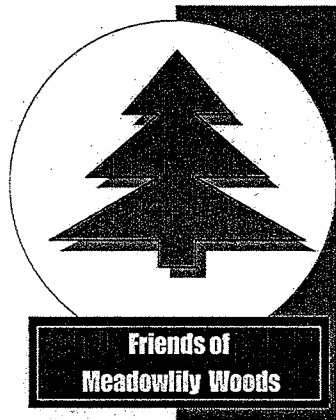


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Secretary to the Planning Committee
City Clerk's Office
City of London
300 Dufferin Avenue
London, ON N6A 4LP

16 June 2012

To: Members of the Planning and Environment Committee


From: Friends of Meadowlily Woods Community Association

RE: Item #13, Trails in Environmentally Significant Areas

Dear Chairperson & Members of the Planning and Environment Committee,

First, I would like to thank all the members of the group that have contributed to this discussion about the issue of trails in Environmentally Significant Areas. From where we started on this issue in early 2009 to where we are today, great progress has been made because of the participation of the various community groups and agencies that have stated a stake in this issue. I think that it has also been an issue that members of staff like Andrew MacPherson, Bonnie Bergsma, Jeff Bruin and others have been a part of the consultation process regarding this issue of trails in natural areas. I think that this process needs to be a more regular part of these issues because participation, transparency and consultation makes for good relations and good feelings between the various stakeholders, staff and the public at large.

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Second, I would like to support the idea of a Trails Advisory Group, (pages 1, 6 and 8 of this document) being established to aid in the continuation of this atmosphere of consultation, participation and openness regarding how decisions are made that affect the protection and preservation of the integrity of the Environmentally Significant Areas (ESAs) in our city. I think that the ideas embodied in this document will assist in maintaining a quality experience of the use of our natural areas by establishing that we have a vast variety of ESAs within our municipal boundary that have different needs when it comes to maintaining and protecting these environments. Only continued participation, openness and consultation will make this possible.

One suggestion that I would make to augment the document under discussion for this meeting is that perhaps it would be wise to **expand** the area of concern for this advisory committee to include not just trails as a part of its area of responsibility, but also that this advisory group be entrusted with **the added responsibility for participating in the full range of decisions and policies pertinent to this topic of Environmentally Significant Areas**— to establish an advisory committee that would include all of the related stakeholders in this area of concern: Upper Thames River Conservation Authority, which manages the ESAs on behalf of the city of London, the Environmentally Significant Areas Management Group, which is the liaison group between the city and the conservation authority as well as the various community and neighbourhood groups that have demonstrated an interest in and support of the Environmentally Significant Areas of London like the Urban League (significant contributors recently of the Million Tree Challenge), Reforest London, Nature London, Thames Valley Trail Association as well as local and area groups like Medway, Killaly, Westminster, Meadowlily, Coves, etc. That what we need is an **Environmentally Significant Areas or Natural Areas Advisory Committee** (like the London Advisory Committee on Heritage and other advisory committees) **to see that this attitude of discussion, consultation, participation and openness continues.**

While some of the responsibilities outlined in my suggestion may be covered in part by the Environmental and Ecological Planning Advisory Committee (EEPAC) which has an important role with regard to Environmentally Significant Areas, the change that I am suggesting is a **more face-to-face liaison** between the ESA group at Upper Thames River Conservation Authority, the ESA Management Team and the stakeholder groups like

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Nature London, Thames Valley Trail Association and the constituent groups like Medway, Coves, Westminster and Meadowlily. If not an expansion of the new trails advisory group to include this feature, then a sub-committee of EEPAC, who's expressed responsibility it is to provide a roundtable group for these same stakeholders and city staff members. It is amazing how easy it is to misunderstand each other when these issues are dealt with second- and third-hand. Another way to enact the same thing would be for there to be immediate representation of these stakeholder groups, UTRCA, ESA Management Team on the Environmental and Ecological Planning Advisory Committee itself.

This also seems in keeping with the sort of face-to-face discussions taking place via the **ReThink London** initiative going on right now as well as encouraging **citizen engagement** and participation. More of this important work needs to be happening at level of the advisory committees and the council committees instead of allowing them to become unnecessary points of contention later in the process of decision-making.

Respectfully Submitted,

Gary Smith
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