

INFORMATION ITEMS

Week Ending March 11, 2016

REPORTS

1. None

CORRESPONDENCE

1. GRCA *Current*, March 2016
2. City of Markham re: Request to the Government of Ontario to Limit the Jurisdiction of the Ontario Municipal Board

BOARDS & COMMITTEES

1. Heritage Committee resignation from Lynn Allingham and D`arcy McGee

ITEMS AVAILABLE IN THE CLERK'S OFFICE

1. None

GRCA Current



March, 2016 • Volume 21 Number 3

GRCA General Membership

Chair	Helen Jowett
Vice-Chair	Chris White
Townships of Amaranth, East Garafraxa, Melancthon and Southgate and Town of Grand Valley	Guy Gardhouse
Townships of Mapleton and Wellington North	Pat Salter
Township of Centre Wellington	Kelly Linton
Town of Erin, Townships of Guelph/Eramosa and Puslinch	Chris White
City of Guelph	Bob Bell, Mike Salisbury
Region of Waterloo	Les Armstrong, Elizabeth Clarke, Sue Foxton, Helen Jowett, Geoff Lorentz, Jane Mitchell, Joe Nowak, Wayne Roth, Sandy Shantz, Warren Stauch
Municipality of North Perth and Township of Perth East	George Wicke
Halton Region	Cindy Lunau
City of Hamilton	George Stajanovic
Oxford County	Bruce Banbury
County of Brant	Brian Coleman, Shirley Simons
City of Brantford	Dave Neumann, Vic Prendergast
Haldimand and Norfolk Counties	Bernie Corbett, Fred Morison

2016 budget approved

The GRCA will spend about \$31 million this year on programs that protect water quality, reduce flood damages, protect natural areas, support responsible development and provide outdoor recreation and environmental education.

The budget was approved by the GRCA board February 26.

Municipalities will contribute about \$11.8 million to the GRCA this year, about 38 per cent of the total budget. The municipal levy portion is up about 2.5 per cent this year to \$10.8 million. That works out to about \$10.49 per resident.

Government grants, primarily from the province, are worth about \$3.4 million, representing about 11 per cent of the budget. Included in this amount are federal grants of more than \$300,000 the GRCA is receiving through the Canada 150 Infrastructure Program.

The GRCA generates just under \$15 million, or about 47 per cent, of its own revenue through sources such as camping fees, park admissions, nature centre programs, hydro sales, property rentals, tree sales, planning permits and donations raised by the Grand River Conservation Foundation.

Spring Flood Outlook

The overall spring forecast is for a warmer and drier than normal spring in the Grand River watershed.

A portion of the runoff from recent melts has been stored in the large reservoirs operated by the GRCA. Runoff from snowmelt and rainfall in March is used to fill the large reservoirs to their normal April 1st operating levels.

The large reservoirs are being filled a little earlier than usual this year to capture runoff from the snowpack that has melted much earlier than is typical. The remaining storage in the reservoirs will be used to reduce flood risk and reservoir levels will be filled to their April 1st operating level over the remainder of March.

The GRCA works closely with municipal

officials to prepare for the spring melt, and holds a series of meetings each year, including a flood coordinators meeting. This year, the municipal flood coordinators meeting took place on February 17. The program included a number of presentations, a review of the flood fan-out system test and a discussion on the role of the municipal flood coordinators.

Warm February weather

So far this winter has been one of the warmest recorded at Shand Dam.

The average temperature in February was 1.5 C above the long-term average, but there have been large swings in temperature through the month. Temperatures averaged -5 C at Shand Dam during February, compared to -15 C last year, which was one of the coldest months on record.

Precipitation for February was close to or slightly above the long-term average across the watershed. This included about 20 to 25 mm of rain and snow that fell across the watershed during a storm Feb. 24 to 25.

Reservoir levels are slightly higher than normal for this time of year.

Flood messages were issued Feb. 1 and 3 due to a thaw and heavy rains. Watershed conditions statements were issued on Feb. 19 and Feb. 26, also resulting from warm weather events.

The level of Lake Erie is well above the long-term average.

New GRCA website launched February 9

The GRCA launched a new website www.grandriver.ca on Feb. 9 and a new Lake Erie Source Protection website www.sourcewater.ca on Feb. 25.

Both sites have a new look, updated text, new e-services and other improvements.

The GRCA website gets about one million unique visits a year. Many users want to find information about Grand River Parks, while



others are looking for river flow data, job opportunities, planning policies and information about environmental programs.

The newly launched website has improved navigation and complies with provincial accessibility standards. Users can also adjust the type size, use the embedded Browse Aloud reader or translate the website into dozens of languages.

Reservation bookings

The campsite reservation system opened on February 29 to provide an opportunity to Hillside Festival campers to make a weekend booking at Guelph Lake Park. These sites were gone very quickly. However, Hillsiders can get one of 300 weekend camping permits that will be available at the park gate July 21.

The reservation system reopened March 1 for all other campsite reservations at the parks during the 2016 season. Grand River Parks have about 2,500 campsites available in eight parks. The parks will open April 30 to Oct. 16 this year.

Winter activities

Variable temperature and snow conditions have meant Grand River Parks have had limited opportunities to provide winter programs.

Ice fishing, cross country skiing and snowshoeing were only available for a limited time up to the end of February. Snow that fell often melted quickly. Hiking is available at Rockwood, Belwood Lake and Shade's Mills parks.

Contractors will plant 132,000 trees

Three contractors will plant 132,000 trees across the watershed this spring on both private land and GRCA property.

The GRCA is hiring three companies to do the work. Contracts totalling \$149,000 were won by Black River Tree Planting, Brinkman and Associates Reforestation Ltd. and Bartram Woodlands Ltd.

Tree planting is contracted out by the GRCA in blocks based on the planting method and tree size. This allows many people to work at the same time to plant trees quickly.

Plantings on private land are paid for by



Students in a Grade 11 environmental science class from Bishop MacDonnell Catholic High School cut down large buckthorn shrubs near their school in Guelph. They have applied dark plastic "buckthorn baggies" to two tree stumps in the foreground. This stops sunlight from getting to the root and help kill the invasive buckthorn without using chemicals. Later, the area will be replanted with native trees.

the individual property owners, but their costs are often offset by funding that comes from a variety of programs including the Rural Water Quality Program, Trees Ontario and the Habitat Stewardship Program.

Plantings on GRCA property are funded through programs and donations made to the Grand River Conservation Foundation.

Many online subscription options

People can subscribe to several categories of news releases, ranging from flood messages to landowner information on www.grandriver.ca/subscribe.

These options ensure that watershed residents receive the information they need.

People can also receive updates about new job postings, beach conditions, volunteer opportunities and more by subscribing to these specific pages of the new website.

To subscribe to calendar events, visit www.grandriver.ca/events and click on the subscribe tab. You will receive weekly email updates with events tailored to your interests.

Stay safe

The public is reminded to exercise extreme caution around rivers, streams and water bodies.

Any remaining ice cover will be severely eroded due to rain and thaw, and riverbanks will be icy and wet.

While air temperatures may be well above normal, water temperatures are still just above freezing.

Anyone going into the water could fall victim to hypothermia within minutes, losing feeling in arms and legs and then becoming unconscious. Safety information for parents and children is available in the GRCA's River Safety Rules booklet.

This issue of *GRCA Current* was published in March 2016.

It is a summary of the February 2016 business conducted by the Grand River Conservation Authority board and committees as well as other noteworthy happenings and topics of interest.

The Grand River Conservation Authority welcomes distribution, photocopying and forwarding of *GRCA Current*.

Next board meeting:

March 24 at 9:30 a.m.,
GRCA Administration Centre.

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RESOLUTION OF COUNCIL MEETING NO. 3 DATED MARCH 1, 2016

MOTION

**(1) REQUEST THE GOVERNMENT OF ONTARIO
TO LIMIT THE JURISDICTION OF THE
ONTARIO MUNICIPAL BOARD (13.2 & 10.0)**

- 1) That the City of Markham request that the Province of Ontario undertake a public review of the mandate and jurisdiction of the Ontario Municipal Board to ensure that the OMB is respectful of municipal planning policies and local decision making and complies with Provincial Policy; and,
- 2) That the Provincial review include consideration of the amount of costs that may be awarded to ensure fairness for community participants in the appeal process; and,
- 3) That a copy of this Motion be sent to the Honourable Kathleen Wynne, Premier of Ontario; the Honourable Ted McMeekin, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing; the Honourable Patrick Brown, Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party; the Honourable Andrea Horwath, Leader of the New Democratic Party; and all MPPs in the Province of Ontario; and further,
- 4) That a copy of this Motion be sent to the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO); Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM); York Region Council and all Ontario municipalities for their consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kimberley Kitteringham', written over a horizontal line.

Kimberley Kitteringham
City Clerk

Copy to: The Honourable Premier Kathleen Wynne
The Honourable Ted McMeekin, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing
The Honourable Patrick Brown, Leader of the Progressive Conservative
The Honourable Andrea Horwath, Leader of the New Democratic Party
All Ontario MPP's
AMO
FCM
All Ontario Municipalities