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**MUSKRAT WATERSHED COUNCIL (MWC)**

Meeting of the Board of Directors

**Meeting Minutes**

**Thursday, May 18, 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. **Call to Order and Record of Attendance**

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

**Attendance:**

**Present:**  Rick Adamson, Anna-Maria Blum, Karen Coulas, Barbara Green, Andy Laird, Debbie MacDonald, Jeff Reeves, Greg Stasyna, Dave Thomassin, Amanda Walt, Michael Walt,

**Regrets:**  Rene Coulas, Gerry Rook, Evelyn St. Amour,

**Council Representative Present:**

Claus Trost, Township of Laurentian Valley

**Council Representative Regrets:**

Chris Olmstead, Township of Whitewater Region

1. **Adoption of Agenda**

Claus approved the agenda, Debbie seconded it.

**Approval of minutes from April, 20, 2023 meeting:**

Dave approved the minutes, Michael seconded.

1. **Treasurer’s Report- Debbie**

See attached treasurer’s report.

Pembroke Community Expo door prize:

Karen was reimbursed $48.83 for the gift basket she prepared as MWC’s door prize contribution.

Invasive Species project:

Dave moved that MWC pay Jody Nicholas $60 for her work on this project. Claus seconded. All were in favour.

SBCNA Bingo

Our next volunteer date is June 11, 2023 from 3:30 to 5:30. Dave volunteered to attend with Debbie. Amanda and Barb may be able to volunteer in July or August once the dates are confirmed.

1. **Directors’ Reports**

**Agricultural Committee**

Pump House Lake - Karen and Rene

Rene has installed the watering system which is now up and running. The tenants who are renting the property thanked MWC for completing this part of the project. Debbie took photos of the installation. Amanda will keep the photos to post in the fall, as MWC still has more work to do at this site.

Eastern Ontario Stewardship Collaborative - Karen

Karen attended a meeting of the Eastern Ontario Stewardship Collaborative where a speaker from the East Central Farm Stewardship Collaborative presented. She will attend another virtual meeting of the Eastern Ontario Stewardship Collaborative at the end of May.

**Science Committee – Dave**

Loon survey project with Birds Canada

MWC will conduct a loon survey again this year. Debbie will do Olmstead-Jeffrey Lake, Gabie Thomsen (sister of MWC volunteer, Anna-Maria Blum) will do Muskrat Lake, Rick Adamson will do Mink Lake.

**Communications & Media - Amanda**

2023 Newsletter - Karen

We need our 2023 newsletter in time for the AGM. Amanda will put together a draft after consulting examples of past issues. Dave will send Amanda a slideshow he used for another presentation that she can use for information. Please send any other newsletter items to Amanda.

MWC brochures - Amanda

The brochures have been edited and will be printed soon. Amanda will send a pdf to Anna-Maria so she can print a few copies to use at a cottagers’ meeting.

Blog - Karen

Karen sent Amanda a blog which will be posted next week.

Blue-green algae and social media

Dave will meet with Amanda next week about how to respond on social media to property owners’ inquiries about blue-green algae.

**Fundraising Committee Update - Karen**

We are still working on the billboards.

1. **Old Business**

Cobden Beach - Michael and Rene

Compressors and Diffusors:

Last week Rene and Michael removed the old compressors and put in the new ones. Michael assembled the diffusers and built steel frames for them. Each new diffuser will work three times better than the old ones, so in total the new diffusers are equivalent to 18 of the old ones. Michael has all the maintenance equipment needed to service them going forward. Michael and Rene will install them soon. Debbie will help and will also take photos. Michael will wash the old diffusers once they are removed.

Beach mats

We have received two mat kits, each containing three mats that are 28 feet long and eight feet wide. This is enough to replace the existing mats which are worn out. We will be deciding soon how and when to install them.

Bingo volunteers - Open Discussion - Karen

We need more volunteers. Volunteers must be paid members of MWC who have taken a training course. Claus will take the course again and will be available to volunteer starting in September. Amanda & Barb can probably volunteer in July or August once the dates are confirmed.

Invasive Species Project Grant Money - Karen

We didn’t get the Canada Summer Jobs student. Watersheds Canada has given us $8,000 for project coordination.We hope to find a matching grant so we can go ahead with a project. Karen moved that MWC earmark the Watersheds Canada money for the invasive species project. Dave seconded the motion. The motion passed with all in favour. Dave suggested we organize one weekend per month for volunteers to look for invasive species. Then we will know what areas to focus on if we get a matching grant. Michael and Debbie volunteered to help. Dave will take the lead and will report back to MWC.

Natural Edge

Dave was approached by a landowner about doing Watersheds Canada’s Natural Edge program, which offers support to naturalize shorelines by planting native species. MWC has participated in this program in the past with Algonquin College students doing the planting. Perhaps we could ask Algonquin College to participate again? Dave will check with the college. We would ask landowners to pay 10 % of the cost of the plants to ensure their engagement. This would only cost the landowner about $100 - $150. We have the app and tutorials on how to use it but it would be good if Algonquin College could help with the app. We have a list of possible properties on Muskrat Lake, Lake Dore and Pump Lake. We still need to find properties on Mink Lake (Rick Adamson will check) and Olmstead-Jeffreys Lake (Debbie will check.)

2023 Planting invoice - Karen

Claus moved to reimburse Karen and Rene $2,400 for fuel and use of their tractor, truck trailer and side-by-side to move sawdust to the planting site so it could be be placed around the base of trees. The reimbursement covers three eight-hour days of work. Andy seconded the motion. All were in favour and the motion passed.

Pembroke Community Expo - Debbie and Barb

Grow For You Inc. https://www.growforyouinc.com/

Barb and Debbie spoke about this company that grows plants in vertical containers. Dave mentioned we did try something like this in the past but it didn’t work for us. It only works on small ponds. Karen mentioned if we get the Cobden Marsh restored, plantings like this might be good to show we can produce real food from a polluted water body.

Poster: Reducing Your Runoff - Rideau Valley Conservation Authority (RVCA)

Barb and Debbie mentioned it would be good to get a smaller handout-sized version of this large poster to give out at fairs and expos. Anna- Maria will ask RVCA if they have any smaller versions of the poster. If not, she will ask if RVCA for permission to adapt the poster to a smaller page by by putting the picture on one side and the writing on the back.

1. **Other/New Business**

2023 AGM - Karen

Karen will check to see if the Legion Hall is available for the morning of July 29, 2023, for our AGM. We would like to have a guest speaker make a short presentation. Karen will check to see if the Pembroke Field Naturalists or the Ontario Turtle Conservation Centre would be interested in presenting.

Turtle Egg Protectors - Karen

An idea we might discuss for a future project is turtle egg protectors. They consist of boards covered by mesh that are placed over turtle nests to keep out raccoons and other predators. The Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry would require a permit to install turtle egg protectors, unless they are on private property.

1. **Next Meeting**

June 15, 2023, 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: 8:20 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 2023!

COST IS $20 PER MEMBERSHIP

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

muskratwatershedcouncil@gmail.com

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

