

MINUTES OF THE MAY 22, 2019 HARMONY RESIDENTS GROUP ANNUAL
GENERAL MEETING IN THE SIMPSONS ROOM, NOTL
COMMUNITY CENTRE

The meeting began at 7.00pm with approximately 50 people attending including 10 Board Directors, representatives from the NPCA and NOTL Council, and guest speaker, Bruce Mackensie, from the Burlington Nature Club.

WELCOME AND GENERAL UPDATE

HRG's Vice-President, Peter Harvey opened the meeting with a warm welcome and a brief update on HRG's activities over the past year. He explained how changes to the NPCA Board, elections and the local and regional level, and approval of Parks Canada's new management plan had affected the Lakeshore Lands and the decommissioning of the old WWTP. He was pleased to say that the newly elected NOTL council fully supported not filling in the WWTP aggregate ponds and the Region agreeing to some form of public consultations before deciding how the WWTP would be decommissioned. He ended by explaining that the proposed Lincoln/ Welland Regiment museum might not be built on the old military rifle range.

INTRODUCTION OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND RE-ELECTIONS

Member of the HRG Board of Directors were introduced by name and nomination from the floor for new members was asked for. No new nominations were made so the following nominees were acclaimed: Michael Adelson, John Boot, Debi Goodwin, David Hennessy (Treasurer) and Ryder Payne (Secretary). Alison Waller, Brock Sanson and Dennis Dick, having been elected in 2018, will serve for another year.

THANKING RETIRING DIRECTORS

Peter Harvey thanked retiring President, Finn Madsen. Finn was one of the founding HRG Board members when, in May 2009, Harmony was formed to prevent the Lakeshore Lands being used as the site for Project Niagara. When Project Niagara was abandoned for lack of funding, HRG decided that an eco/heritage park would be a much better use of the federally owned land. For the past 10 years Directors like Finn have worked continuously to convince the Region and Parks Canada to have the land recognized as a park. Peter presented Finn with a token gift in appreciation for all the work he has done for Harmony over the last decade.

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David Hennessey, also a founding member, thanked Peter Harvey for his outstanding work as Vice-President, Board meetings' chairperson, recruiter of new Directors, manager of HRG's computer site, and definitely Harmony's most active Board member over the past several years. David presented Peter with a token gift for his efforts. Both Finn and Peter agreed to continue to help Harmony as advisors.

ANNUAL TREASURER'S REPORT

Board Treasurer, D. Hennessey, gave a brief summary of HRG's finances:

HRG's Treasurer's Report 2018-19 May to May

Opening Balance May 24, 2018

\$5883.20

Income from membership dues \$800 less expenses approved by the board

End balance May 17, 2019

\$5890.59

Please note: there is \$2625.00 in the Peter Kavanagh Memorial Fund
In the end balance leaving \$3265.00 available for operations

GUEST SPEAKER

Bruce Mackensie of Hamilton Nature Club gave a detailed account with illustrations of how the Grimsby Wetlands evolved from the Biggar WWTP's decommissioned aggregate ponds. He began with the observation that what happened with the Grimsby Wetlands was very similar to what HRG was trying to make happen with the NOTL decommissioned WWTP. The Biggar Ponds were once almost filled in and converted to a grassland area. The Hamilton Nature Club, knowing that the ponds were an important refueling stopover for migrating birds and habitat for many other wildlife creatures, managed to persuade the Region and the DND that filling in was both expensive and unnecessary, and that they had a much better plan for lagoons.

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He explained how some of the ponds were simply left while others were drained, the toxic sludge removed and pile up on the site and allowed to detoxify. It was then spread so that islands would be formed when pond was left to fill up with rainwater and snow melt and become a natural wetland with large expanses of open water between islands. This contradicted the region's experts who had insisted that, without a continuous flow of effluent, the ponds would dry up. The water levels did fluctuate, which was natural and good for wetlands, but with one meter of rainfall and only a third of that lost to evaporation, drying up was not possible.

He explained how, working with supportive politicians and local volunteers, it had been possible to create a design plan for what needed to be done to the ponds. He described how, using volunteers and recycled material, a series of projects had been carried out that made the wetlands more attractive to both wildlife and the public. He referred to the process as one of "green infrastructure replacing sewage infrastructure", and pointed out that as the property matured the wildlife diversified. He also gave good advice to HRG for its pond conversion project: one, if the ponds are drained to remove toxic sludge, make sure the clay sealer is not damaged; and two, when the detoxified sludge is returned to the ponds, ask that it be spread to create islands and the ponds left to refill naturally.

He concluded by describing how successful one of the projects, the removal of phragmites, had been. He ended with two points about phragmites' habitat; that phragmites thrives best on disturbed ground, and, that phragmites does not do well in standing water.

Bruce accepted questions from the floor, mostly about phragmites, and stayed behind to answer more questions after the meeting adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8.30pm.