

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION MEETING COMMENTS

15. Coves ESA Conservation Master Plan

- Tom McClenaghan, 220 Baseline Road East – indicating that, as a former educator, he knows the advantage of having things repeated a number of times; suspecting that you may have heard some of what he is about to say previously; asking that the Committee bear with him and he will be brief; reminding the Committee that the earliest reference to the Coves occurred on March 2, 1793, with the arrival of the Governor and his party here in the Coves; advising that every history of London begins on that particular day; believing that it is important for us to remember that; indicating that one of the uses in the Coves that a lot of people have forgotten at this stage is that the Cove or the interior was used as a rifle range and it started in the 1860's, and was used intermittently up until 1901; advising that the Federal Government purchased the interior and they have seen the order on Council, signed by Wilfred Laurier; indicating that this created a thousand yard gun range within the Coves meander; advising that that range was used from 1901 through until 1946; advising that, the other day, he was talking to an individual who grew up at the corner of Elmwood Avenue and Wharnccliffe Road South and he said that he could hear the firing down at the range when he was a kid and they always knew what kind of guns they were using because of the distinctive noises they made; realizing that that was the first time he had ever heard that particular story but it was an interesting story and he is sure that it is more than that to the gentleman who heard those guns going off; indicating that the use was shared by all, by and large, in South London and the borders of South London, all, that is, who could find their way there; advising that he has spoken to people who grew up on Ridout Street, lived their whole life there, and did not know where the Coves were; indicating that all you need to go is get on Elmwood Avenue and go West and when your feet are wet, you will know you are there; advising that, during the 1960's, 1970's and 1980's, the Coves, by and large, were neglected and they ended up as the repository of everything that the garbage trucks would not pick up, you name it, it was there, from bicycles to beds, springs and carpeting, you just took it down to the Coves; noting that his kids still kid him about that, that indeed they have got a bit of junk and they are just going to toss it into the Coves; further noting that they had better not; mentioning one name that is extremely important, and that name is Joe Bowman; indicating that some people may not have heard of Mr. Bowman, but he was a very important individual within this area; indicating that he served a term or two on Council; noting that no one here is old enough to remember that; advising that Mr. Bowman lived almost his entire life in Manor Park; indicating that he ran a grocery store and he lived across the road from where Corey Auto Wreckers once was; advising that he died last year, at the age of 92; indicating that the other thing that Mr. Bowman was noted for, was that he was on the beach on June the sixth; indicating that Mr. Bowman was one of the individuals who pressed the local school to become involved in the cleanup of the Coves and so began the annual Coves cleanups; advising that this was significantly prior to the cleanup of the Thames River; noting that it predated the cleanup of the Thames River by almost fifteen years; advising that Mr. Bowman was an individual who, to some degree, was a mover and a shaker, in his own small way; and he has a feeling that Mr. Bowman would be rather glad about what it is that has happened here tonight; indicating that Friends of the Coves became a reality in 2000, with its incorporation and charitable status and the Coves subwatershed plan was commissioned by Friends of the Coves with a substantial grant that was awarded to it by the Trillium Fund; indicating that he has the original plan, which weighs about a ton and a half; noting that it includes, as well, a historical record of this particular area and, he believes, that it was one of the first studies done, anywhere in Canada, of a completely urban subwatershed; believing that it broke new ground; advising that it produced fifty-nine recommendations and Council struck an implementation committee that has met approximately forty times in order to deal with these recommendations; noting that this happened in 2004; believing that there was at least one person on that Planning

Committee who was there the night that report was presented; indicating that the Coves is a wilderness in the heart of a city that is unique in Canada as far as can be ascertained; indicating that "Crusaders of the Coves" is a one hour film and each of the Committee members has received a copy of that; indicating that the important thing about the film is to know that there are over twenty different people who speak, unscripted, in that film, they speak from the heart and he thinks that is really important that you understand that; advising that the step being taken today is huge as it sets the rules for enjoying this unique jewel and that will allow it to survive into the future; noting that this is a bold but necessary step; advising that the document speaks for itself; expressing that it was a great pleasure to be involved; advising that he would like to thank Mr. Macpherson and the people in his department who pushed and pushed until we got this particular item done; and, quoting Winston Churchill, "this is not the end, but rather the end of the beginning."

- Gary Brown, 35A – 59 Ridout Street – indicating that this is probably one of the most pleasurable things he has ever done with the City of London, is being involved with the Local Advisory Committee; requesting that the word "accessible" is not interpreted as being accessible for dump trucks and pavement; indicating that that two new trail guidelines were an extremely useful tool in helping to determine where the trails go in the Coves; reiterating that that was extremely well done; noting that it has probably only been used a couple of times so far and it works; encouraging the City to acquire the Valspar property; noting that it is out of the City's hands, but he would like it on record; expressing that he is stunned that Mr. McClenaghan did not use his favourite expression nowadays, tonight, but he will; indicating that there is potential development on the Toyota Town lands which are overlooking the Coves; keeping in mind that we are going to invest, and we spent all this time developing a plan for this to be an Environmentally Significant Area, that we really should not allow the historical vista to be destroyed by putting two very tall apartment buildings overhanging the Coves; advising that he is unsure what kind of view that would leave in the Coves; requesting that that be looked at in the future; advising that, he realizes that a lot of people were involved in this initiative, but one man's vision, his drive, his effectiveness as a leader and a community leader, is really why the Coves is what it is today; and, requesting that everyone stand up and give Mr. McClenaghan a round of applause for what he has done for this City and for Friends of the Coves.