**Minutes of Joint GREN-CCOB Meeting**

**Feb. 5, 2013, United Church, Paris, ON**

GREN and Concerned Citizens of Brant (CCOB) organized a joint meeting in Paris to hear about issues in both areas of the Grand watershed and to discuss ways we might support one another. About 40 people attended representing GREN, CCOB, Oxford People Against the Landfill (OPAL), Sustainable Brant, The Langford Conservancy, the Tutela Heights Phelps Road Conservancy, and some residents of St. Mary’s.

**Source Water Protection Plan -** Theresa McClenaghan, executive director of the Canadian Environmental Law Association (CELA) summarized the current status of the Plan.

* The proposed SWPP has been or soon will be sent to the Minister of Environment for approval. There is still an opportunity to write requesting the Minister to make changes or improvements. Theresa suggests focusing on a few issues. The Minister may appoint a hearing officer to hold a hearing to discuss the recommendations and send the Plan back the SW Committee to amend it.
* Even after the Plan is approved, citizens can influence the enforcement provisions, as well as future phases as the Plan is reviewed and implemented.
* John Jackson (GREN) and Sandra Parsons (CCOB) will coordinate comments to the Minister on the SWPP.

**Concerned Citizens of Brant (CCOB)**

* Ron Noriss reported that their group was formed to oppose a proposed gravel pit on 600 acres of farmland in Paris near a town well, the Grand River, and a heritage cold-water stream. The group’s concern is water contamination, as the pit is below the water table. The proponent is the Dufferin Company, and the pit permit was issued in 1974 and has been dormant until now.
* The group is working well with local politicians who appreciate their research and information.
* It was noted that aggregate operations are a huge concern throughout the watershed.

**Greenbelts and Status of Waterloo Region Official Plan**

* Kevin Thomason from GREN suggested that groups be proactive by “making their own greenbelt.” They can then take concrete proposals to councils and decision makers, to protect farmland, water, and sensitive landscapes from sprawl.
* He summarized the situation of the Waterloo region ROP, many parts of which are being appealed to the OMB by developers. The Region recently lost at one hearing, with the OMB requiring that significantly more greenfield acreage be allowed for development. The Region is appealing the decision.

**Water Conservation vs. Lake Erie Pipeline**

* Susan Bryant from GREN summarized GREN’s initiative to campaign for water conservation in Waterloo Region rather than the proposed 100 km. pipeline from Lake Erie. The negatives of a pipeline include mega costs (1.2 billion in 2008 dollars), high energy use for pumping and treating, poor water quality in Lake Erie, temptation to unrestrained growth, and more sewage affecting the Grand River.
* Great Lakes United has a trillium grant for water conservation research and action that includes Waterloo region as a pilot model community.
* We need to have discussions with downstream communities also considering the pipeline to understand their water needs and expectations.

**Sustainable Brant, The Langford Conservancy, Tutela Heights Phelps Road Residents Association– Land Use Issues**

* Ella Haley noted that the city of Brantford is surrounded by a greenbelt, and leapfrog development is eating up farmland outside the belt, with some land proposed for industrial zoning as well as plans for a massive subdivision. Walton International own 12-13,000 acres that is buying out farmers, dividing communities, and creating cosy relationships with councilors, and will be flipping the land for big profits.
* With CELA’s support, the group is currently in an OMB hearing.
* Sharon Terry and Gail Bury discussed Walton’s proposed subdivision, which would have a communal septic area of 8 acres on clay, posing a threat to the nearby Grand River.

**Oxford People Against the Landfill (OPAL)**

* Steve McSwiggan from OPAL reported that the group opposes a proposal from the Walker Environmental Group to site a landfill in a limestone quarry near Ingersoll, threatening groundwater quality and quality of life. The company has a lease on 200 acres and options on 2300 acres. This could be Canada’s largest dump.
* The group is developing good relationships with municipal council and their MPP. They asked the MPP why big money is allowed to come into communities and get their way. The MPP took the question the Minister.
* See their active website: opalalliance.ca

The meeting ended with discussion of how to keep in touch, and those who chose to listed their email.