**GREN Minutes – April 24, 2013**

St. John’s Kitchen

1. **Water Symposium at *rare*** – June 8, Slit Barn, 768 Blair Rd., Cambridge, 10:00-2:45
* Bob Burtt is organizing this event with *rare.* He explained that it grew out of concerns about the water pipeline planned for Waterloo Region and communities downstream.
* Susan K. volunteered to make a Facebook page for the event.
1. **People’s Budget Meeting** – Greg Michalenko spoke at this meeting on behalf of GREN; Susan K. and John J. helped write the presentation.
* The meeting was hosted in this Region by the Ontario Federation of Labour to get input into the Ontario budget.
* Greg noted that his comments were the only ones that touched on environmental issues, but it was great to see people ready to stand up for their views.
* The final report was submitted to the Wynn government. It’s on The People’s Budget.ca and OFL.ca. The GREN submission is on our website.
1. **Municipal Elections 2014** – Marc Xuereb from the Labour Council discussed the Council’s plan to start early this time organizing Better Choices Coalition for Waterloo Region.
* Will start consultations in June with local groups, intending to broaden the base and issues beyond just labour. Would like GREN to be in the coalition.
* Coalition will decide on core issues to use for evaluation, analyze all candidates for the three cities, the Region and the school board, and decide who to support. Recruiting volunteers to work for their candidates is also part of the effort.
* GREN chose not to endorse candidates in the last election. Consensus is that we should endorse this time, as it helps people make decisions and increases voting turnout.
* It was decided that we would endorse candidates both as GREN and as part of the Coalition.
* Greg M. asked if there’s solid evidence that endorsements work. Norah Chaloner pointed him to Guelph Civic League.ca
1. **GREN Updates**
2. **Status of ROP and OMB hearings –** Deb Swidrovich summarized: the surprising OMB decision to side with developers against the ROP, thus opening 1013 hectares for sprawl development in the Region.
	* Region is appealing OMB decision in divisional court.
	* John, Deb and Kevin T. have been compiling info to support the Region, getting letters of support from orgs. across the province to pressure the provincial gov’t to support the Region. The province agreed.
	* Now need to get the province to sit at the next OMB hearing on the ROP, concerning the countryside line. Risks involved, as Region would pay developers’ costs if Region loses.
	* **Smartgrowthwaterloo.ca** (put together by Kevin and Deb) explains the issues and tells people how they can help support the Region. Please thank the province and circulate the website.
3. **Source Drinking Water Protection** - John J. reported that GREN received inadequate response to its comments on the Source Water Protection Plan from the SWP Committee. The Plan was submitted to the Minister in February. John sent the GREN comments on to the Minister.
4. **Citizens Climate Lobby** (CCL) – Caterina Lindman reported that people are now organizing a local chapter of the CCL. Since 2007, the Lobby has grown to 80 chapters in US and Canada working for effective energy policies.
	* Key asks are putting a rising fee on carbon and paying dividend to households; ending fossil fuel subsidies; developing renewable energy plan for Canada.
	* For more info and to join, see citizensclimatelobby.ca or contact Caterina.Lindman@gmail.com

1. **Region’s Biosolids** (sewage sludge) – Robert Milligan reported, noting that Cambridge is unhappy about becoming the destination for the Region’s biosolids.
	* Robert says new technology from U Waterloo has not been considered by the Region—an economical and non-smelly process used in Guelph and being installed in Centre Wellington.
	* We don’t know when Region will make final decision.
	* Robert will arrange a speaker about the technology in the fall.
2. **The Peaker Plan** – Norah Chaloner reported on the plan by the Ontario Power Authority and Hydro One to build a new power plant somewhere in this area.
	* She noted that the reason given is to address strain during the 10 peak days of summer. She says retrofitting would do the job. A new plant will cost almost a billion dollars.
	* Norah wants pushback from K-W, Cambridge and Guelph. She will speak about this to any group.
	* For more information, see [www.cleanairalliance.org](http://www.cleanairalliance.org) or contact Norah at nchaloner@hotmail.com There will be a public meeting on it in May in Guelph.

1. **GREN Business**
	1. **GREN Membership fees are due**--$40 for a group, $20 individual, $10 student. Fees support our website and other activities, and paying members get to vote.
	2. **GREN Elections for the Executive** *–* There were no nominations and the current executive agreed to continue. Chair- John Jackson; Vice Chair- Kevin Thomason; Treasurer- Theo Negoita; Secretaries -Greg Michalenko, Susan Koswan, Susan Bryant.

**Next Meetings** – June 8, Water Forum at *rare*

June 27, GREN Potluck Picnic at Kevin’s on Sunfish Lake, Waterloo.

**Minutes by Susan Bryant**