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Coming up at 9:30, it's this month's Grand River Conservation Authority membership meeting. On the agenda:



MEETING PREVIEW: Grand River Conservation Membership Meeting f...

This month's meeting of the Grand River Conservation Authority membership is the last one before a summer break (like a lot of local boards and committees), and that means it's time for...

<https://guelphpolitico.ca/2023/06/16/meeting-preview-grand-river-conservation-member...>

Chair White has called the meeting to order.

Announcement : The Grand River Conservation Foundation held their AGM last week, and their annual report will be released digitally soon.

Agenda approved.

No Declarations of Pecuniary Interest.

Minutes from last meeting approved.

First, a presentation: Unauthorized Activity at Rockwood Conservation Area. Pam Walther-Mabee, Manager of Conservation Area Operations will present.

Walther-Mabee notes that although the presumption is that conservation authorities are public land, they're owned by the GRCA, and are thus liable. There is no rock climbing allowed on any GRCA property, despite the repeated request to change.

Why no rock climbing?



Why was the climbing activity prohibited?

1) Liability and safety concerns:

- Risks associated with climbing- supervision of site, fencing, limiting access to those with proper gear, signage, maintenance, operational agreements
- Additional insurance
- No marked trail to the activity, challenge for EMS support
- Area is not maintained for this activity

2) Environmental and Operational concerns:

- Environmentally sensitive areas
- Caves, unique species of bats
- Potential impacts of pedestrians on Eramosa River – Blue Springs Creek



Walther-Mabee notes some of the stuff left behind by climbers.

Rockwood History with Rock climbers



Walther-Mabee says that they've met with several climbing groups over the years, and their justifications never change. The concerns also include the fact that GRCA doesn't own all the land with climbing rocks and environmental sensitivities.

Staff have added signage, especially in the back area of the CA where climbers tend to enter. They've tried been removing unsanctioned bridges and other ad hoc infrastructure, and they eventually hired a contractor to remove the anchors.

Member Davis confesses he's done his share of rock climbing, and notes that Halton has three spots for rock climbing. Second opinion? Walther-Mabee says one of the biggest differences is land ownership, top of rock face at Rockwood is not GRCA land.

Member Challinor notes that in Halton, it's very difficult to get people out of the Niagara Escarpment, and a number of deaths have happened over the years. The Milton Fire Dept. handles search and rescue and have to plan for it. He says it's not worth it.

Member Devine says that people are going to climb whether it's allowed or not, is it possible to buy the necessary land? Walther-Mabee says the owner isn't interested in selling despite conversations. "He's the only person I know that doesn't want to sell a rock," Devine says.

Motion to receive correspondences approved.

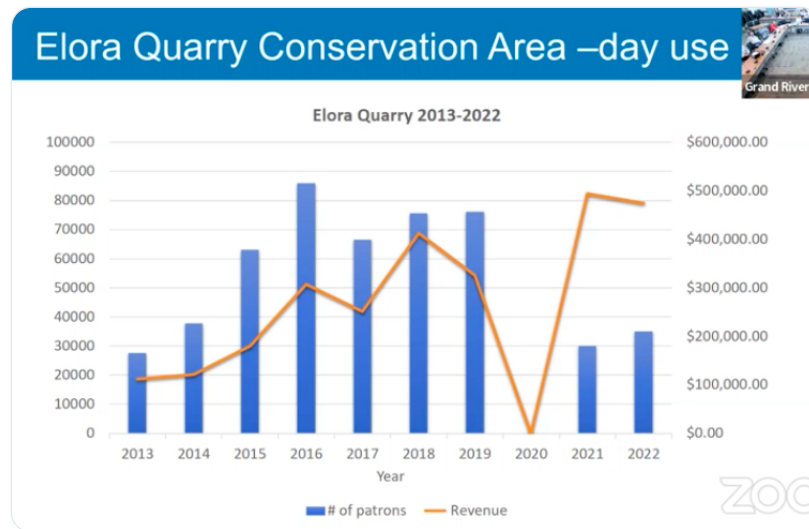
10. Correspondence

THAT Correspondence from Danielle Ripsman, Colleen B., Liz Maffett, Ben Webster, and Jessie Blake regarding unauthorized rock climbing activities at Rockwood Conservation Area, and from Jennifer Saunders regarding protection of Ontario wetlands be received as information.

- a. Rock climbers re: Unauthorized Activity at Rockwood Conservation Area
- b. Jennifer Saunders re: Wetlands Protection

Next, Capacity Measures and Operational Improvements at the Elora Quarry. This arose from a delegation last month.

Walther-Mabee presents again noting that his one of the most popular spots in the GRCA collection. This graph is # of patron and revenues.



Pre-pandemic issues (aka: before the pandemic and the new rules for entry)

Pre-pandemic Elora Quarry challenges

- Trespassing
- Upset local community
- Vehicles/ cars parked all over the neighbourhood
- Long line ups, grid locking downtown Elora
- Reliance on paid off-duty OPP
- Negative customer experiences
- Risks to staff with many irate customers everyday
- Site was over-used, trails were compacted, overcrowded beach,

The solutions:

Solutions starting in 2021

- Fencing around the permitter installed in 2020
- Reservation system – site management
- Capacity based on parking
- Reduction of external reliance on off duty OPP
- Experienced GRCA staff re-assigned for operational season
- Customer experience improved
- Positive site impacts



Even when the first capacity issues were introduced in 2017, a limit of 1,300, they were still experiencing issues thanks to promo of the Gorge. This probably didn't help either:






<https://www.youtube.com/embed/ViU3Zco0ZYM>

2023 operations:

2023 Operations

Quarry opened June 10, 2023

- 2 sessions of 4 hours each with limited parking and limited number of customers
- GRCA conservation area membership is not compatible with the online reservation program



Memberships were excluded to help manage capacity using the reservation system. When they looked at adding a set number of memberships but that would have required a whole new system and staff monitoring.

Challinor asks about those costs, he says that there's should be some consideration to bring the costs back to the membership noting that the cost of new tech is also decreasing.

Member Watters says reservation systems get updated all the time, and as a Centre Wellington resident he notes that it was unsustainable, but now there are times when it looks like there are no cars there. Wonder if they've gone from one extreme to another.

Q: Are we at capacity most days?

Walther-Mabee: On weekends and holidays yes. And in July and August when summer vacations begin.

Q: Is capacity based on parking?

Walther-Mabee: Yes, lack of parking big deal all over Elora.

Walther-Mabee says they can do small increases in parking, but it's hard when you don't know if a vehicle's going to contain 2 people or 6 people. There has been some talk of a bus system.

Member Williams notes that the cost is concerning. The WR Library has a GRCA season pass people can borrow, so that can access the conservation authorities, but they can't get into the Gorge.

Q: Is the issue the capacity of the parking or the capacity of the park?

Walther-Mabee: Little of both. The beach at EQ is small. Overuse of the trails and the washrooms was also a concern. Sometimes staff had to wait till end of day to do first cleaning of the washrooms.

Devine says that the GRCA should look to find additional parking in Elora and then bus people in.

Member Foxton notes that there's an issue of safety. More people might make it easier to lose track of a child and it is an old quarry after all.

Challinor says that this is not about creating a free for all again, the issue is making sure that the membership and pass holders can access GRCA sites without the additional fees. There has to be a "sweet spot."

White says it's reasonable to ask that staff look at the reservation system. He also notes that the pop. of Fergus is going double over the next several years, so there will be more local need. There's been good restoration, but more parks will be looking at capacity issues.

Motion to receive the report as information approved.

Approved.

- information.
- b. Ad-hoc Conservation Authorities Act Regulations Committee - June 7, 2023

THAT the minutes of the Ad-hoc Conservation Authorities Act Regulations Committee Meeting of June 7, 2023 be received as information.

These items approved with comment or question:

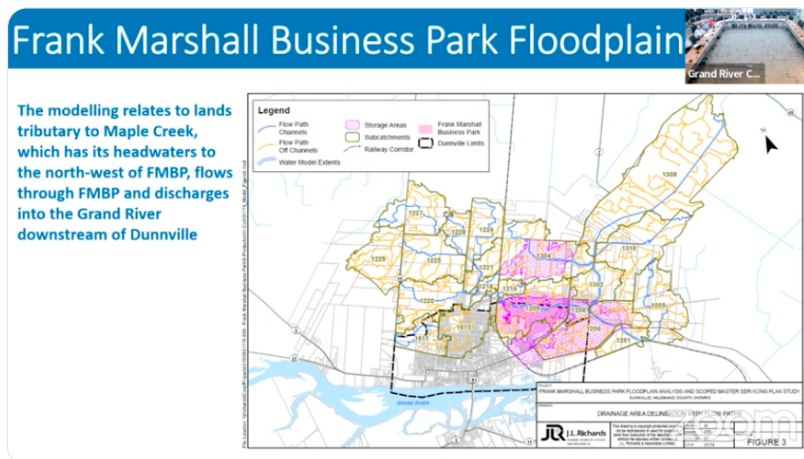
- information.
- c. GM-06-23-47 - Progress Report #5 - Ontario Regulation 687/21
- THAT Progress Report #5 be approved, circulated to all participating Grand River watershed municipalities, posted on the Grand River Conservation Authority website, and submitted to the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry in accordance with Ontario Regulation 687/21.
- d. GM-06-23-48 - Cash and Investment Status
- THAT Report Number GM-06-23-48 – Cash and Investment Status – May 2023 be received as information.

Member Smith asks about a particular line item and the amount spend last year and the budget cost this year. That's the cost of construction of the new nature centre at Guelph Lake, which is expected to begin this fall.

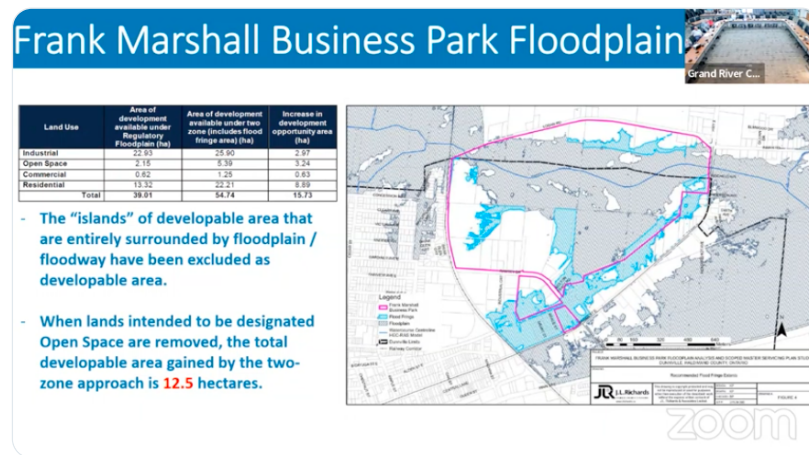
These two items approved.

- e. GM-06-23-52 - Financial Summary
- THAT the Financial Summary for the period ending May 31, 2023 be approved.
- f. GM-06-23-51 - Request for Proposals - Engineering Consulting Services, Permits and Plan Review
- THAT the Grand River Conservation Authority accept the proposal from Stantec Consulting Limited to carry out engineering consulting services up to the amount of \$150,000, excluding HST.

Vahid Taleban, senior engineer for flood management will now present the Dunnville Two Zone Floodplain Policy and Mapping Update, County of Haldimand. The County initiated this work.



Using the 2 Zone method, it makes more land available for development 144 sq feet of new industrial space and 168 new residential units possible.



Member Shirton asks if the 168 residential units are firm, there was talk about rezoning the "light industrial" for residential. Taleban says yes, there could be a change in land use planning and increase the available residential.

Fun fact: A lot of the planning for the floodplain in the Frank Marshall business park area date back to Hurricane Hazel.

Member Wilson asks about the risk of another Hazel-like storm, especially with climate change. Taleban says the changes are made based on a risk assessment, and these forecasts are being constantly reviewed.

Davis asks if there will be a warning for anyone building on the land. GRCA does not register on the title, but anyone purchasing the land can get the information in the title check/clearance.

Motion approved.

g. **GM-06-23-50 - Dunnville Two Zone Floodplain Policy and Mapping Update, County of Haldimand**

THAT a Two Zone Floodplain Policy Area for portions of Dunnville be endorsed;

AND THAT the updated floodplain mapping, as prepared by J.L. Richards & Associates Limited (June 2022), be used as the guiding document when dealing with planning matters and permit applications in the study area.

AND THAT amendments to the Grand River Conservation Authority's Ontario Regulation 150/06 mapping be approved to incorporate the revisions to the floodplain and associated regulated allowance.

Motion approved.

allowance.

h. GM-06-23-53 - Current Watershed Conditions

THAT Report Number GM-06-23-53 – Current Watershed Conditions as of June 14, 2023 be received as information.

Motion to approve the new appointments to the GRC Foundation approved.

The membership has now moved in-camera. Chair White said that it will be short.

17. Closed Meeting

THAT the General Membership enter a closed meeting in accordance with the *Municipal Act section 239(2)* for the following purpose(s): litigation or potential litigation.

- a. Minutes of the previous closed session
- b. Litigation or Potential Litigation

That was short.

Motion to approve the minutes of previous closed session approved.

Nothing further, so that's a wrap for this meeting.

There's no GRCA meeting in July, so we're back at the end of the August.



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