

From: [REDACTED]  
Sent: Monday, June 10, 2024 9:47 AM  
To: PEC <pec@london.ca>  
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Comments regarding Agenda Item 3.8

Please add to the public agenda re: Agenda Item: 3.8 <https://pub-london.escribemeetings.com/Meeting.aspx?Id=3b5cdb10-ddd6-44b5-879c-982ef8197ef6&Agenda=Agenda&lang=English>

Dear Councillors,

My name is Julie Woodyer, I am the Campaigns Director for Zoocheck, a national wildlife protection organization, former chair of Aspen Valley Wildlife Sanctuary and a former animal cruelty inspector. I am writing you today on behalf of our supporters in the City of London, regarding agenda item 3.8 involving the disruption of natural habitat to ask you to consider your decisions carefully in this and other similar projects going forward.

Several years ago, I assisted Howard Smith, retired biologist with the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Managing Director for Aspen Valley at that time, in an effort to live trap beavers out of the Stanton Drain in London so they would not be killed prior to major construction on the drain taking place. It was a long and expensive project, but we did manage to livetrapped the beavers and overwinter them at Aspen Valley Wildlife Sanctuary and they were released the following spring. However, even though we were able to save the beaver family, we found that the Stanton Drain was teeming with other wildlife including several species of turtles, snakes, amphibians and fish, many of which likely perished in the drain as a result of the construction. Turtles and frogs will bury into the bottom of a lake or river bed for the winter and as such it is very difficult to remove so they are not dug from their winter hibernation spot by the construction equipment. Most turtles in Ontario are listed as species of Special Concern, Threatened and even Endangered, so ensuring we protect every turtle is prudent. While we were there working to remove the beavers safely we also rescued as many turtles as we could find, but there would have been many more buried into the bottom of the river that died. Furthermore the drain (river) was no longer healthy, viable habitat for wild animals to thrive because of that construction. It takes many years for a river to recover to being good natural habitat for many of these species. In addition to the aquatic species, this kind of construction also disrupts land based animals and birds because of the nature of the work and the heavy equipment moving along the riverside.

Flooding has become more common in cities due to the removal of natural substrate which rain water is absorbed into and replacing it with concrete which does not allow the water to drain properly. Therefore limiting the amount of hard unnatural substrate and maintaining forests, natural run off areas and meadows is essential to avoid flooding and other related problems. And rather than creating new housing that is sprawling and takes

up a lot of natural area, it is advisable to consider housing with a smaller footprint that takes advantage of height and is designed to allow natural areas to be maintained.

For the reasons outlined above, we request that any projects that impact natural areas, be carefully considered and ensure that whatever measures are taken, also preserve existing water run off areas, rivers, streams, meadows, forests and other habitat for wild animals. The idea that you can tear up one area of natural habitat and replace it with another is flawed as the animals living there will be disrupted and many will die. Additionally the new habitats are not immediately a viable option for those displaced animals and often take many years to develop into good healthy environments for wild animals. Additionally, attempting to relocate natural run off areas commonly creates more problems with flooding down the road. While we do not discourage recovering previously destroyed natural areas , we have very serious concerns about the removal of any further habitat for wild animals since so little is left.

We urge you to consider these matters in this and all future proposals for development or change and we encourage you to seek out independent wildlife and environmental protection organizations to help assess natural areas to help guide you in your decision making process.

Yours sincerely,

Julie Woodyer  
Campaigns Director, Zoocheck

