**GREN Meeting Minutes - Jan. 25, 2012**

Waterloo Region Headquarters

1. **Presentation on Source Water Protection in Waterloo Region, by Leanne Lobe, Supervisor –Source Water Protection for Region of Waterloo**

* Waterloo Region is in the Lake Erie Source Protection Region, which consists of four watershed areas: Kettle Creek, Catfish Creek, Long Point Region and Grand River.

|  |
| --- |
|  |

* As per Ontario’s Clean Water Act (2006), the Region and other municipalities are required to develop a plan to protect municipal water. The plan will a) identify the sources of municipal drinking water, including municipal wells, river and lake intakes, b) outline the threats to the quality and quantity of water in source areas, c) propose actions needed to reduce those threats and protect source water.
* The task of developing protection plans is guided by the Lake Erie Region Source Protection Committee, and the GRCA co-ordinates the planning process. The first step is an Assessment Report to identify all the water sources and the threats to each. The Region completed its assessment report in draft form in 2010 and submitted it to the MOE for comments. MOE comments are not yet in. The Region has gone ahead discussing strategies and drafting policies for the final protection plan. Public consultation will take place once the policies and final plan are approved---probably not before fall 2013.
* For doing Assessment Reports, the MOE has prescribed 19 specific threats (e.g. chemical storage, manure spreading, septics) and identified the specific circumstances where the threat can be actual ones (e.g. within 100 meters of a municipal well, sandy soil, high water table). The risk for any area is calculated based on the hazard rating of the threat, on a 10-point scale, and the vulnerability of the water source, on a 10-point scale. The risk score is calculated by multiplying the hazard rating by the vulnerability score. The result will be a number on a 100-point scale: **Risk score = Hazard rating x Vulnerability score.** Based on the results, threats are placed into one of three categories:
  + Significant threat - 80 to 100
  + Moderate threat - 60-79
  + Low threat - 41-50

{Note: This is complicated! To learn more, go to [Lake Erie Source Protection Region](http://www.sourcewater.ca) website}

* Chloride, DNAPLs, TCE, and nitrates are the main threats to the Region’s wells. The Region is working on drafting the protection policies. The potential costs of implementation could be huge. The current thinking is to
  + Be more restrictive nearer the wells, or where specific wells are particularly vulnerable.
  + Use a carrot and stick approach, starting with a more voluntary approach for landowners in the early years and becoming more restrictive after the first 5-year period.
  + Use existing programs wherever possible.
* The Clean Water Act gives the Region more tools than the traditional ones of incentives and education. To address significant threats, the Region can prohibit an activity; restrict land use; negotiate individual risk management plans (RMPs) with landowners.

* For example, the draft policies to deal with the threat of salt on parking lots close to wells:
  + Large lot - require training and accreditation in the Smart about Salt program
  + Medium lot - give incentives for operators to get above accreditation
  + Small lot - educate the operators on wise use of salt
* Question: How does the Region propose to educate the public about salt and other threats? Leanne responded they’re already doing it, for example with the Smart About Salt program (a Region initiative that is now national.) However, it’s tricky because while they want to get out the message, they don’t want to scare people into not drinking the water.

* Question: Who will enforce the restrictions? Leanne responded that the Region will have inspectors. They are working on how many and the costs.
* Question: What about surface water intake zones? Leanne responded that there are no significant threats reported in the water intake zones from the Grand River.
* Leanne noted that the Region’s Official Plan can be more restrictive than what can be written into the Source Water Protection Plan. She noted “holes” in the Clean Water Act on aggregate issues and pre-existing contaminated sites.

1. **Presentation on Saving Hidden Valley - Daphne Nichols**

* Daphne explained the negative impacts on the ESPAs and rare features (including breeding areas of Jefferson salamanders) of Hidden Valley of the proposed extension of River Rd. and exit from Highway 7-8.
* It was noted that whenever alternative routes are proposed and considered by the City, the Ministry of Transportation steps in and nixes those options.
* Daphne requests letters to the Record and councilors suggesting that the City of Kitchener use LEAF funds to purchase the property. (See below appendix for her Jan. 25 e-mail with specifics.)

1. **Region’s Proposal for Private Participation in LRT – John Jackson**

* John noted concern about a little publicized proposal for a public/private arrangement for the LRT. A short article in the Record gave Feb. 7 as the date for the public to respond to Regional Council on the issue. The Region’s report on the proposal will be issued on Jan. 27 after 4:30. That’s very little time in which to make intelligent comments.

* The public does not get to see the contract, which is negotiated in private, which makes it difficult to comment.
* GREN agreed to have John draft a statement from GREN objecting to the short timeline for public consideration and comment and requesting a six-week period. John will circulate the statement to GREN by e-mail.

***Appendix: E-mail from Daphne Nichols to GREN, Jan 25, 2012***

Hi friends of Hidden Valley, friends of clean water and air,

The lead editorial in Saturday's Record (link below) recommends that those people who care about saving Hidden Valley, Kitchener as a "Natural Area Park" should contact their councillors **now**. Suggest to Kitchener Councillors that the remaining LEAF money be used to buy Hidden Valley. (Local Environmental Action Fund) Please, write while the issue's hot!

 Write your councillor, in fact, copy all the councillors and Mayor Carl Zehr: [council@kitchener.ca](mailto:council@kitchener.ca) and/or write the Editor, John Roe ( [jroe@therecord.com](mailto:jroe@therecord.com)), in response to the article. If you're short on time, you could simply say "I agree with  the Record editorial of January 21st, 2012: We must preserve Hidden Valley".

If you live in Waterloo, or Cambridge, your councillors can encourage the Region to take a stronger stand, especially to protect Regional drinking water if the River Rd. extension goes ahead:  For all  Regional Councillors and Chair Seiling:  [council@region.waterloo.on.ca](mailto:council@region.waterloo.on.ca). (Or it might be the plural[councillors@region.waterloo.on.ca](mailto:pluralcouncillors@region.waterloo.on.ca) , if it bounces back. Sorry)   
If you'd like to write a longer letter, here is a bit more background information.

Hidden Valley is much more than a **beautiful** area of woods, fields and Provincially Significant wetlands. It's 200 acres of healthy ecosystems which impact our water and air quality. Water and air impact our health, and therefore our economy. Hidden Valley's worth as **"Natural Capital"** should be evaluated, before any development or road construction occurs in the area. Without clean water to drink and clean air to breathe, what else will matter?  
   
**Water:** The water from the threeProvincially Significant Wetlands in Hidden Valley enters the Grand River, right where 22% of the Region's

 drinking water is piped out and sent to Manheim for treatment. Any contaminants from development, roads and parking lots would end up there. But not all contaminants, including road salt, oil and gasoline can be removed, so surely the precautionary principle should apply. That would mean that the business parks (zoned B1 and B2, which could include manufacturing) and the subdivision which are permitted in Hidden Valley, should NOT be constructed. This beautiful and biodiverse ecosystem is simply too valuable, just as it is! The zoning bylaws  were established 24 years ago are out-of-date: current zoning standards, would not permit this kind of development. Hidden Valley needs to be rezoned.   
   
**Air:** The construction of the River Rd. extension, including new ramps onto highway 8, would require clearcutting a large portion of the mature forest near highway 8. The Grand River Conservation Authority recommends forest coverage of 30%, but  Kitchener has less than 12% forest coverage. Trees produce oxygen and remove an equal volume of carbon dioxide. How much does your councillor think we should value of this natural air purifying system, when air pollution in KW is the worst in the province?

**Parks:** At a time when the population of Waterloo Region is going to increase by 200,000 people in the next 19 years, we need a variety of parks for recreational needs. Hidden Valley, with it's wonderful wildflowers, nesting and migratory birds, and beautiful hills and valleys is an oasis in the heart of the Region. We need more parks, not fewer parks. Let's preserve Hidden Valley.

Please send an email and then circulate this request to as many of your friends as possible. As the Record states, now is the time to speak up. [gordanddaph@sympatico.ca](mailto:gordanddaph@sympatico.ca)

Waterloo Region Record, Saturday, January 21, 2012  
Let's preserve Hidden Valley  
<http://www.therecord.com/opinion/editorial/article/658865--let-s-preserve-hidden-valley>

Minutes by Susan Bryant