



Grand River Conservation Authority Agenda – CA Act Regulations Committee

Date: September 9, 2021
Time: 11:00 a.m.
Location: GRCA Zoom Virtual Meeting
Members Present: John Challinor II, Susan Foxtton, Chris White
Regrets: Michael Harris, Helen Jowett
Staff: Samantha Lawson, Karen Armstrong

1. Call to Order

J.Challinor assumed the Chair and called the meeting to order at 11:10 a.m.

2. Certification of Quorum

The Secretary-Treasurer certified quorum with three members present.

3. Chair's Remarks

None.

4. Review of Agenda

Moved by: Susan Foxtton

Seconded by: Chris White

THAT the agenda for the Conservation Authorities Act Regulations Committee Meeting be approved as circulated.

Carried.

5. Declarations of Pecuniary Interest

None.

6. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Moved by: Chris White

Seconded by: Susan Foxtton

THAT the minutes of the previous Conservation Authorities Act Regulations Committee Meeting held on June 15, 2021 be approved as circulated.

Carried.

7. Discussion Items:

7.1. Exception Request for Chair and Vice-Chair Term Limits and Rotation

7.1.1. MECP Guidance on submitting requests for exceptions under the CA Act

- K.Armstrong provided an overview of MECP requirements for the submission of exception requests, which include a request letter, the completed template form, a clear statement through a Board resolution with a recorded vote, and a copy of the meeting minutes at which the resolution was moved

7.1.2. Proposed draft GRCA exception request letter and template

- K.Armstrong noted that the draft exception request letter was prepared based on feedback previously provided by the Board, as well as letters from other conservation authorities that have submitted successful requests for exceptions.
- K.Armstrong reminded the Committee that, prior to the recent changes made to comply with the legislative changes, the GRCA's Administrative By-law allowed for five consecutive one-year terms for the positions of Chair and Vice-Chair, and did not prescribe any rotation amongst participating municipalities. Under the current CA Act and Administrative By-law, the term limits are reduced to a maximum of two one-year terms, and a provision that the positions rotate amongst participating municipalities. It was also noted that the GRCA holds an annual election where all members have the right to run for either position, and are elected to the roles by the full Board.
- Committee members considered the current practice, and discussed implications of shorter term limits, and the impact it may have on the Board. Specifically, Members discussed the complex nature of conservation authorities, and that shorter term limits may not allow the Chair and Vice-Chair positions to become comfortable and knowledgeable in their roles.
- The Committee member also discussed the practicality of having four year term limits, as the length aligns with municipal, provincial and Federal terms of elected representatives, as well as allows the Chair and Vice-Chair adequate time to become knowledgeable in their respective roles, and build strong relationships with municipal partners, watershed members of parliament, and all other key stakeholders and user groups.
- The rotation of each position amongst all member municipalities was also considered. The Committee noted that the GRCA has a fair and democratic process in the annual election, where any member may volunteer their time to either position, and members can choose to re-elect or not re-elect a Chair or Vice-Chair. Committee members agreed that it is highly preferred to have an elected volunteer hold the role of Chair or Vice-Chair, rather than having the role imposed upon a specific member in order to comply with the requirement to rotate amongst member municipalities. As such, the Committee agreed that an exemption to this piece of the regulation be included in the exception request to the Province.
- K.Armstrong thanked the Committee members for their discussion and feedback, and advised that an updated draft letter would be prepared based on the input provided. An updated draft will be circulated to the Committee to confirm that all input has been incorporated, and the final version will be added to the September Board meeting agenda.

7.1.3. Ad-hoc Committee recommendation to the General Membership

- The Committee discussed the recommendation to the General Membership to ensure that all details regarding the exception request would be included in the final resolution for the Board.

Moved by: Susan Foxtton

Seconded by: Chris White

THAT the Ad-Hoc Conservation Authorities Act Regulations Committee recommends to the General Membership:

THAT the Grand River Conservation Authority submits a request to the Minister of Environment, Conservation and Parks for an exception as per s.17 (1.3)(a) of the Conservation Authorities Act to the two-year term limit for Chair and Vice-Chair of the GRCA Board of Directors to allow up to four one-year consecutive terms for the Chair and Vice-Chair.

THAT the Grand River Conservation Authority submits a request to the Minister of Environment, Conservation and Parks for an exception as per s.17 (1.3)(b) of the Conservation Authorities Act that the GRCA be exempt from the requirement to rotate the Chair and Vice-Chair amongst all participating municipalities.

Carried.

8. Other Business

- S.Lawson advised the Committee that the Province is anticipated to finalize and release the phase 1 regulations in the near future, and suggested that a meeting of this committee be scheduled ahead of the October Board meeting. Staff anticipate having a draft report on programs and services prepared for review at that time, prior to approval of the full Board later in the fall.

9. Next Meetings

At the Call of the Chair

10. Adjourn

The Chair thanked the Committee for the discussion and adjourned the meeting at 11:36 a.m.