Minutes of GREN Meeting

May 20, 2009

St. John’s Kitchen, Kitchener

**GREN Updates and Decisions**

1. **Rock out with GREN**-GREN fundraising dance is on June 12, 8:00-1:00, Uptown Waterloo Legion - 19 Regina St. - Second Floor - elevator and overnight parking. Tickets $10.00. Bring a snack. Tickets available at the door or in advance by emailing Susan Koswan. Suggest your favorite music! Come! Sell tickets!
2. **Finances and Membership**-Current finances $440.23, plus $150. from Earth Day event = total $590.23. GREN website is paid for 3 years. We need more memberships.
3. **Media Strategy**-The executive met and discussed Bob Burtt’s media strategy proposal. Bob and Susan K. are putting together a media list, and Susan K will do press releases.
4. **Waterloo Region ROP Committee Update** (Kevin T. and Deb S.) At the recent Regional Council meeting on the 2nd draft of the ROP, many developers and several GREN members spoke. The draft is progressive and getting generally good support. Some farmers complained they weren’t consulted about protected countryside, and council could be responsive to this. The final draft is due in June. Yvonne F. suggested GREN members write letters to the editor in support of ROP. She will take the lead. Deb noted concern that new draft changes language from “fixed” countryside line to “long term.” We need to remind council to stand firm on the countryside line. Dr. Emil Frind has written a strong piece on protecting recharge areas, and she will make sure it gets out to the media. Jane Schneider will contact Mark ? (Fed. Of Ag.) to encourage him to publish his concerns, and John J. will do a letter for GREN.
5. **Greenbelt Committee Update** (Kevin T.) Kevin says the Region of Waterloo considers the protected countryside as equivalent to a greenbelt. If Region pulls back on the protection in the final draft of the ROP, what does that mean for the greenbelt? We’ll see when new ROP appears.
6. **Pipeline to Lake Erie Committee Update** (John J.) The Committee met for the first time. Noted that we’re not in panic mode on this issue. We have time to develop a campaign. There are 6 components to our first steps: 1) Look at Region’s plan and critique it. For example, no mention of energy costs of a pipeline. 2) List the environmental implications of the pipeline (i.e. less protection for groundwater). 3) Show there’s a better way to meet water needs. For example, “reduce, reuse, and recycle” applied to water, as in Tony and Carol Maas’ work. Find examples where such methods are in use. Anticipate and prepare responses to technical and political questions that would arise. 4) Define the role of the Region, the municipalities, the province in implementing the alternative way, through legislation and by-laws (not just education). 5) Identify potential allies, both individuals and organizations. 6) Identify the proponents of the pipeline and consider ways of dealing with them. Our next step is to put together questions and a list of research for items—not to try to answer them as yet. Norah Chaloner and Bob Burtt have joined the Pipeline Committee.
7. **Sustainability Charter** (Susan K) Susan K wants to design a charter of sustainability principles to propose that councils adopt as a template in assessing all their decisions. She and Yvonne F. will work on this in the fall.

**Member Updates**

1. **Waterloo Region Rapid Transit** (John J) We discussed whether GREN should take a position. Some concerns were expressed about current transit proposal. It was noted that the province is paying most of the capital costs, in exchange for population growth in the region. Noted that if the environmental community does not support rapid transit, it won’t happen. Also that intensification of the urban core protects the countryside by preventing sprawl, and that tracks (rather than just buses) provide security to development in the core, since they won’t move. Norah noted that Guelph is interested in getting a rapid transit links to K-W in the long term. It was agreed that John will present GREN’s position (support, with qualifications) to Regional Council on June 10. Kevin and Susan K will draft up a statement and it will be emailed to GREN members for comment before it is finalized.
2. **Grand River Council of Canadians – deferred**
3. **MOE Moraine Decision** (Lulu L.) Lulu’s petition to have the MOE review the Waterloo moraine has been denied. The report commissioned by the MOE to respond to her concerns excluded most of the relevant information and issues. There’s support among MOE people for Lulu’s concerns, and she will continue to pursue this.
4. **Grand River Chronicles** (Susan B) The K-W Art Gallery has an exhibit of 3 local artists chronicling the Grand River in their own way. It’s on until July 5 and well worth a visit.
5. **Lakeside Parklands near Greenbrook wells** (Tibor ?, Mary Ann Vanden Elzen) Some citizens from Lakeside Park area expressed concerns about the City of Kitchener’s plan to sell some of Lakeside Park for development. Some of the land is contaminated and some is wooded. The citizens are organizing to oppose the sale. It was suggested they might join forces with the group opposing sale of some of Kiwanis Park, and noted that the City has overspent on downtown development and is now trying to recoup by selling parkland.
6. **News from Guelph** (Norah C.) The Hanlon Expressway will become a high-speed, 400-type highway, in spite of opposition. That battle is lost. Guelph people are still working on getting council to modify plans for Hanlon Business Park, a 675 acre site with a coldwater stream. The plan calls for removal of 750 trees and laying lots of impervious surface.

**Next Meeting**—June 18, 7:15, in Waterloo, focusing on water fluoridation, at Waterloo Mennonite Brethren Church, 245 Lexington Road (corner of Davenport), Waterloo. There will be no meetings in July and August.

Minutes prepared by Susan Bryant