**Minutes of Meeting of Grand River Environmental Network (GREN)**

# April 27, 2011, 7:15

# St. John’s Kitchen, Kitchener

1. **Discussion of Light Rail Transit – GREN’s Position**

* Waterloo Regional Council will vote on the transit options on June 15. There was discussion whether GREN should take a position, and what position GREN should take.
* Kevin S. urged a position in support of Regional staff’s preferred LRT option, noting that if we don’t get an efficient transit option now, it will be put off for a generation. The money promised by the feds and province now won’t be available for long. He also stated that the new ROP, with hard countryside lines, depends upon renewed public transit to be successful. Others expressed concerns about the routes and technologies in the current transit recommendation.
* After some discussion, the following motion was tabled as the GREN position:

*Urge Region to adopt a combination of L9 & L3 (the administration’s recommendation to council). [this means that they commit now to having a light rail train system all the way from St. Jacob’s farmers market to the Ainslie Street bus terminal in Cambridge (L9), but that they begin by having rail only from St. Jacob’s farmers market to Fairview Mall and Bus rapid transit to Cambridge (L3); 2) Urge Region to now commit to and immediately begin rapidly implementing a reformed bus system throughout the three communities, with new Express Bus Routes and new local bus route system as shown on page 10 of their “Connecting to the Future” document; 3) integrate this with a reassessment of the road system needs given that the bus and rail system is dramatically improved; 4) while the details of the LRT system are being developed over the next two years, that they continue to explore new technologies; and 5) ensure that planning policies are implemented (as described in the Region’s new official plan) that will support the transit system.*

* Since there was not consensus among the members present, a vote was taken on the motion. Only paid-up GREN members are eligible to vote. The vote of those present was 10 in favor and 2 against. It was agreed we would poll the rest of the GREN members by e-mail.

1. **Pipeline Committee Update**

Susan B. reported that the committee has not met since last spring. The committee had developed materials for a campaign against the pipeline and then it was decided a launch was premature, with ROP, LRT, and an election taking precedence.

* John J. noted that Great Lakes United has been granted Trillium funding for a 3-year water conservation pilot, with Waterloo Region being one of the 3 communities to pilot the project.
* Susan suggested that the thinking about the pipeline may be changing, and that we should perhaps recast the campaign as a pro water conservation campaign rather than an anti-pipeline campaign. She suggested re-starting with a GREN meeting featuring speakers from the Region who can enlighten us on the current thinking---perhaps Eric Hodgins (head of water protection for Waterloo Region) and/or Jane Mitchell (Region councillor and new chair of GRCA).

1. **ROP Update**

* Kevin S. reported that there will be a pre hearing on the OMB challenges to the Waterloo ROP on May 20 or 22. Regional planner Kevin Eby will take the lead on behalf of the Region. There are 22 challenges to the ROP, and the pre hearing will attempt to scope the issues. Resolving them could take years.

1. **Transition K-W**

* Alisa McClurg from TransitionKW spoke about the history of the Transition movement world-wide and the success of the Mayor’s Forum on April 2, in the City of Waterloo, with a focus on values and an approach called “facilitated networking.” The aim is to bring people together for a common vision.
* The next local gatherings are on May 7 and June 18. You can register for the next Forum and see video of the last one at <http://www.transitionkw.ca/mayorsforumseries.html>  
  <http://resilientwaterloo.ca/mayorsforumseries>

1. **Hidden Valley**

* Daphne N. showed a map illustrating the extension of River Road that is planned through Hidden Valley in Kitchener, noting the harm it will do to the ecosystem and the threat to the reservoir for 25% of the area’s drinking water. She also discussed light pollution in the area from Highway 8.
* The Region’s public consultation of the extension is on 4:30-8:00 on May 17. Q & A is 7:00-8:00. Knights of Columbus Hall, 110 Manitou Drive, Kitchener.
* The information Package for the PCC will be posted on the Region’s main website under Council/Committees Meetings, agendas, with the Planning and Works Committee Agenda for May 3, 2011, and on a new project website:  [www.regionofwaterloo.ca/riverextension](http://www.regionofwaterloo.ca/riverextension)

1. **Other Business**

* Kevin S. and Deb S. attended the International Greenbelt Conference, where a draft agreement was signed to work together as a global greenbelt network.
* Susan B. noted that the GREN executive had sent short letter to the MNR opposing the Melancthon Quarry.
* Yvonne F. reported that the City of Kitchener will be closing downtown King St. to vehicle traffic on four Sundays from June until September. GREN could have booth there.

**Postscript on the Transit Vote by GREN members**

On May 2, John J. sent an e-mail to All GREN noting that all 17 paid-up GREN members had voted on the motion quoted above. The motion passed with 14 in favour and 3 opposed. Therefore, this is the GREN position that we will be promoting to the Regional Council. John noted the following:  
  
*The fact that this is the GREN position does not mean that GREN members shouldn’t present a differing view to Regional Council if they so wish. Just make sure that it is presented on behalf of yourself or of another group that you are part of – but not on behalf of GREN. Likewise, even if you support the motion that GREN has adopted, we encourage you to speak to or e-mail the councillors and participate in the various public input sessions promoting the position. The more people and groups that speak out the better.*