**GREN Updates from May 2, 2019 Meeting**

**UPDATES**

**Hidden Valley- Deaun** The land use document is going to the standing committee of Kitchener Council on June 10, but the draft had not yet been sent to Deaun and the committee. Kitchener staff person Brandon Sloan wants comments back to put together the staff report. Deaun will be away in May. Yvonne will help John to put together GREN comments. {The document has since been sent out. Gord Nicolls’ draft comments on it are attached.}

**Ford Government**

* **Environmental Defence** is organizing a 2- day all-Ontario meeting to build a movement and organize resistance to Ford attacks on environment. (**June 8 and 9, and the meeting takes place in KW!).** Day 1 is a conference with experts--what's at stake and breakout sessions. Day 2 is workshops to share stories and provide training and tools. **GREN has been asked to help. We will, when we find out what's needed.** Details are sketchy, as John received notice of the event just before meeting time. Tickets will be on sale soon. GREN may organize a GREN meeting for the end of day 2, which will likely be in the early afternoon.
* Kevin commented on the **Ford growth plan** to open up the housing market and get more stock. The document is vague, but the move will make it far easier to get around urban boundaries. He noted that the wording of such documents is sometimes lifted verbatim from comments made by developers.
* The Ford government is bringing back the **OMB** so developers aren't hampered. It will keep its new name—Local Planning Appeal Tribunal (LPAT).
* We noted the changes to the **Ontario Endangered Species Act.**
* Regional review re: **amalgamation.** Kevin notes that most of our environmental protections will be gone if Region goes, as well as municipal protections based on the countryside line. The townships are especially worried, as the rural community is the most threatened.

**Federal**

* John noted that the changes to the **federal Environmental Assessment Act** are awful. They exempt nuclear facilities and some oil sands. Wording is lifted directly out of the oil companies’ brief. Now, "only the biggest issues need to go through a full E.A.”
* **Mike Morrice**, founder of Sustainable Waterloo Region, is running as the Green Party candidate for Kitchener Centre in the federal election. His campaign launch party is May 16, 7:00, at Catalyst137. **Special guest is Elizabeth May**. Tickets on Eventbrite.

Minutes by Susan Bryant