

# Minutes



## Annual General Meeting

March 2, 2019

### Hawk Ridge Golf & Country Club, Severn, ON

The 2019 Annual General Meeting (AGM) was called to order by President Doug Christie at 3:01 p.m. Those in attendance were 225 members and guests.

<b>1. Welcome Guests</b>		Lead: Doug Christie
Discussion/Conclusions:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Welcome given to everyone; acknowledging that the land on which we gather is the traditional territory of Haudenosaunee, Anishnaabeg, Wendat and Metis Peoples. This territory is covered by the Upper Canada Treaties.</li><li>• Welcome given to political friends: Bruce Stanton, MP Simcoe North; Mike Burkett, Severn Township Mayor; Jay Fallis, City of Orillia Councillor; and Scott Macpherson, Oro-Medonte Councillor.</li></ul>		
<b>2. Review of Previous Minutes</b>		Lead: Lisa Neville
Discussion/Conclusions:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lisa Neville read highlights from the 2018 AGM minutes.</li><li>• Minutes for the 2018 AGM accepted as provided in the AGM handouts and as posted on the website in the AGM pre-reading materials.</li></ul>		
<b>Motion:</b> To approve the minutes of the 2018 Annual General Meeting of The Couchiching Conservancy.		
Moved by: Lisa Neville	Seconded by: Neil Gray	Vote: <b>Carried</b>
<b>3. President's Remarks</b>		Lead: Doug Christie
Discussion/Conclusions:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• With the ending of his two-year presidency, Doug Christie called staff members to the stage to be recognized for the smooth running of The Couchiching Conservancy during his term.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Dortehea Hangaard, Tanya Clark, David Hawke, Courtney Baker, Joelle Burnie, Ron Reid (absent), Kathy Connor, Ginny Moore (absent), Meagan Coughlin, and Mark Bisset were all individually recognized and thanked for their talent and dedication.</li></ul></li></ul>		

- Members and volunteers, as well as the board of directors, also thanked.

**4. Treasurer’s Report**

Lead: Jack Booth

Discussion/Conclusions:

- Jack Booth reviewed *The Couchiching Conservancy Financial Statements for the Year Ended October 31, 2018* provided in the AGM handouts and posted on the website in the AGM pre-reading materials. Highlights included:
  - Acquisition of the 730-acre Ron Reid Nature Reserve (RRNR):
    - both revenues (higher donations and grants lines) and expenses (property and easement acquisition line) increased significantly over the prior year;
    - reserves for the protection and stewardship of properties increased by \$157,000;
    - fundraising increased the cash position to \$449,000, as well as increased deferred contribution;
    - capital assets increased by \$502,000.
  - Dale easement donation increased capital assets further by \$125,000.
  - Acquisition reserve funds increased to \$201,000, including a \$71,000 donation.
  - Heartwood endowment fund reached \$278,000, and pledges estimated at \$2.4 million.
  - Investment income more than doubled to \$38,000 – funds are being invested at the Community Foundation of Orillia and Area, and held in acquisition and property protection reserves and stewardship endowment fund.
  - Wage and benefit costs increased due in part to increased number of properties being managed and additional staff required. Grants were obtained to cover most of the increase.
    - going forward need to balance these costs with future property acquisition
  - The positive financial results for 2018 year largely due to generosity of supporters e.g., fundraising goal for the RRNR exceeded by \$57,000.
  - Net assets increased by \$899,000 to \$5.9 million, of which just under \$4.8 million consists of property and easements.
- Thousands of volunteer hours not reflected in these financial statements but is a key factor to the strong financial position and long-term success of The Couchiching Conservancy.
- Jack Booth thanked all supporters, volunteers, staff and board members, as well as the auditors Hehn Trickey for their timely work.

**Motion:** To receive the financial statements for the year ended October 31, 2018.

Moved by: Jack Booth

Seconded by: Ken Thomson

Vote: **Carried**

**Motion:** To appoint Hehn Trickey Professional Corporation Chartered Accountants as auditor for the year ending October 31, 2019.

Moved by: Jack Booth

Seconded by: Ann Gray

Vote: **Carried**

**5. Past President’s Council Report**

Lead: Cathy Massig

Discussion/Conclusions:

- Cathy Massig spoke of her reasons for pledging money to the Heartwood fund, and urged members to consider becoming a contributor.

## Discussion/Conclusions:

- Mark Bisset thanked Doug Christie for his words to the staff and thanked him for all his work. He also thanked members and guests for attending the AGM and investing in the ideas of The Couchiching Conservancy.
- New Strategic Plan (2020-25):
  - Pam Fulford is leading the steering committee to build the next plan.
  - Encouraged members to help build the plan by joining the conversation through opportunities such as focus groups, surveys and other outreach.
  - Committee members are: Pam Fulford, Gord Ball, Dale Leadbeater, Margaret Pomeroy, Dorthea Hangaard, and Mark Bisset.
  - Most of the key objectives of the current plan (2014-19) have been met, including:
    - renovation of Grant's Woods office;
    - new natural heritage acquisition strategy;
    - significantly increased reserves for stewardship and operations;
    - grown volunteer and supporter base; and
    - increased staff compliment.
    - goal of protecting 2,500 acres almost met with 2,200 acres protected and still 9 months of the year left
- Natural Heritage Acquisition Strategy:
  - To ensure use of resources to the greatest effect by being strategic about the properties protected.
  - Shows the most ecologically important places in the region, along with connecting links and buffers.
  - Changes since the first Natural Heritage Action Plan (1990s) include looking beyond our borders at the movement of species in the face of climate change, and species at risk.
  - To identify priority areas, a shared mapping exercise of Simcoe County and parts of the City of Kawartha Lakes was completed with Oak Ridges Moraine Land Trust and Huronia Land Conservancy.
  - Black and Head River corridor is a high priority area, and we are looking for properties to make corridor connections. Currently, in negotiations with two landowners in this zone, and working on idea of acquisition and stewardship campaign.
  - Consultation occurred with 17 of our partner organizations on the new strategy, which will guide acquisition (Ron Reid, primary author).
- Dedication at the property of the RRNR occurred in 2018 honouring Ron Reid's lifetime achievement in conservation. More than 100 people attended.
- Cedarhurst property:
  - 1,300-acre property within the heart of the Carden Alvar, sold to developers with plans for a shooting range, which could include 3 km of berms, new roads and noise.
  - Have notified the municipality of our concerns and worked to improve the fill bylaw.
    - acceptance of fill in rural areas increasing because laws governing infilling of properties is weaker here, and cities, such as Toronto, will no longer accept the fill generated there
  - Letter/email campaign held to make the City of Kawartha Lakes aware of opposition.
  - Currently, with the Nature Conservancy of Canada, trying to make an offer to purchase the property. If an application is submitted, will continue to oppose development of the property.

- Planner has been retained through funding already received, but will mobilize a fundraising campaign if/when an application is submitted.
- Advocacy work must be balanced with our goals of protecting and stewarding our properties.
- Sheila MacFeeters legacy gifts from her estate have helped build a significant reserve for acquisition and supported our Citizen Science program. Both of these uses are connected because we must not take on new properties unless we can look after them.
- Citizen Science program, 2018:
  - 148 volunteers monitoring properties, of which 80 were new volunteers;
  - 219 visits made to properties;
  - 9 training sessions held;
  - Close to 1,500 hours of stewardship; and
  - 500 observations submitted to provincial databases.
  - Collected information used to make important stewardship decisions; more people involved means more power to protect properties.
- Volunteers also doing other important work, including committee work, property maintenance, acting as ambassadors, etc.
- Mark Bisset thanked all the volunteers for their efforts and support.

**7. Legacy Landscapes**

Lead: David Hawke

Discussion/Conclusions:

- David Hawke reminded guests that the Legacy Landscapes art show is still on until March 24, 2019 at the Orillia Museum of Art & History (OMAH).
- The team consisted of: David and Juliana Hawke, co-creators; Mary Ann Tully, co-creator; Shannon Hawke, advertising; Tanya Clark, social media; and Dave Wilkins, show lighting. Also acknowledged the five months of free gallery space provided by OMAH.
- To date approximately \$1,500 raised.
- A catalogue of the show is now available for purchase.

**8. Recognition of Volunteers**

Lead: Bob Sullivan

Discussion/Conclusions:

- Bob Sullivan recognized the work of the Citizen Science volunteers, as well as individuals, David and Juliana Hawke, for their volunteer work on the Legacy Landscapes project.

**9. Election of New Board**

Lead: Mark Bisset

Discussion/Conclusions:

- Biographies of the proposed slate of directors for 2019 provided in the AGM handouts and on the website in the AGM pre-reading materials.
- The slate of nominees for the 2019-20 board are: Jamie Ross as President, and Doug Christie, Jack Booth, Lisa Neville, Wendy Lowry, Robert Sullivan, Pam Fulford, Kathy Hunt and Neil Gray as Directors.
- Mark Bisset asked three times: “Are there any nominations from the floor?” Seeing none the motion was read.

<b>Motion:</b> To accept the slate of candidates as recommended by the Nominations Committee for 2019-2020.		
Moved by: Tom Wilson	Seconded by: Judy Probst	Vote: <b>Carried</b>
<b>10. Incoming President's Remarks</b>		Lead: Jamie Ross
Discussion/Conclusions:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jamie Ross thanked those present for the vote of confidence in him and is looking forward to protecting natural habitats.</li> <li>• Welcome to the two new board members, Kathy Hunt and Neil Gray.</li> <li>• Said good-bye and thanks to Margaret Pomeroy and David Homer who are leaving the board.</li> <li>• Thanked Doug Christie for all his work as president.</li> </ul>		
<b>11. Guest Speaker: Janet Sumner</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wendy Lowry introduced the AGM's guest speaker, Janet Sumner, Executive Director of the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society's Wildlands League, co-chair of the National Advisory Panel, and an environmentalist.</li> <li>• Presentation by Janet Sumner: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Two greatest environmental challenges of our time are climate change and biodiversity loss, which are connected and their solutions are connected.</li> <li>○ What can we do? Protect the land and water, and stop burning fossil fuels.</li> <li>○ Need functioning and healthy ecoregions, and strategies for protecting freshwater, the boreal forests (major carbon storage), NW Passage and the Arctic, and the Emerald Edge (largest intact coastal rainforest).</li> <li>○ Must keep wildlife corridors open e.g., Yellowstone to Yukon.</li> <li>○ Need to build climate change resiliency and must mitigate flood risks.</li> <li>○ Protection network of corridors required and need human connection for advocacy.</li> <li>○ Government Funds available for reaching the 17% protected area goal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ first round of funds was for \$10 million and bumped to \$14 million (very few provincial applications);</li> <li>▪ second round of funds for \$175 million and have received &gt;240 expressions of interest; proposals due end of March 2019;</li> <li>▪ may exceed the target 17% and reach 22%;</li> <li>▪ CPAWs is trying to bring together the groups who are trying to protect property; the federal government was largely unaware of the amount of interest.</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Future work: program for stewardship and long-term care of protected areas.</li> <li>○ Funding Collaboration by Foundations to leverage more money for the federal Environment Minister; supports crown land and large parcels of property.</li> <li>○ Governments are not monolithic; Ontario government may wish to expand the living legacy sites and have put 1-2 expressions of interest in for federal funding.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>		

Meeting adjourned at 5:15 p.m. by Doug Christie.

Minutes Recorded by: Lisa Neville, Board Secretary