

Environmental and Ecological Planning Advisory Committee

Report

The 4th Meeting of the Environmental and Ecological Planning Advisory Committee
March 21, 2019
Committee Rooms #1 and #2

Attendance PRESENT: S. Levin (Chair), E. Arellano, A. Boyer, R. Doyle, A. Duarte, C. Dyck, P. Ferguson, S. Hall, I. Mohamed, K. Moser, S. Sivakumar and I. Whiteside and H. Lysynski (Secretary)

ABSENT: B. Krichker and R. Trudeau

ALSO PRESENT: C. Creighton, J. MacKay and L. Pompili

The meeting was called to order at 5:00 PM

1. Call to Order

1.1 Disclosures of Pecuniary Interest

That it BE NOTED that no pecuniary interests were disclosed.

2. Scheduled Items

None.

3. Consent

3.1 3rd Report of the Environmental and Ecological Planning Advisory Committee

That it BE NOTED that the 3rd Report of the Environmental and Ecological Planning Advisory Committee, from its meeting held on February 21, 2019, was received.

3.2 Municipal Council Resolution - 2nd Report of the Environmental and Ecological Planning Advisory Committee

That it BE NOTED that the Municipal Council resolution adopted at its meeting held on February 12, 2019, with respect to the 2nd Report of the Environmental and Ecological Planning Advisory Committee, was received.

3.3 Proposed 2019 City Funded ESA Capital Projects

That consideration of the proposed 2019 City-Funded Environmentally Significant Areas Capital Projects BE POSTPONED to the next meeting.

4. Sub-Committees and Working Groups

4.1 ESA Management Committee Minutes

That consideration of the Environmentally Significant Management Committee Minutes from its meeting held on October 24, 2018, BE POSTPONED to the next meeting.

5. Items for Discussion

5.1 Clarke Road Environmental Assessment Working Group Comments

That the following actions be taken with respect to the Clarke Road Environmental Assessment:

- a) the Environmental and Ecological Planning Advisory Committee BE ALLOWED to review the Environmental Study Report (ESR) prior to the thirty day review; and,
- b) the Environmental and Ecological Planning Advisory Committee BE INVOLVED in the detailed design phase of the project.

5.2 Environmentally Significant Areas and Your Dog Pamphlet

That it BE NOTED that a review of the proposed "Environmentally Significant Areas and Your Dog" pamphlet was undertaken and further amendments will be made.

5.3 Zoning By-law Amendment - 348 Sunningdale Road East Working Group Comments

That the attached, revised, Working Group comments relating to the property located at 348 Sunningdale Road East BE FORWARDED to the Civic Administration for consideration.

5.4 Meadowlily Woods Environmentally Significant Area Conservation Plan - Phase 1 Working Group Comments

That the attached Working Group comments relating to the Meadowlily Woods Environmentally Significant Area Conservation Plan - Phase 1 BE FORWARDED to the Civic Administration for consideration.

5.5 Notice of Planning Application - Draft Plan Subdivision and Zoning By-law Amendment - 1938 and 1964 Commissioners Road East and Portion of 1645 Hamilton Road

That the existing Working Group consisting of S. Levin, C. Dyck, S. Hall, K. Moser and I. Whiteside BE REQUESTED to review and report back at the next Environmental and Ecological Planning Advisory Committee meeting with respect to the draft Plan of Subdivision and Zoning By-law Amendment relating to the properties located at 1938 and 1964 Commissioners Road East and a portion of 1656 Hamilton Road.

5.6 Notice of Planning Application - Zoning By-law Amendment - 3900 Scotland Drive and Other Properties

That it BE NOTED that the Notice of Planning Application for the Zoning By-law Amendment relating to the property located at 3900 Scotland Drive, from C. Lowery, Planner II, was received.

5.7 Notice of Planning Application - Zoning By-law Amendment - 4680 Wellington Road South

That it BE NOTED that the Notice of Planning Application for the Zoning By-law Amendment relating to the property located at 4680 Wellington

Road South, from M. Sundercock, Site Development Planner, was received.

5.8 2019 Work Plan

That the following actions be taken with respect to the Environmental and Ecological Planning Advisory Committee Workplan:

a) the attached 2019 Work Plan for the Environmental and Ecological Planning Advisory Committee BE FORWARDED to the Municipal Council for consideration; and,

b) the attached 2018 Environmental and Ecological Planning Advisory Committee Workplan Summary BE FORWARDED to the Municipal Council for information.

6. **Deferred Matters/Additional Business**

6.1 (ADDED) Mud Creek Project - Phase 1 Construction - Update 2

That it BE NOTED that the Environmental and Ecological Planning Advisory Committee reviewed and received a communication dated March 15, 2019, from S. Chambers, Division Manager, Stormwater Engineering, with respect to an update on the Mud Creek Phase 1 construction.

6.2 (ADDED) Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

That it BE NOTED that the Environmental and Ecological Planning Advisory Committee reviewed and received a communication from L. Livingstone, Managing Director, Neighbourhood, Children & Fire Services and S. Stafford, Managing Director, Parks and Recreation, with respect to the Parks and Recreation Master Plan; it being noted that representatives from the Parks and Recreation Department will be presenting at the next Environmental and Ecological Planning Advisory Committee with respect to this matter.

6.3 (ADDED) Is Your Cat Safe Outdoors? Brochure

That the Civic Administration BE REQUESTED to mail the "Is Your Cat Safe Outdoors" brochure to new homeowners living adjacent to natural heritage areas.

7. **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 6:45 PM.

Review of EIS by BioLogic Incorporated, dated November 20, 2018.

Received by EEPAC at the February 2019 meeting

Reviewed by R. Doyle, A. Duarte, and I. Whiteside

Theme 1 – Characterization of the Provincially Significant Wetland present to the east, north, and west of the site.

The EIS highlights that the proposed development will be located within a pocket of land bordering the Powell Drain wetland (a unit of the Arva Moraine PSW Complex); the wetland boundary is 32m from the properties northwest corner, 95m from the west property line, and 60m from the northeast corner. As this PSW is located outside of the Subject Lands, a formal evaluation of the wetland's ecological function was not included in this report.

Additionally:

- Figure 3 of the report provides future land uses of the adjacent properties. Land surrounding the PSW has been designated either Low Density Residential or Multi-Family, Medium Density Residential.
- The PSW is likely fed via surface water flow predominately from regions to its north and south. The EIS notes that groundwater was found 41m bgs (pg. 7) and that there were no seeps or springs observed on the subject lands; given the groundwater depth, it is unlikely that groundwater would constitute a water source to the PSW.
- The EIS states that there are no species at risk or species of provincial interest listed by NHIC within 1 km of the site. However, this assertion was not based on field work in or around the PSW and a more thorough evaluation may find otherwise.
- Lastly, the EIS indicates that the PSW has not been evaluated (e.g. pg. 13 the report notes that the "functions of the wetland will require further consideration").

Our concern is that future developments in the area will also exclude any evaluation of the PSW as the wetland will be, of course, outside any area being developed. This piecemeal, site-by-site approach could result in degradation of the wetland as the individual impact of any one development may be minor, but the cumulative impact may indeed be consequential. Given the lands adjacent to the development will likely be developed in the future, EEPAC agrees with the EIS and considers it important to characterize the existing ecological functions of the wetland now, before these potential developments occur, in order to develop an overall strategy to protect the wetland's ecological integrity.

Recommendations:

1. Characterize the ecological functions PSW before any of the lands zoned for future development have been developed, including the parcel under consideration.
2. Conduct a water balance assessment in order to understand water flow into and out of the wetland.
3. Develop an area strategy for future developments that protects water flow into and out of wetland from both a quantity and quality perspective, as well as any additional measures necessary to protect the ecological health of the PSW.

Theme 2 – Site water balance assessment

The report discussed that the northwest corner of the site slopes to the north and that the northeast quadrant of the site is flat with evidence of sheet flow to the east of the site, which in turn presumably drains to the PSW. Sheet flow to the east may also feed the unevaluated wetland patch identified 35m east of the site through air photo interpretation. (N.b. the size of the wetland is estimated at less than 100 m².) Furthermore, Figure 3 of the report appears to show a water channel from the northeast corner of the property, which the report seems to describe as "not a defined channel" but rather a "broad swale" dominated by terrestrial grasses (bottom of page 13). Regardless of whether it is a "swale" or a "channel", it is possible that this channel/swale provides flow to the PSW, especially during periods of higher precipitation.

The EIS does identify the importance of considering adjacent features and functions of the PSW; however, it does not quantify how the proposed site development will preserve the wetland's ecological health.

Recommendations:

4. Conduct a water balance assessment to determine water flows pre and post development with a specific focus on water flows to the PSW. Based on this evaluation, propose specific mitigation

measures (if needed) to ensure that water quantity and quality objectives are met that ensure the PSW's existing functions are not impaired.

5. Reconsider whether the channel/swale from the east of the site should be included under section 15.4.15 "Other Drainage Features".

Theme 3 – Tree preservation/ replacement

The report states that investigations for Ecological Land Classification (ELC) were conducted on October 18, 2017, June 5, 2018 and June 20, 2018. These surveys found that the most densely treed section of the Subject Lands, classified as a Mineral Cultural Woodland Ecosite (CUW1), is concentrated in the southwest corner of the property. This community is dominated by Red Pine (*Pinus resinosa*), Norway Spruce (*Picea abies*) and Sugar Maple (*Acer saccharum*); however, near the south-central edge of the Subject Lands, a mature Tulip Tree (*Liriodendron tulipifera*) was found.

Following a site investigation for potential bat maternity roost habitat (April 25, 2018), 10 trees were identified as potential Species At Risk bat maternity roost habitat. Seven trees located on the Subject Lands have been deemed hazardous and marked for removal. It was recognized in the EIS that three of these trees are candidate bat roosting trees. To mitigate the removal of these trees, the report states that six bat boxes will be installed. In Table 7 (Net Effects Table), however, the report mentions that 17 residential yard lights will also be installed. Although the presence of light fixtures can result in increased foraging opportunities for some bats, these fixtures can negatively impact bats that are emerging, roosting and breeding. Specifically, artificial light can result in delayed emergence from roosts, roost abandonment or avoidance, reduced reproductive success and increased arousal from hibernation (Stone et al., 2015). Thus, light fixtures should be positioned in such a way that light is directed towards the townhouses and away from the surrounding trees.

Although seven trees have been explicitly marked for removal in the RKLA Tree Report, drawing T-1 (Drawing Preservation Plan) shows that several additional trees will be removed. Information about the total number of trees marked for removal should be provided so that the impact of their removal can be adequately assessed. In addition, the ecosystem services being provided by the trees, such as refuge to wildlife, will be lost due to the removal of some trees and the disturbance occurring around the remaining ones; thus, compensation for such loss should be provided.

Recommendations:

6. Light fixtures are positioned in such a way that light is directed towards the townhouse dwelling units and away from the surrounding trees and bat boxes. Alternatively, bat boxes could be positioned in areas where light pollution is minimized, and/or light intensity could be minimized.
7. Considering that the trees marked for removal are broad-leaf deciduous species, at least double as many trees of the same Functional Type should be planted in the surround of the construction area.

Meadowlily Woods Environmentally Significant Area (MW ESA)
Conservation Master Plan – Phase 1 (Natural Resource Solution Inc., Feb. 2019)
Received at EEPAC: Feb. 21, 2019 meeting
Reviewed by: Carol Dyck, Susan Hall, Sandy Levin, March 2019

OVERVIEW

This Phase 1 work identifies the ESA as a unique site that has a number of unique vegetation communities as well as an endangered plants. It also has a relatively low number of non-native plants. Given this ESA is only just becoming subject to new development pressures on its borders, it is imperative the City move quickly to complete the Master Plan and to begin to close informal trails that threaten this unique area, and enforce the no bike rules.

Locally rare communities identified by NRSI using Bergsman and DeYoung, 2006 to indicate frequency in London are:

MAS Shallow Marsh, 1.5% (within FOD7-3 along River) and cattail shallow marsh
Maple Hemlock Mixed Forest (FOM3-2) FOM is less than 2.5%
Meadow Marsh was 5.6%

In addition, two rare vegetation communities were found in multiple areas of the ESA:

Dry-Fresh Hickory Deciduous Forest (FOD2-3): This rare vegetation community encompasses two moderately sized portions of interior forest within the subject site.

Fresh-Moist Black Walnut Lowland Deciduous Forest (FOD7-4): This rare vegetation community is located to the east of Meadowlily Road South near the Thames River.

1. *“The subject site includes the currently mapped Meadowlily Woods ESA , as well as the Thames Talbot Land Trust west of Meadowlily Road South, public lands north of the Thames River and private lands east of the MW ESA where access was provided” (i).*
EEPAC supports the extension of the ESA north of the river, particularly from the viewpoint of potential development north of the river in the Norlan/Highbury Ave. area.

The subject site and the revised, ESA boundary delineation doesn't include land east of Hamilton Road. Map 5, “Natural Heritage”, in The London Plan depicts the ESA extending east beyond the subject area to the edge of the urban growth boundary. Though MW ESA is identified as one of the largest natural areas within the City of London (i), it still does not include all potential sensitive areas and significant valley lands. A study of the whole area has the potential of providing a more holistic/landscape view of the area. This holistic approach and assessment of biodiversity, migration and movement of species might be used to determine best management practices for the area as a whole even though some lands might not be part of the ESA.

Recommendation 1: Include the area to the east of the MW ESA boundary to the urban growth boundary, as identified on Map 5 of the London Plan, in the natural heritage inventory of Meadowlily Woods ESA.

Recommendation 1a: If this is not possible, Map 5 of the London Plan must be revised to show this area as a separate ESA as suggested in the NRSI report as well as revised to show the recommended revised boundaries of the Meadowlily Woods ESA.

2. The Park Farm Landscape Plan Report (Biologic 1998) *“involved an examination of historical artifacts and methods to restore both the cultural and natural environment surrounding Park Farm, located with the MW ESA” (p.8).* The Friends of Meadowlily have also located an old mill that was not mentioned in report.

Recommendation 2: Identify the location of the old mill and examine any historical artifacts and methods to restore both the cultural and natural environment around the old mill.

3. *“Field work consisting of a detailed, multi-season inventory and evaluation was carried out in 2013. Also, background info was gathered from a range of groups and studies. The MW ESA has been the site of numerous biological studies extending from the late 1970’s to the present day including EIS’s, EA’s, Master Plans, Natural Heritage Studies, research programs and other inventories (p.6)”.* These have been reviewed and relevant information included in the CMP, Phase 1. As part of the fieldwork areas needing ecological restoration were identified. P.81 describes the restoration practices that are needed. *“They include: waste removal; invasive species management (Common Buckthorn, Tartarian Honeysuckle, Garlic Mustard and Japanese Knotwood); and vegetation plantings in areas where there has been an abundance of pedestrian traffic, unauthorized dumping of refuse and where invasive species have been removed”(p.81).*

Recommendation 3: Provide a listing of ecological restoration work that has been done since 2013 to remove refuse, to manage invasive species, to plant any vegetation, and to reroute or close trails in heavily used areas.

Recommendation 4: If not already part of the restoration work, remove buckthorn that is growing in or near rare vegetation communities such as the Hickory Forest ELCs east of the Sport’s Park.

Recommendation 4a: EEPAC would appreciate knowing what is in the 2019 budget for the work identified in Recommendation 4.

Recommendation 5: Monitor the Red Oak Forest vegetation communities for oak wilt.

4. The MW ESA was *“identified as having a fairly healthy vegetation community. In total there are 435 species of which 316 species (73%) are native (p.21). It includes 3 SARs (Butternut, Kentucky Coffee Tree and wood poppy) as well as 2 rare vegetation communities (p.27). Other significant species observed are Barn swallow, Chimney swift, Eastern Wood Pee-Wee, Eastern Meadowlark, Snapping Turtle and Monarch”(p.85).* Given the richness of diversity and landscape, much of the ESA has been designated “Nature Reserve”. Also, given the pressures from nearby development and the already observed off- trail use in the area, it will be important to protect this ecological jewel.

Recommendation 6: Map all informal trails and include a topographical map with both managed and unmanaged trails marked.

Recommendation 7: Identify areas of proposed and actual subdivision development near the recommended boundaries of the ESA. Increased population might result in increased pressure on the natural environment and harm to endangered species. Identify the location of managed trails before informal trails become the norm.

Recommendation 8: Three different Thames Valley Parkway projects are proposed for this area according to the Development Charges Background Study. Provide more information on where the trails are located, type of trail surface, use of bridges over the ravines and relationship in terms of timing with the next phases of the Conservation Master Plan process.

Recommendation 9: The property owners at the east end of the ESA should be approached to dedicate ESA lands to the City now or at least allow the UTRCA to manage the lands. Ravine J and K lands were part of scoping meetings.

Advisory Committee Work Plan – 2019

March 2019

Activity	Background	Responsibility	Timeline	Strategic Plan Alignment
Environmental Management Guidelines	This document was last updated in 2007. It has been a standing item in staff and EEPACs work plans since the last term of Council and EEPAC. There is money available from a Foundation to pay for the work and an agreement with the City has already been signed.	EEPAC will review the terms of reference and work with the consultant in cooperation with staff	As directed by staff	Building a Sustainable City
Protecting Environmentally Significant Areas	Communicating why it is important that dogs are controlled in and around Environmentally Significant Areas (cats indoors, dogs on leash) with the assistance of Corporate Communications; EEPAC will work with AWAC on this	P. Ferguson and Committee as a whole	To present to PEC no later than after EEPAC's May meeting	Building a Sustainable City
Collaboration with other Advisory Committees	An EEPAC representative is cross appointed to ACE where appropriate, EEPAC members will provide advice to its representative on this body Ongoing work with the Accessibility Advisory Committee to improve the process for accessible trails in ESAs	Chair and vice chair and Committee as a whole	As this involves staff, a timeline will be developed	Building a Sustainable City Strengthening our Community Leading in Public Service
Review of Environmental Impact Studies and Environmental Assessments submissions as part of Planning application and the <i>Environmental Assessment Act</i>	EEPAC is circulated and asked to review consultant submissions and provide input to City staff. In cases of significant disagreement, EEPAC advises PEC	Working Groups as required	As required, usually provide turnout in one meeting cycle	Building a Sustainable City

Conservation Master Plans for Environmentally Significant Areas	Review Phase 1 Natural Heritage Inventory, participate in Phase 2	Working Groups and Committee	Depends on timing of information from staff. Currently have received the Phase 1 Inventory for Meadowlily Woods Environmentally Significant Areas	Building a Sustainable City
Trail Advisory Group	EEPAC has a representative on this staff directed group. It reviews trail locations and potential new trails for compatibility with the Significant Wildlife Habitat, if any, in the area. Recent examples including Westminster Ponds/Pond Mills ESA, Medway Valley Heritage Forest ESA, Lower Dingman ESA.	Representative or alternative	As determined by staff	Building a Sustainable City Strengthening our Community
Wetland Relocation, Monitoring and Creation and Relocation of Wildlife	A Working Group has been established to do research on matters pertaining to wetland relocation. This has occurred in one location in the NW and is likely to be considered for the SW. There are no existing guidelines for this and how it should be included in development agreements.	R. Trudeau, C. Dyck, S. Sivakumar, C.	By the last meeting of this term of EEPAC	Building a Sustainable City

Advisory Committee Work Plan – 2018

January 2018

Activity	Background	Responsibility	Timeline	Strategic Plan Alignment
Environmental Management Guidelines	Design standards, including snake hibernacula; research whether or not there is something other than what is located at the Toronto Zoo and/or Long Point; bat boxes; barn swallow galleries; artificial nesting cavities/ roosting; aquatic habitat data collection for the Environmental Management Guidelines or Community Master Plans Restoration standards for wetlands, including microbes in soil and muck		Continuation of the work undertaken in 2016 with respect to the Environmental Management Guidelines	
Protecting Environmentally Significant Areas	Communicating why it is important that cats and dogs are controlled in and around Environmentally Significant Areas (cats indoors, dogs on leash) with the assistance of Corporate Communications; EEPAC will work with AWAC on this			
Collaboration with other Advisory Committees	An EEPAC representative is cross appointed to ACE and TFAC, and, where appropriate, EEPAC members will provide advice to its representative on this body Ongoing work with the Dark Sky/Bird deaths in relation to high rise buildings Working Group consisting of EEPAC, ACE & AWAC representatives	In Progress – Expect completion of Dark Sky/Bird Deaths in February		
Review of Environmental Impact Studies and Environmental Assessments submissions as part of Planning application and the <i>Environmental Assessment Act</i>	EEPAC is circulated and asked to review consultant submissions and provide input to City staff. In cases of significant disagreement, EEPAC advises PEC	Working Groups as required	As required, usually provide turnout in one meeting cycle	

Conservation Master Plans	During 2017, Phase 2 of the Medway Valley Environmentally Significant Area Conservation Master Plan is set to begin. EEPAC has a representative on the Local Advisory Committee and will provide review to the full plan. There may also be progress on the Conservation Master Plan for the Meadowlily Conservation Master Plan during this year.	Presenting at PEC – February 20, 2018		
Trail Advisory Group	EEPAC has a representative on this staff directed group. It reviews trail locations and potential new trails for compatibility with the Significant Wildlife Habitat, if any, in the area. Recent examples including Westminster Ponds/Pond Mills ESA and Medway Valley Heritage Forest ESA.			
Wetland Relocation, Monitoring and Creation and Relocation of Wildlife	A Working Group has been established to do research on matters pertaining to wetland relocation.	R. Trudeau, C. Dyck, S. Sivakumar, C. Therrien		