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**MUSKRAT WATERSHED COUNCIL (MWC)**

Meeting of the Board of Directors

**Meeting Minutes**

**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)

**Thursday, October 20, 2022, 6:30 p.m.**

1. **Call to Order and Record of Attendance**

The meeting of the Muskrat Watershed Council was called to order at 6:40 p.m.

**Attendance:**

**Present:**  Karen Coulas, Rene Coulas, Barbara Green, Debbie MacDonald, Jeff Reeves, Evelyn St. Amour, Dave Thomassin, Amanda Walt, Michael Walt, Anna Maria Blum, Andy Laird, Greg Stasyna, Jim Butterworth

**Regrets:**  Andrea Bishop, Gerry Rook

**Council Representative Present:**

Claus Trost, Township of Laurentian Valley Township

Mike Moore, Township of Whitewater Region

1. **Adoption of Agenda**

Debbie approved the agenda, Jeff seconded it.

**Presentation by Kristi Beatty**, program coordinator for the environmental technician program at Algonquin College Pembroke:

No presentation was available tonight.

**Approval of minutes from September 22 2022 meeting:**

Dave approved the minutes, Mike seconded.

1. **Treasurer’s Report- Debbie**

See attached treasurer’s report.

SBCNA Bingo:

Our next volunteer date is Sunday, November 6, 2022 from 3:30 to 5:30 p.m. Debbie is looking for a volunteer. She will send new MWC volunteers an email about getting trained to become SBCNA volunteers. Amanda said she was interested in receiving this information. Debbie will order a MWC golf shirt for Amanda.

Beach mats:

 The bill for the beach mats has been paid.

Email address for sending membership renewal e-transfers:

 Use treasurer@muskrat watershedcouncil.com

1. **Directors’ Reports**

**Agricultural Committee Update – Rene & Karen**

Jeffrey Lake/Pumphouse Lake Update:

Rene said the watering system has been received. Rene talked to the cattle owner. They have decided not to install the system this fall because freeze up is coming soon. The system will be stored at Rene and Karen’s farm over the winter. All parts are there except the switch which Rene will pick up soon. In spring they will install the system and maybe do more fencing, if we get more grant money. Michael volunteered to help if needed but Rene said the farmer will be asked to help. In his experience, farmers appreciate it more and take more ownership if they do some of the work themselves.

 Tree Planting in collaboration with Watersheds Canada:

Karen said we are still checking on properties for this mechanical tree planting project to take place in the spring.

**Science Committee Update - Dave, Rene, Michael**

Algonquin College:

Algonquin College will be starting water testing again. Brenda Slonka, Algonquin College’s new head of the office of applied research, will try to put MWC back on the list for student projects. We will be getting an invitation soon to make a presentation at Algonquin College. For the past three weeks, Algonquin students have been doing soil contaminant, species at risk and other assessments in the Cobden Marsh.

Cobden Marsh:

Karen said the grant for the berm will cover some studies but some work will also get done. In 2017 there was a study done. This previous work will reduce costs. Dave will meet with Ivan Burton, the township’s Chief Administrative Officer, to discuss this in a few weeks. Karen would also like to attend that meeting. Dave noted that he will be working full time from home in the future so he will be more available.

Beach Update:

Rene met with Michael to discuss our aeration system, which isn’t working ideally. Michael mentioned a Canadian company called Canada Pond Pro

that uses compressor piston compressors, which are better and cheaper than the ones from Weeds B Gone that we currently use. Our compressors are over pressurized. We can downsize the power and improve the efficiency for less money than we pay now. Michael, Rene and Andy will meet at the beach at 9 a.m. on Sunday, October 23. They may pull out one of the aerators to examine it.

Rene said we need to take a serious look at this new system. The Weeds B Gone aerators cost too much and require too much maintenance.

Michael also mentioned a Canadian-made burlap product that is very effective at suppressing Eurasian milfoil, an invasive species that has been confirmed to be in Muskrat Lake. The burlap is weighted down at the bottom of the beach area and does a good job of permanently suppressing milfoil. Since Eurasian milfoil is an invasive species, there are grants available to help get rid of it, so we could look for a grant. Mike and Rene will do some research on the company that produces the burlap and will report back at a future meeting. Claus said we should share any information we gather with other lakes in the watershed. Karen will write a blog about milfoil. Dave and others will send her background information. Amanda will send out the blog.

Independent Laboratory Water Testing:

Dave sent an email to two Ottawa water testing labs. Amanda volunteered to take samples to the lab as required since the lab is near their home. Karen noted that if the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNR) and Algonquin College resume water testing, we won’t have to arrange for independent laboratory testing. In any case, testing wouldn’t happen until spring. Dave said the college did offer do some testing but they aren’t an accredited lab. He mentioned that a local realtor would like us to post our own water testing results on our website. If we did this we would need a disclaimer to say our testing was not done by an accredited lab.

Boat Cleaning Station:

Dave will research the idea of having a boat cleaning station at the Cobden boat launch, to prevent invasive species from entering the lake. We will discuss this idea at a future meeting and possibly bring it up with township council. Michael said boats entering the lake need to be washed with hot water, which gets rid of the invasive species.

**Communications & Media - Amanda and Karen**

Tracking membership:

Amanda said we now have 218 members - one new membership came in last month.

Media Updates:

Amanda thanked all who participated in the clean up of the Cobden Marsh trail last Sunday. She has posted photos on our Facebook page and will also put them on our website.

We will need to upgrade our website subscription to premium in order to get all our information out there.

We are trying to limit use of our gmail account because we have two accounts and it is less confusing to have only one. This will not affect the gmail accounts used by directors. Amanda has placed an auto reply on the gmail account directing messages to our info@muskratwatershedcoucil.ca account.

Amanda will be posting a blog next week.

She will clean up our public information on the Whitewater Township website and will add information about our projects, such as the Great Lakes Local Action Fund (GLLAF) project.

She will also update our MWC pamphlet.

**Fundraising - Karen**

No update

1. **Old Business**

No old business

1. **Other/New Business**

Bylaw Discussion - Karen

We have created a committee to look at bylaws that would make an environmental difference for new builds. An example would be requiring that some trees and plants that are removed during construction be replaced and maintained after the new building is complete.

To provide background, Claus explained that 30 years ago MNR used to take care of policing this, then there were budget cuts and the city planners were asked to take care of it. MNR wants the municipality to police the waterfront, he said. Development permits are required from the township before doing work. So now the township is putting in bylaws.

Claus will chair a committee, which will consist of himself, Karen, Debbie and Dave. They will each do some research and will meet in February. Claus will contact them with a meeting date. They hope to come up with a model bylaw that they can share with township council.

Strategic Planning - Dave

Our last strategic plan expired in 2017. Dave asked everyone to look at our old strategic plan and send updates and corrections to him and Karen. Dave will send the old plan to Barb who will circulate it. We will discuss this at our next meeting.

Ultrasonic - Claus

Claus suggested we could research ultrasonic, which has been used with aerators on golf courses in Quebec. Michael said it works better in ponds than in lakes.

Mayor Moore

We gave Mayor Moore a round of applause and thanked him for his years of liaising with MWC on behalf of Whitewater Township.

1. **Next Meeting**

Thursday, November 17, 2022

**MEETING WILL BE BOTH IN PERSON AND VIRTUAL:**

**IN PERSON MEETING WILL BE IN THE BASEMENT OF THE WHITEWATER TOWNSHIP MUNICIPAL BUILDING, 44 MAIN STREET, COBDEN, ENTRANCE FROM THE PARKING LOT**

**ONLINE MEETING VIA GOOGLE MEET**

meet.google.com/ezd-qitc-btk

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

1. Adjournment: 8:17 p.m.

**Minutes recorded and submitted by:**

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Barbara Green, Secretary, Muskrat Watershed Council

**Approved by:**

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Karen Coulas, Chair, Muskrat Watershed Council

DON’T FORGET TO RENEW YOUR MWC MEMBERSHIP FOR 2022!

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.)

