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**MUSKRAT WATERSHED COUNCIL (MWC)**

Meeting of the Board of Directors

**Meeting Minutes**

**Thursday, May 23, 2023, 6:30 p.m.**

**In person: Basement of the Whitewater Township Building, 44 Main Street, Cobden ON**

**Online through Google Meet**

meet.google.com/ezd-qitc-btk

**+1 587-978-1050 (PIN 460326449)**

1. **Welcome and Call to Order**

The meeting of the Muskrat Watershed Council was called to order at 6:35 p.m.

1. **Introductions and Record of Attendance**

**Attendance:**

**Present:**  Karen Coulas, Yuanbo Gan, Barbara Green, Debbie Macdonald, Jeff Reeves, Gerry Rook, Evelyn St. Amour, Greg Stasyna, Dave Thomassin, Claus Trost, Amanda Walt

**Regrets:**  Rick Adamson, Alex Benzie, Anna-Maria Blum, Rene Coulas, Andy Laird, Mckenzie Mitchell, Elliott Stevens, Michael Walt

**Council Representative Regrets:**

Connie Tabbert, Township of Laurentian Valley

Chris Olmstead, Township of Whitewater Region

1. **Meeting Rules** - Karen
2. Meeting **roles discussion- Karen**

Note taker: Amanda

Timekeeper: Debbie

1. **Adoption of Agenda**

Claus approved the agenda, Dave seconded it.

1. **Approval of minutes from April 18, 2024 meeting:**

Debbie approved the minutes, Jeff seconded.

Debbie will keep a record of people who contact MWC through our info@muskratwatershedcouncil.com email address who might be interested in volunteering for planting projects.

1. **Treasurer’s Report- Debbie**

See attached treasurer’s report.

Paypal selected MWC to receive a $255 PayPal Giving Grant, which has been deposited into our Scotiabank business chequing account.

Baker Tilley (our accountant and tax firm) needs to know when our AGM will be held so they can determine the date to have our financial review completed.

Debbie has renewed our Wix account - we’ve been offered a discount for a two-year subscription. Without it, we have no website. Total cost is $692.13. Debbie asked permission to take this amount out of our BMO Bingo account. Claus said to go ahead and do this.

Debbie was not able to attend the rescheduled Invasive Phragmites Control Fund virtual Info Session hosted by the Invasive Species Centre (ISC), but will review the recorded version when available. This session was advertised through the Federation of Ontario Cottagers’ Associations (FOCA).

SBCNA Bingo

A $56.16 iGaming Funds Distribution amount (our share of the online Bingo proceeds) was deposited into our BMO SBCNA Charity Gaming Business Account but will be transferred into our Scotiabank account since iGaming funds are not part of our regular Bingo shares and are considered separate monies. Going forward these funds will be deposited directly into our Scotia business account every six months.

Bingo Volunteer dates for the next months (from 3:30 to 5:30):

June 16, 2024: Debbie and Evelyn

July 14, 2024: Debbie and Barb

August 11, 2024: Debbie and ?

September 8, 2024: Barb & ?

1. **Directors’ Reports**

**Agricultural Committee - Karen**

We are looking at a few possible projects for next fall.

**Science Committee - Dave/Karen/Debbie**

Shoreline naturalization - Dave/Karen

We are still looking for suitable properties for tree planting. We are aiming to find eight properties but could go ahead with the project if we can find four. If we don’t find at least four properties by the end of June we’ll need to cancel the tree planting project for this year. Dave will send Karen a point form list of what he’d like to post on Facebook, asking for landowners interested in shoreline naturalization. Karen will approve this and forward it to Amanda and Barb, who will write it up for posting.The planting will be mostly shrubs, with some trees. Jeff has a neighbour who might be interested.

Tree Planting - Karen/Dave

Karen said this spring MWC used a professional tree planter to replant 4,000 plants on previously-planted properties. On one side of a ditch many previously-planted shrubs died because the farmer plowed too close. This time we planted closer to the edge of the ditch. Two properties planted last spring did quite well. Sawdust worked quite well around the base of the plants.

Dave mentioned Love Your Lake has micro grants of about $500 available to cover small costs - the deadline to apply is June 3, 2024. Debbie will look into this to see if we will be have time to apply.

Invasive grant - Dave/Debbie

The deadline to apply for this grant from Invasive Phragmites Control Fund through the Invasive Species Centre (ISC) is Thursday May 30th. We would use the grant to map Invasive Phragmites (European Common Reed), and pinpoint where it has appeared and plan for its removal. It is an invasive plant causing damage to Ontario’s biodiversity, wetlands and beaches. Invasive Phragmites is a perennial grass that has been damaging ecosystems in Ontario for decades. It is not clear how it was transported to North America from its native home in Eurasia. Dave moved that we set up a steering committee consisting of Dave, Karen and Debbie to apply for the grant. Claus approved the motion, Gerry seconded it and the motion passed. Claus suggested we talk to the county weed inspector.

Water Sampling - Dave

Last year we did water sampling in Mink Lake, Muskrat Lake, Olmstead-Jeffrey Lake and Lake Dore. This year, we could create a water sampling committee. The public could get involved. Amanda will put a call out for interested volunteers. A trained MWC volunteer would need to be present if the general public is involved in water sampling. Amanda will send Dave an email to let people know about the testing, which will take place once a month. Yuanbo Gan, Gerry Rook and Amanda all indicated interest in water testing. A two-hour training session would be needed.

Algonquin Projects - Dave

Dave still needs some early fall projects for his students. Fish habitat bundles are a possibility. Watersheds Canada could partner with us, possibly in Mink Lake. We would need a pontoon boat. Debbie described the bundles placed in Olmstead-Jeffrey Lake, which were tied with Polyethylene rope and attached to cement blocks.

Volunteer of the Year - Dave

Barb Green is our 2024 volunteer of the year.

Dave mentioned MWC might want to look into the Province of Ontario Volunteer Service Awards to honour volunteers who have served 10 years with MWC.

**Communications & Media - Amanda**

Article on cold water safety

Amanda thanked Jeff for sending her an article on cold water safety, which she has posted.

 Aerators

 The aerators at Cobden Beach will be installed next weekend.

 AGM newsletter

 Amanda needs help with content for our annual newsletter. Please send her article suggestions in point form or rough draft and she and Barb will write them up and polish them.

**Fundraising Committee Update - Karen/Dave**

Canada Summer Jobs

We heard back that we were not successful in obtaining this grant for the second year in a row. We received a rejection email stating that due to a high volume of applicants and limited funding, not all projects can be funded.

1. **Old Business**

Pembroke Community Expo Update - Debbie and Barb

Debbie and Barb represented MWC at this annual event, which was quite well attended. Despite some logistical problems getting our lattice panels up the small elevator to the second level where our display area was located, many people stopped by our booth. Most were especially interested in the map of the watershed. Maybe we could include a map on one of our handouts? Or perhaps we could create a webmap (an interactive display of geographic information that you can use to tell stories and answer questions) or place a QR code on our existing map? Dave mentioned our map is based on a pdf from 2014. Maybe we could make a more precise and up-to-date map? This could be a future project.

Gift Basket - Karen

Karen put together a beautiful gift basket, required for MWC’s participation in the Pembroke Community Expo. It contained reusable bamboo cutlery, reusable bags to replace plastic ziplock bags, a hand towel, a donation of honey from Farmer’s Daughter and work gloves and a hat donated by Huckabone’s Garage. The basket was worth about $120.

Turtle Boxes at meeting for pickup - Karen

Turtle boxes and bat boxes are available for pickup tonight. If others want one, Dave can get more.

Beach billboard - Claus

Claus got the map but we needed the logo and the sign completed. Dave did this during the meeting and the sign is now at the printer.

1. **Other/New Business**

Trillium Seed Grant - Karen

The deadline to apply for this grant is June 26, 2024. We would not find out if we were successful until December 2024. There are several funding opportunities involving various invasive species. The grant would provide up to $100,000. We could hire an intern to work on it over the winter.

10 Year Anniversary MWC - Karen

Saturday, August 17, 2024 is the proposed date for our 10th anniversary AGM. We could hold the meeting from 9 a.m. -12 p.m. or 10 a.m. - 1p.m. Karen and Greg will check with the Cobden Legion to book the hall and to see if the Legion’s fundraising BBQ could run later if we choose later end time.

Several guest speakers were suggested: a FOCA presentation on cottage succession; a speaker from the Ottawa Riverkeeper; a speaker on invasive species; the Chief Building Officer of the Township of Whitewater Region on regulations concerning waterfront building and the making of beaches along shorelines. We may also ask local politicians to say a few words. We will send out invitations in July. We will discuss refreshments at our June meeting. Please bring your ideas about how we can mark our 10th anniversary to our June meeting.

1. **Next Meeting**

Thursday, June 20, 2024, 6:30 p.m.

**In person: Basement of the Whitewater Township Building, 44 Main Street, Cobden**

**Online: Through Google Meet**

meet.google.com/ezd-qitc-btk

**+1 587-978-1050 (PIN 460326449)**

1. Adjournment: 8:00 p.m.

**Minutes recorded and submitted by:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 Barbara Green, Secretary, Muskrat Watershed Council

**Approved by:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 Karen Coulas, Chair, Muskrat Watershed Council

DON’T FORGET TO RENEW YOUR MWC MEMBERSHIP FOR 2024!

COST IS $20 PER MEMBERSHIP

IT’S EASY TO RENEW - JUST SEND AN E-TRANSFER TO:

treasurer@muskratwatershedcouncil.com

(Please put your name and email address in the message box so we can email your tax receipt.)

