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Dec 15, 2023 · 59 tweets · [adamadonaldson/status/1735667288664092915](https://twitter.com/adamadonaldson/status/1735667288664092915)

Coming up at 9:30, it's this month's Grand River Conservation Authority board meeting. This is what's coming up on the surprising long agenda:



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

Just because it's almost the holidays that doesn't mean the Grand River Conservation Authority board is slacking off. There's a long list of reports to get through before everyone...

<https://guelphpolitico.ca/2023/12/08/meeting-preview-grand-river-conservation-membe...>

Chair White has called the meeting to order.

Opening remarks:

- White and the CAO went to the Conservation Authorities of Ontario meet
- Members are getting a book about aerial views of the watershed
- The pre-winter flood meeting took place (more on that soon)
- Board Xmas party after the meet.

Declarations of Pecuniary Interest? None.

One delegation: Chuck Beach who wants to talk about nature centres and outdoor education. White preambles by explaining that the GRCA is taking extra time to find ways to keep the program going. The board & staff blue outdoor education and want to keep up despite leg. changes.

Beach says he worked at S.C.Johnson for 32 years before retirement and has since dedicated himself to various charitable endeavours. He's joined by Joy, Richard and Vic, and they're especially concerned about losing the three nature centres mentioned Oct 27 especially Apps Mill.

White re-affirms that there was no motion to close the nature centres in October, and there was no motion to move programs online. They were responded to a request from school board for more hybrid options. They all want to get to the same place.

Member Miller thanks the delegation and says in the case of Apps Mill that it's a unique space that can't be replicated. Asks staff if they will be meeting with the fundraising groups.

White says it would be silly to ignore fundraises since they will be needed.

Correspondence. There's one email this month, and it's from the group Brant for Nature who are expressing concerns about the future of the GRCA's outdoor education program and the potential closure of the Apps Mill Nature Centre. Motion to receive for info approved.

Next, Strategic Plan.

Motion that Update THAT Report Number GM-12-23-105 – 2022-2024 Strategic Plan Update be received as information is moved.

Miller notes the mention of outdoor education, and asks about engagement about Strat Plan update. Staff says there were a lot of moving targets during last refresh, so they're looking at something more fulsome during this round now that provincial stuff is settled.

Motion approved.

Next, Proposed By-law 2-2023

THAT By-law 1-2023 be read a first, second, and third time and adopted by the General Membership, to take effect on December 15, 2023;

AND THAT By-law 2-2023 be repealed on December 15, 2023;

(cont'd)

AND THAT a copy of By-law 2-2023 be forwarded to the Ministry of the Natural Resources and Forestry, and posted publicly on the Grand River Conservation Authority's website.

The board has to make a decision on one thing: New regs allow boards to approve budgets by either a weighed vote or a simple majority, which will be separate from the apportionment vote, which will be weighed. In the past, the GRCA has combined the two into one weighted vote.

White notes that this is a big watershed, and the weighed vote for budget has worked well for this board. He thinks they should stick to the weighed vote on budget. Member says that it makes sense from the perspective of best practices.

Seems like the board agrees, so this will be added as a friendly amendment.

Slate is approved.

Next, Report of the Audit Committee

THAT the Report be received as information;

AND THAT the Asset Retirement Obligations (ARO) Policy dated December 15, 2023 be approved and implemented;

AND THAT the Reserve Funds Policy dated December 15, 2023 be approved and implemented.

That's approved!

Next:

d. GM-12-23-93—Budget 2024 - Notification to Municipalities

THAT a letter be sent to participating municipalities on December 22, 2023 advising them of the General Membership meeting to be held on January 26, 2024 to approve the 2024 municipal apportionment and of the General Membership meeting to be held on February 23, 2024 to approve the 2024 Budget;

AND THAT the Grand River Conservation Authority 2024 Budget Draft #1 and apportionment amounts be included with the letter.

That's approved too!

Next, Fee Policy, Fee Schedules, and Proposed 2024 Fee Increases. Pam Walther-Mabee, Manager of Conservation Auth., and Beth Brown, Manager of Planning and Regulation are presenting.


Coming up with this year's fees:

## Conservation Area User Fees

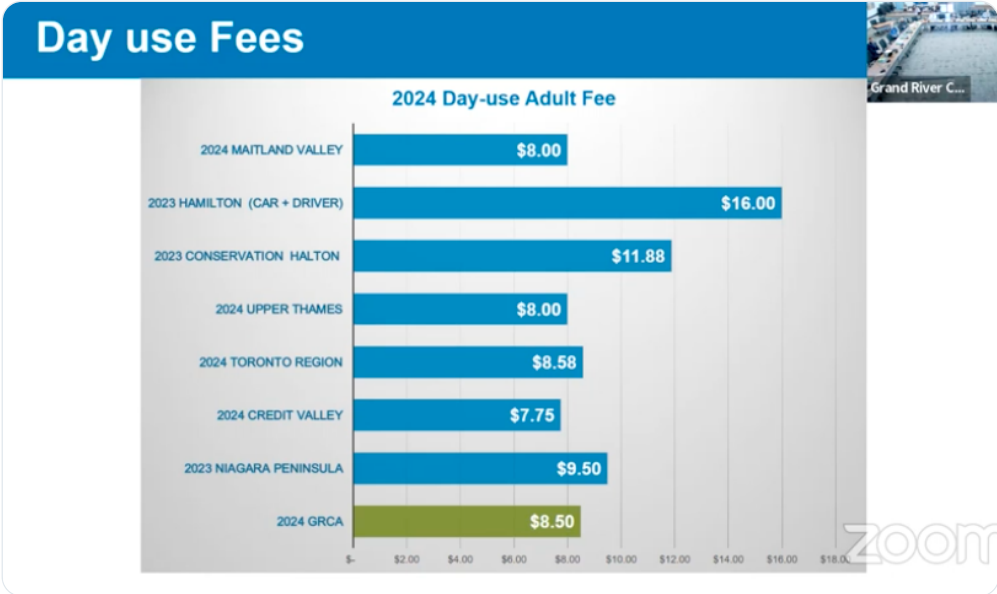
Proposed Recommendations for 2024:

- Implement cost-of-living increase of 3% rounded to the next \$.50 or \$1.00 as appropriate
- For portions of the services that can't support cost recovery, incremental changes are proposed to be phased over 5 years.
- Review local comparators as part of market analysis to ensure pricing is aligned with what customers are willing to pay

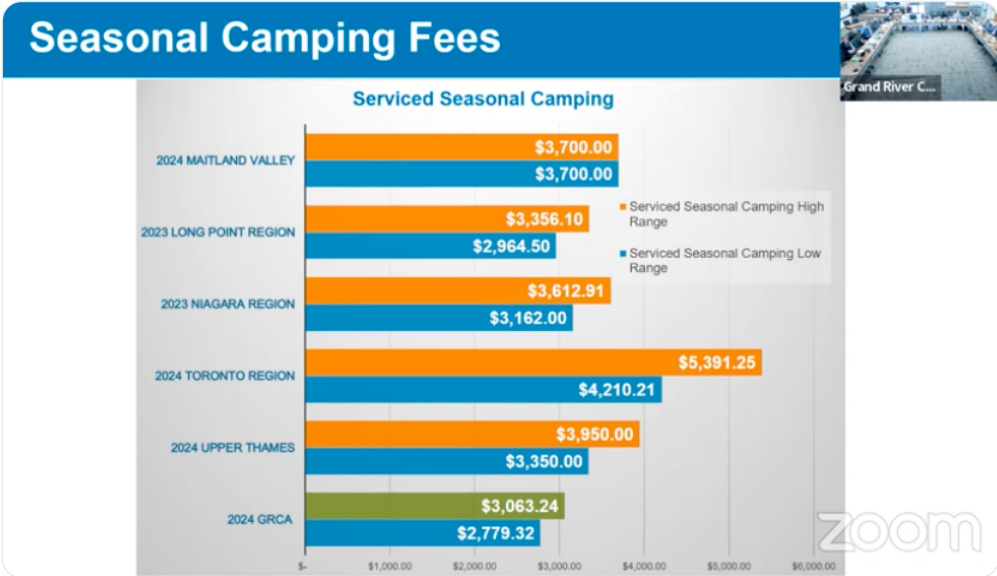
zoom



GRCA is about mid-range with other parks, public and private. Year-long membership holding to 2023 rates, which is \$160 or good for 6 visits by a family of four.



Average increase for seasonal campaign. GRCA is lowest compared to other Cases despite the average 7% increase coming this year.



No proposed increase to serviced nightly camping. Still on the lower end, but this is the biggest portion of the CA's camping fees.

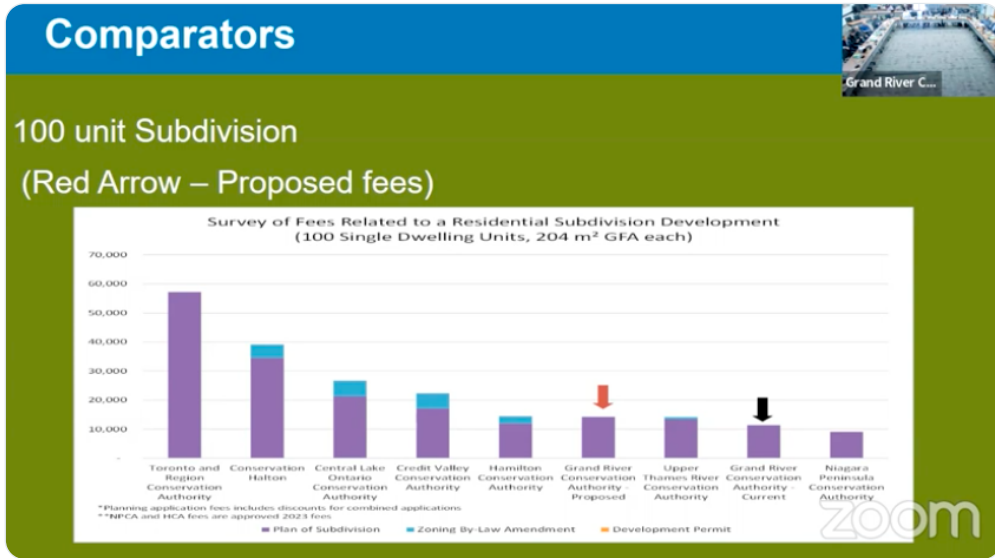


GRCAs are not able to change their planning, development and permitting fees until 2024, that's another last minute change courtesy of ONgov. So the fee increase proposed in the report is now null.

For category 1 programs (mandatory), fees charged cannot exceed the cost of service delivery, each CA can decide the portion of fees recovered by the user. The GRCA is presently recovering 66% through user fees and they would like to keep it at that level.

Planning has had 56% cost recovery thought the GRCA is aiming for 100%. That's what they're going to continue striving for, and will be phasing in fee increases over 3 years.

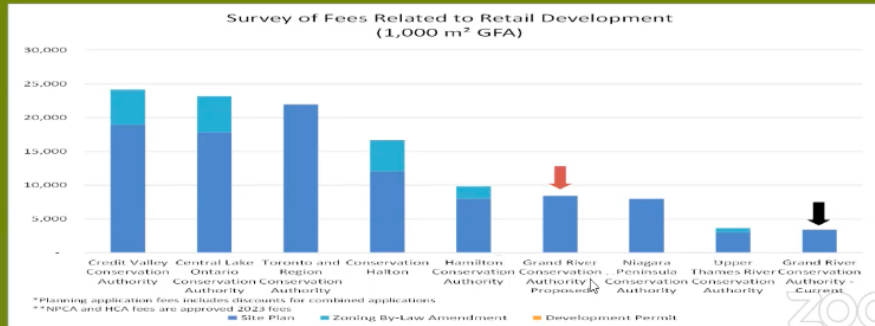
To visual the change: Black arrow is current, red arrow is proposed...



Same, but for retail site plan:

## Comparators

1000 sq.m. retail site plan  
(Red Arrow – Proposed fees)



Challinor asks if the staff are confident that they will be where they need to be in 5 years. Walther-Mabee says they are considering where they are compared to other CAs, but they're in the process of asset management review, which will give them better answer.

Challinor asks if the staff are looking at full cost-recovery. Brown says they are more planning, but as Watson proved they're only at 56%. Challinor says planning has change drastically, growth not paying for itself, and no board should be subsidising development.

Challinor says it's unlikely that the GRCA is going to be accused of gouging given where we are today. Brown says she doesn't know about all neighbouring CA, some are going to 100% though.

Shirton says that he would like to see the profit and loss for every park, it would be helpful in making financial decisions in the future and would be nice to have for an upcoming board meeting.

Another member notes that perhaps the ONgov are giving a decision weighed to the GTA where fees are higher as the smaller CAs are trying to catch up. Foxton agrees that thinks that the ONgov is in error treating all CAs equally in this. More advocacy?

White says that the need more information because Toronto's a unique creature and there's a lot in flux. The point is valid, but we need to make sure that we know what we're talking about.

Staff are asked if they've had an opportunity to object. Staff say no, they literally got this yesterday. Member says that they've got to increase fees with the rate of inflation at least.

White notes that direction to staff is to get some more information and bring it back to the board for further discussion.

### Motion

THAT the Grand River Conservation Authority Fee Policy be approved and implemented effective December 15, 2023;

AND THAT Fee Schedule 1 – Outdoor Environmental Education Fees be approved and implemented effective January 1, 2024;

(cont'd)

AND THAT Fee Schedule 2 – Conservation Areas Fees be approved and implemented effective January 1, 2024;  
AND THAT Fee Schedule 4 – Tree Nursery Fees be approved and implemented effective January 1, 2024.  
It's approved!

Next two items are approved.

- f. GM-12-23-91—Complimentary Grand River Conservation Area Membership Passes  
THAT Report Number GM-12-23-91 – 2024 Complimentary Grand River Conservation Area Membership Passes be received as information.
- g. GM-12-23-97—Per Diems and Honorariums 2024  
THAT Report Number GM-12-23-97 – Per Diems and Honorariums for 2024 be received as information.

Monthly financial updates approved!

- h. GM-12-23-100—Cash & Investment Status Report  
THAT Report Number GM-12-23-100 – Cash and Investment Status – November 2023 be received as information.
- i. GM-12-23-102—Financial Summary  
THAT the Financial Summary for the period ending November 30, 2023 be approved.

Awarding of tenders approved.

- j. GM-12-23-94—Supply of Computer Storage Equipment  
THAT the Grand River Conservation Authority award the supply of HPE Alletra 5030 computer storage equipment to CDW Canada Corporation of Etobicoke, Ontario in the amount of  
\$103,979.80 excluding HST.
- k. GM-12-23-92—Administrative Building Exterior Lighting Upgrades  
THAT the Grand River Conservation Authority (GRCA) award the tender for the Administrative Building Exterior Lighting Upgrades to Live Electric for the amount of \$101,372.81 excluding HST;  
AND THAT a total budget of \$112,000.00 excluding HST be approved.

Next, New Guelph Lake Nature Update

Motion THAT Report GM-12-23-98 – New Guelph Lake Nature Centre Update be received as information.

Cllr Chew asks about the potential \$300k shortfall. Staff says that will be on the foundation. They're proposing to move forward w/ the tenders b/c all paper work is in place, so if there is an overrun, the reserves will cover & the foundation will pay it back. It's a contingency



That report approved.

Next, Residential Program Wind-down Status Update. Motion THAT Report GM-12-23-99 – Residential Program Wind-down: Status Update be received as information is approved.

Next, Grand River Watershed Flood Warning System. Vahid Taleban, manager of flood operations will present. This was the first in-person meeting since Feb 2020!

## Test Message Results

All

Agencies Represented	2023 Dec. Attendance
Municipal Flood Coordinators	29
Municipal Police	1
Ontario Provincial Police	2
Provincial Ministries	2
Water Survey – Environment Canada	5
Other Conservation Authority staff	9
News Media	0
GRCA Staff	19
Other	1
Total Persons in Attendance	68

Grand River C...

zoom

They looked over potential weather conditions this coming winter, emergency response plans, and made sure that everyone had provided their updated contact information. A pre-winter test of the flood warning system was completed on November 29.

This slide seems important, re: climate change.

## Climate Change and Extreme Weather

Grand River C...

**1- Very hot days**  
(T > 30 C) -> increase  
13-18 days

**2- Ice days**  
(Tmax < 0) ->  
decrease 20-23 days

**3- Precipitation ->**  
increase 55-57 mm

**4- extreme rainfall**  
probability to double  
(20 year becomes 10 year)

**PROJECTED CHANGE IN VERY HOT DAYS (2021-2050)**  
(# of days with temperatures > 30°C)

**TEMPERATURE ANOMALIES – PAST 4 YRS**

**DAMAGE CAUSED BY SEVERE WEATHER IS ON THE RISE**  
Nationally, insured damage for severe weather events reached \$3.4 billion last year, according to Catastrophe Indices and Quantification Inc. (CaiQ)

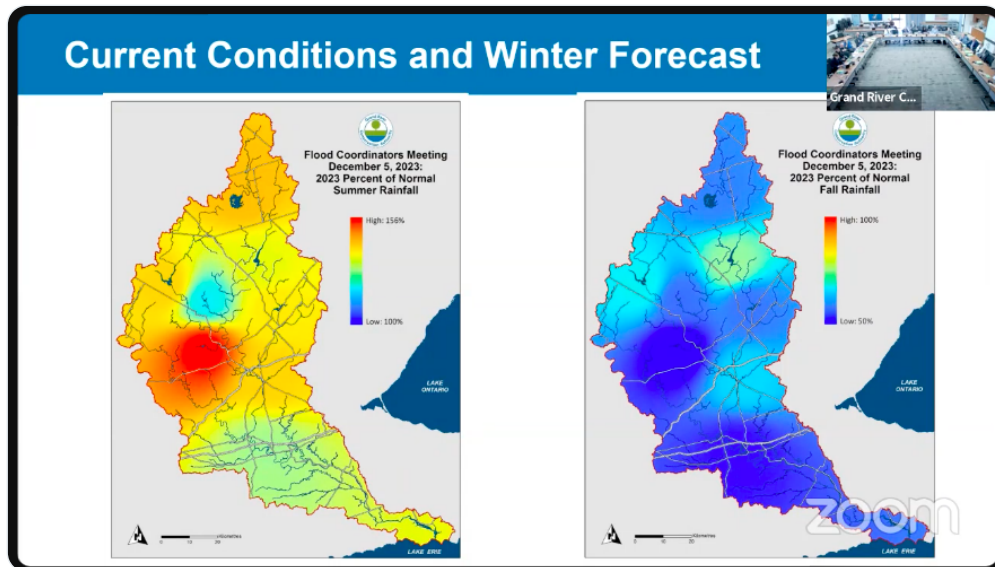
**CATASTROPHIC LOSSES IN CANADA IN 2006, 2016, 2022 AND TREND**

**THE FREQUENCY & INTENSITY OF EXTREME TEMPERATURES**

Do note that this trends are looking a couple of decades out. As for El Niño, look for more lake effect snow this winter and warmer than normal temps.

On the bright side, we had a slightly wetter than normal summer, but that's been kind of offset by a drier than normal fall. A level 1 low water condition will likely be called next week.





Motion THAT Report Number GM-12-23-104 – Grand River Watershed Flood Warning System be received as information is approved.

Motion to receive Current Watershed Conditions report for info approved!

The board is now going in-camera to talk about Proposed or pending acquisition or disposition. See you soon...



Well that was fast.

White has 2 motions: Minutes from closed session be approved and easement allowance for City of Waterloo both approved.

That's a wrap for this meeting, and a wrap for this year of GRCA business!



@threadreaderapp unroll please!

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