarding this item.

24-133

Moved By Gord Greavette

Seconded By John Challinor II

THAT Report Number GM-08-24-73 – Current Watershed Conditions as of August 13, 2024 be received as information.

Carried

13. Committee of the Whole

Not required.

14. General Business

There was no General Business.

15. 3rd Reading of By-Laws

None.

16. Other Business

None.

17. Closed Meeting

The Chair asked if any Board members had questions regarding the minutes of the previous closed session. Seeing that there were none, the Board continued in open session.

17.a Minutes of the previous closed session

24-134

Moved By John Challinor II

Seconded By Doug Craig

THAT the Minutes of the previous closed session be approved as circulated.

Carried

18. Next Meeting - September 27, 2024 at 9:30 a.m.

19. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

24-135

Moved By Christine Billings

Seconded By Guy Gardhouse

THAT the General Membership Meeting be adjourned.

Carried

Chair

Secretary-Treasurer