**DRAFT**

**Minutes of GREN Meeting - March 3, 2015**

Christian Science Sunday School, 64 Water St., Kitchener

1. **Waterloo Westside Costco Update – Deb Swidrovich** Concerns about the proposed Costco development on Erb St. include traffic snarls, effect on the nearby ESL areas, paving of 22 acres, mostly for parking, on top of the Waterloo moraine. The City of Waterloo will be doing a comprehensive traffic study, but the development will be going ahead before the traffic study is done. Several GREN folks spoke at the recent City of Waterloo meeting about the development. **Will update GREN when it's time to go to City council.**
2. **Update on activities of Concerned Citizens of Brant (CCOB) – Nick Greenacre and Anne Ehrlich** Main issue is proposal to reopen a large aggregate pit in Paris. The pit is in a wellhead protection area, close to intakes from the Grand River for Brampton’s water supply, and on the Galt-Paris moraine. Under its current licence, it can operate and has started. Currently, the company is applying to the MOECC for a permit to take water for a pond to wash aggregate--just outside the protection areas.

Major concern is high levels of atrazine and other pesticides (endocrine disrupters) from decades of farming, in soil and water. Washing will mobilize the contaminants, and the wastewater will go back into aquifer, carrying the contaminants. Also, leachate from the pond will go into the Grand River. The threat is greatly reduced if aggregate is not washed. The local council supports the recommendation that no approvals be given until proper studies are done.

Lake Erie Source Water Protection Committee (and other SWPCs) is trying to get limits on aggregate mining below the water table. The matter is now going to the minister.

**GREN agreed that we will write a letter to the MOECC requesting they deny the water taking permit, and another to the Source Water Protection Committee supporting their position on mining below the water table.** Sample letters and more information are on the CCOB website—CCOB.ca

1. **Upcoming GREN/Sierra Club Joint Event on Pollinators – Deb S**. At the Princess Twin, April 7, 6:30. There will be 3 speakers (John Bennett (Sierra Club), Lawrence Packer (wild bees) and Paul McKay, a panel discussion, displays, farm and honey products. Free. **{NOTE: This event is sold out as of April 1}**
2. **Greenbelt Review Update – Deb S.** Province's greenbelt consultation tour was at Bingemans on March 25. Their main interest was hearing people’s ideas. Formed small groups for discussion. A number of GRENers attended. The plan will be released in 2016.
3. **Waterloo Region Strategic Plan Update – Greg Michalenko** The Region holds consultations every 4 years to set priorities for the new council. Greg and other GREN members attended a focus group. A wide range of interests were represented--poverty, housing, food, etc. **Go to http://www.regionofwaterloo.ca/en/regionalgovernment/publicinput.asp to participate on-line or to find a focus group. Consultation goes until June.** The Region will put out a draft we can comment on.
4. **Update on Province's Climate Change consultation – John Jackson** There was great turnout, about 150 including some GRENers, at the March 19 event at KPL. About 50 people spoke. **Greg suggested GREN write a letter to the presenters expressing how nice it was to be listened to.**
5. **Update on Region’s Waste Issues – John J.** Changes are coming, and the question is whether GREN sets up a committee to respond to the Region before all decisions are made. Plan will be finalized in 2015-16.

The Region has been updating its Waste Management Master Plan (30 year plan), saying we need to look at an alternative to landfill, such as "thermal technology," which means incineration. John listed some problems with incineration—very expensive to build (300-500 million), outdated emissions standards, inefficiency as energy source.

Equally concerning, the Region’s plan does not set targets for diversion but only discusses various options for collection as ways of achieving diversion. Other municipalities are more aggressive. Waterloo Region’s current diversion rate is 52% while Guelph’s is 69%. This rate includes the residential sector only, ignoring the industrial, commercial and institutional sectors, which contribute 60% of the current Waterloo landfill volume. No goals or incentives are planned to address these sectors.

John told the story of how Halifax dealt with the waste issue. People protested when the plan was for incinerator, so city council asked the citizens to come up with a plan. A committee of 20 citizens were funded for consultants and had a plan in a year, which was then implemented. Diversion rates have been very high.

**It was agreed that GREN set up a committee on the waste issue, and suggested that we push the Region to hold public consultations on the issue.**

Thanks to Don for negotiating the use of the Christian Science Sunday School space.

Minutes by Susan Bryant