

SAMUEL WILMOT NATURE AREA MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

TUESDAY NOVEMBER 9th, 2021, 7:00 P.M.

Via Microsoft Teams

Welcome

Attendance: Brian Reid, Leo Blindenbach, Tom Hossie, Megan Vandenberg, Kate Potter, Rod McArthur, Ken Mercer (staff), Patrick Bothwell

Regrets: Corinna Traill, Carrie-Anne Atkins

Additions to the Agenda – signage warning of bridge surfaces being wet; emptying of fishing line receptacles; removal of silt fencing; update re storm drainage pond;

Acceptance of the Agenda (as amended): Moved by Megan, seconded by Patrick that the agenda as amended be accepted. CARRIED:

Minutes of meeting of October 19th, 2021: moved by Leo, seconded by Rod that the minutes of the SWNAMAC meeting of October 19th, 2021, be approved. CARRIED.

Status Reports/Updates:

Fall Cleanup – November 6th: Kate advised that the event was a big success with 30 people joining committee members in the effort to cleanup the SWNA and adjacent areas. Not only was the turnout encouraging, but most participants commented on generally how clean the nature area was. By the time of this evening's meeting, the municipality had removed all debris, bags etc from the cleanup.

Butternut Tree Planting – Ken advised that there were no developments to this point

South Lookout – The tender has closed and the successful bid was awarded. Some additional funds had to be added to the budget for this project . It is still unclear if the project will be undertaken this fall. If not, it will be given high

priority for an early start in the spring. Brian requested that the interpretative sign presently on the platform be removed and stored to avoid loss or damage.

Storm Drainage pond – status report - Ken . No new developments to report. The matter is now being addressed with the developer by representatives of the municipality.

Note: since this meeting was held, Leo received a response from engineering that basically repeated what we already know: that the developer did not get the required permits. The committee believes the municipality should be more aggressive in directing the developer to live up to its obligations. Local residents and users are complaining about the appearance of the area and the lack of effort to address the matter.

Fall mowing of wildflower areas: as per our last meeting, mowing of the area along the waterfront in the Port will be done after freeze up. The new wildflower meadow on the Cobbledick side will be undertaken in the spring.

Winter Trail Maintenance: Ken advised that this will be done again this year as it was last year. Committee members again enquired about whether or not salt would be used in the process since salt is harmful to plant life and the larger ecosystem. Ken will investigate further but suspects that some blend of salt and sand is normally used.

Membership – Brian advised that he has had two positive and useful conversations with Municipal Clerk June Gallagher since our last meeting about how our committee can have greater input into the appointment process. Following those discussions, the wording in the advertisement for the position on the municipal website has been modified to more accurately reflect what the committee does and what skills etc are required. In addition, the email address of the Chair has been added to the advertisement encouraging potential candidates to contact the chair to discuss the position in more detail. Brian noted that he had already received one such contact. An advertisement has already been placed in the local paper and the committee has distributed the notice of vacancies through its social media outlets. It will probably be January before we know the results of the process.

Acknowledgment of Committee member: Brian advised the committee that one of its members, Leo Blindenbach, had recently been awarded The Ontario Seniors Achievement Award by the province of Ontario. This award is given to those seniors who have contributed to their communities in a variety of ways. It was noted that only 15 such awards were given out for the entire province. The committee congratulated Leo for this well-deserved award.

Other Business: Slippery Bridges - Leo reported that the surface of the bridges within SWNA, particularly the newer metal one, can be very slippery when wet. This is compounded at this time of year by the amount of leaves that fall on to the surface. Some injuries have been reported by cyclists. Ken will install warning signs.

Fishing Line receptacles – Brian and Leo reported that they had emptied the 5 receptacles the day before the current meeting. Considerable material was removed which otherwise could have been left on the trails, beach and shorelines of the creek. It is encouraging to see that the receptacles are being well used.

Silt fencing: Leo and Brian noted that the black silt erosion “ fencing “ used when the waterfront trail was paved remains in place. It is unsightly, has largely collapsed and no longer appears to serve any useful purpose. Ken was asked when and if this can be removed . He will investigate if there is some type of holdback requiring it to remain. It was noted that it cannot be removed by volunteers since there is a considerable amount of it and it is now well embedded in the soil.

Greenbelt extension – Brian noted that a recent article in the newspaper indicated that the province was considering a number of additions to the greenbelt, including additions to the Wilmot Creek watershed. Although we suspect this will be considerably north of the Nature Area, the committee would appreciate notification of any specific information as it arises.

Next meeting: after some discussion, it was agreed that we would not meet in December unless some matter arises requiring our attention. Communications until our next meeting can be done by email.

Next meeting will take place on Tuesday January 11th at 7:00 p.m.

Round Table:

Kate – the family has used the Nature Area as a backdrop for many family photos. Kate expressed concern about the number of users not adhering to the requirement to keep their dogs on a leash

Megan – noted the number of positive comments she has heard from users about the cleanup and the generally clean nature of the SWNA

Tom – was happy to see the large turnout for the cleanup, particularly from those with young families who are helping their children acquire a positive environmental ethic. He too was happy to see the amount of use that the fishing line receptacles are receiving. He commented on the amount of erosion of the banks below the waterfront strip along Lakeshore Drive.

Patrick – his work has taken him away from home for several weeks. But he is looking forward to returning and resuming his active participation in our events etc.

Rod – commented on the discussion at our last meeting about the lack of advertising about SWNA in municipal publications noting that there are really only two public access to the waterfront in this area. Having said that, perhaps we do not want to attract large crowds to a sensitive zone .

Rod asked Ken about garbage pickup during the winter months. Ken responded that some barrels would likely be removed since they could not be accessed by municipal vehicles during the winter. Rod and Megan suggested that those by the beach should remain during the winter months because of high usage. Rod offered to empty them. He and Ken will discuss further.

Brian – happy to see how many people are using the nature area on a regular basis, and was encouraged by the turnout at the cleanup event . He thanked all members for their work this past year.

Leo – advised that he has connected with a scouting group that has offered to construct additional birdhouses to replace/supplement our current inventory. Brian will forward the appropriate plans.

Adjournment: moved by Leo , seconded by Patrick that the meeting be adjourned. CARRIED.