



Full Authority Agenda

September 4, 2019

KCCA Admin Centre

10:00 a.m.

Audio/Video Recording Notice

"Board members, staff, guests and members of the public are reminded that the Full Authority Board/Committee meeting is being recorded, and will be posted to the Authority's web site along with the official written minutes. As such, comments and opinions expressed may be published and any comments expressed by individual Board members, guests and the general public are their own, and do not, represent the opinions or comments of the Full Authority and/or the KCCA Board of Directors.

The recorded video of the Full Authority meeting is not considered the official record of that meeting. The official record of the Full Authority meeting shall consist solely of the Minutes approved by the Full Authority."

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Up Coming Meetings

Executive Committee Meeting	October 2, 2019	Administration Centre	10:00 a.m.
KCCA Full Authority Meeting	October 16, 2019	Administration Centre	10:00 a.m.

----- Original message -----

From: "Minister, MECP (MECP)" <Minister.MECP@ontario.ca>

Date: 2019-08-23 8:10 p.m. (GMT-05:00)

To: Kim Gavine <KGavine@conservationontario.ca>

Subject: Improving transparency and accountability

Dear Ms. Kim Gavine,

On Friday August 16th, I sent a letter to conservation authorities and municipalities to reiterate our government's commitment to improve transparency and accountability for conservation authority activities, and to focus on the delivery of programs and services related to their core mandate. Response from municipal leaders was very positive at the Association of Municipalities of Ontario conference this past week.

The changes we are making through Bill 108, the *More Homes, More Choice Act*, to refocus conservation authorities to their core mandate is an opportunity to have them work in a more transparent and open way with municipalities so the public understands what is being paid for. Municipalities contribute a significant amount of money to conservation authorities' annual budgets. Municipal councils, like any level of government, are elected to serve the public and their communities which is why our government clearly specifies in Bill 108 that they have the option to enter into transparent and public funding agreements with conservation authorities for non-core services.

I strongly encourage conservation authorities to proactively formalize these arrangements with their municipal partners. Where agreements already exist, the *Conservation Authorities Act* and upcoming regulations will help streamline these relationships.

I further indicated that conservation authorities should not proceed with any increases to fees or levies while legislation and regulations are put in place unless they are supported by your partner municipalities for 2020 and beyond. Unfortunately, we've heard some conservation authorities with operating budgets of millions of dollars can't find even one per cent of efficiencies.

I appreciate the productive conversations with municipalities and stakeholders at the AMO conference, and I look forward to further discussion and engagement with municipalities, conservation authorities, Indigenous communities, and stakeholders that are involved with the stewardship of our lands on upcoming regulations to ensure that we're moving conservation authorities towards those mandated programs.

I encourage you to share this letter with your membership as a means to clarify how we will be moving forward.

Sincerely,
Jeff Yurek
Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks

September 5, 2019

Honourable Jeff Yurek M.P.P.
Constituency Office
750 Talbot Street, Suite 201
St. Thomas, ON
N5P 1E2

Dear Minister:

Kettle Creek Conservation Authority's Board of Directors acknowledges receipt of the Ministry's letter dated August 16, 2019 in which all 36 of Ontario's conservation authorities were encouraged to "wind down" non-mandatory programs and services.

In a subsequent Twitter statement on August 20, 2019 the Ministry stated, "Bringing conservation authorities back to their core mandate will allow municipalities to better manage conservation authority budgets and programs. The legislative changes will ensure conservation authorities focus on delivering core services and programs that protect communities from natural hazards and flooding while using taxpayer dollars efficiently and effectively."

And finally, on August 23, 2019 in an e-mail to Conservation Ontario the Ministry clarified that conservation authorities, "should not proceed with any increase to fees or levies while legislation and regulations are put in place unless they are supported by your partner municipalities for 2020 and beyond."

As Board Members of the Conservation Authority and municipal council representatives we acknowledge the goal to be fiscally responsible, accountable and transparent to our watershed community.

The preamble to Bill 108, Schedule 2 reminds us that we have a fiduciary responsibility to act honestly and in good faith with a view to furthering the objects of the Authority which as defined in the Conservation Authorities Act R.S.O. 1990 are, "to provide, in the area over which it has jurisdiction to deliver programs and service designed to further the conservation, restoration, development and management of natural resources."

As Board Members we take that responsibility very seriously.

In order to accommodate the 50% reduction in the Hazard Management Transfer Payment that was announced earlier this year, the Authority will eliminate one full-time position. Further, the Authority has instructed staff to identify cost savings, explore shared services and pursue opportunities for increased revenue generation through fee for services or user-pay. This type of fiscal responsibility will ensure that municipal levy contribution to the CA budget remains at approximately 34% as compared to the province's 2%.

However, to “wind down those activities that fall outside the scope” of our core mandate before the core mandates have been outlined by regulations, and before meaningful discussions can occur with our member municipalities is premature, and would have a deep and lasting impact on the watershed. The community wants to know that the local environment is healthy, the water is clean, the forest cover is being enhanced and that they have opportunities to explore nature.

KCCA operates two campgrounds, independent of municipal levy, providing recreational opportunities close to home and \$211,000 in seasonal employment opportunities for youth. On average our campgrounds generate \$46,000 annually in revenue that is re-invested into infrastructure replacement including the upkeep and maintenance of the authority’s dams, reducing pressure on municipal levy.

Therefore, a moratorium on fee increases or the winding down of the programs and services offered at our two campgrounds while the Ministry conducts a review will detrimentally impact our ability to compensate for the reduction in the Natural Hazard Management Transfer Payment without downloading costs to the municipalities.

Further, winding down programs and services such as outdoor education and stewardships services will not save the province or our member municipalities any money. KCCA staff work tirelessly to fund these programs through fundraising efforts and contracts – annually raising over 60% of its budget in this manner.

Programs such as the Elgin St. Thomas-Elgin Children’s Water Festival – scheduled to occur in St. Thomas in May 2020 are entirely supported by Authority fundraising efforts and a team of volunteers. To “wind down” this program would only steal an opportunity from 3,200 students to learn about the importance of water in our community and educate the next generation on the importance of keeping our Great Lakes clean.

The Kettle Creek Conservation Authority Board of Directors has always worked with its member municipalities to collaboratively develop programs and services that promote, restore and protect a healthy watershed in a fiscally responsible manner. We are dedicated to continuing that collaboration to ensure that our tree planting, environmental monitoring, stewardship, recreational and educational programming continue to be offered to the community.

Therefore, at its September 4, 2019 Full Authority meeting KCCA’s Board of Directors passed the following motion:

That the letter dated August 16, 2019 from the Ministry of Environment Conservation and Parks be received; and further that

In the interest of the watershed community and the Authority’s fiduciary responsibilities that the Authority advocate to the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change to consult with conservation authorities and municipalities to define mandatory and non-mandatory programs and services; and further

That the Ministry provide for the transition period as outlined in Bill 108 including time to establish an inventory of the Authority’s programs and services, consultation by the Authority with participating municipalities and the ability to enter into agreements with

participating municipalities for non-core mandated programs if financing is required for its delivery.

The KCCA Board of Directors and staff look forward to further discussion and engagement with the Ministry and our member municipalities to ensure the conservation, restoration, development and management of natural resources within the Kettle Creek watershed.

Sincerely,

Stephen Harvey
Chair, Kettle Creek Conservation Authority

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