**GREN Minutes Nov. 12, 2015**

**Christian Science Church nursery, Kitchener**

**Brant Greenbelt**- Ella Haley and Richard from Sustainable Brant

* Ella explained the current disputes over where to locate the greenbelt in Brant—province won’t specify. Proposed options by municipal planner aren’t good enough, don’t protect farmland.
* Noted the big land buy-ups in Brant and elsewhere by Walton company, and developers using farmers in their battle against greenbelt
* Suggestions from GREN members: 1) Propose your own map of the greenbelt that meets greenbelt criteria, based on science. Perhaps base it on waterways and moraines, with corridors for connecting them; 2) Get a “rock star” to support your cause—e.g. Sarah Harmer, Margaret Atwood.
* Rally at Paris Fairgrounds on Nov. 16, 7:00. Check sustainablebrant.org for more information.

**Update on Provincial Greenbelt** - Kevin T

* Crombie Report on the greenbelt plans, including recommendations, will be released soon, and there will be public consultations.
* Kevin noted that the community will need to give our politicians confidence that the public supports any recommended expansions of the greenbelt.

**ESL Road Study –** Deb S

* The road study confirmed the risks the ESL folks already know about—problems that will be caused if Wilmot Line gets paved. No recommendations in the report.

**GREN Projects for the Year** – John J

John asked for ideas for projects, noting that at least one must be watershed-wide. Members who will take the lead on a project will prepare a one-pager summarizing the issue, why it is important, why GREN should do it, potential benefits and drawbacks of GREN doing it, concrete suggestions for action (e.g. lobbying, public events, research, etc.) These are due in early January. Topics suggested at the meeting:

* Expand the ALUS program – Susan K (See below for description of ALUS)
* Proposed incinerator option for garbage – John
* Sewage sludge and biosolids issue – Lulu
* Impacts of gravel pits and push for rehabilitation – Temara Brown volunteered by Lulu
* Lobbying for land trust policy in Waterloo Region – Greg
* GRCA- working for better consultation and enforcement – Deb
* Water Taking permits – Bob B
* Expansion of the greenbelt – Deaun Moulton
* Regional transportation and green infrastructure – Kevin
* Ways to raise GREN profile (radio show, etc.)

Alternative Land Use Services, or ALUS for short, is a unique incentive program that recognizes the role farmers and ranchers play in producing both food and a healthy environment. Supported by Ontario Nature and the local communities, ALUS is a voluntary program that allows for community-led, farmer-delivered conservation initiatives.

Through ALUS, farmers receive payments to conserve and restore natural features such as wetlands, creeks, shorelines, native grasses and trees, and unique ecosystems like tall grass prairie and oak savannah. In this way, parcels of farmland are converted into habitat for wildlife.

**Next GREN Meeting**: early January, date to be determined