

ST. CLAIR RIVER BI-NATIONAL PUBLIC ADVISORY COUNCIL

Draft Meeting Minutes

May11, 2004

Lambton-Kent District School Board Auditorium
200 Wellington St.
Sarnia, Ontario

ATTENDEES:

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| Rick Gallerno | Gary Johnson | Frank Schoonover |
| Stewart Thornley | Paulette Duhaime | PattyTroy |
| Modris Zandbergs | Sharon Bender | Doug Steen |
| Teresa Warren | Mike Williams | Bela Trebics |
| Victoria Donohue | Howard Heidemann | Tip Haagsma |
| Bud West | Fred Fuller | Ray Fillion |
| Donald Craig | | |

Bela Trebics called the meeting to order at 6:40 PM.

1. Welcome and Introductions
All attendees introduced themselves.
2. Approval of Agenda
A modified agenda was approved following the removing of Agenda Item 4. (i.e. MOE/MDEQ Spills Report)
3. Approval of March 11th, 2004 Minutes.
The minutes were approved as amended.
4. Friends of the St. Clair River Website Update

Ken Hall presented the re-design of the Friends of the St. Clair River Website. A re-design was required as the old website had become unwieldy and downloading was slow. Additionally, there was no webmaster or website editor responsible for updating and improving the content of the website. The re-design is proceeding in two phases.

In addition to improving downloading time, three main purposes of Phase One of the re-design were: 1) to improve public access, understanding and awareness of the achievements and progress of the St. Clair River RAP, 2) to provide a resource of educational material on technical information, environmental conditions and issues about the St. Clair River ecosystem, and 3) to provide a RAP/BPAC members' services section including a

secure members section, a user group chat room forum, membership list, BPAC meeting minutes etc. In this regard Ken provided a site user name (foscr) and password (friends).

Phase Two includes emphasis on general news items and public interest stories, the beginning of site promotion work, an expanded educational resources section, the provision of site links and solicitation for new ideas.

Ken concluded by encouraging BPAC members to visit the site and to provide any comments to Ken at: Khall5@cogeco.ca

It was moved by Patty Troy, seconded by Fred Fuller that Draft Minutes and the Agendas be made available to the general public. Additionally that historical minutes be posted on the site and finally that by-laws should be posted. In response to a question, Bud West responded that the MOE had provided \$5000 for the re-design of the Friends' website.

6. Report on the provincial Industrial Spills Action Team

Bela Trebics gave a brief description of the Industrial Spills Action Team (ISAT). The tasks of ISAT are to:

- 1) Assess the current status of risk assessment, spill plans and pollution prevention strategies for industries along the Ontario shoreline of the St. Clair River.
- 2) Identify weaknesses or gaps, including the results of the SWAT inspections.
- 3) Determine possible solutions.
- 4) Assess the health, environmental, community and business impacts of possible solutions.

The timeline for these tasks is comparatively short with there report due by mid-June.

Bela indicated that to date, the SWAT inspections have resulted in 52 orders at three industries; Terra Nitrogen, Nova Sarnia and Cabot Carbon.

Following the presentation it was moved by Patty Troy and seconded by Paulette Duhaime that:

The Beneficial Use Impairment (BUI) related to drinking water be re-designed as impaired.

Motion carried.

Discussion followed the motion and it was generally agreed that a re-listing criterion that was specific and measurable was needed. The best way to establish a re-listing criterion was discussed. Two suggestions for consideration were forming a re-listing sub-committee and holding a facilitated workshop if funding could be obtained.

It was suggested at the meeting that for starters through the review of these minutes, BPAC be asked to consider how we will establish a re-listing criterion for drinking water and also if there is the need to review and/or update the delisting criteria presented in the Stage 2 Recommended Plan released in 1995.

7. Wetlands Mitigation Banking

Fred Fuller, St. Clair County Drain Commissioner gave this interesting presentation. He indicated that it is difficult to find developable lands that do not contain wetlands. Basically, Fred presented two concepts concerning the development of lands containing wetlands.

The first concept known as "wetlands mitigation banking" involves the creation of artificial wetlands that can be "purchased" for the purpose of development. This is a controversial practice however and there are only 1 or 2 wetland mitigation banks in the State of Michigan. The Water Quality Board is concerned that the created artificial wetlands may not work. One possible solution is to construct wetlands well in advance of the need to destroy existing wetlands and see if the artificial wetlands prove to be functional.

A second concept is also of concern to the Water Quality Board. The concept uses developer dollars known as "preservation credits" to purchase "high quality" wetlands. In some instances however this could lead to the overall loss of wetlands. Fred indicated that there is a poor track record of preserving wetlands in St. Clair County and Michigan. Apparently the U.S. EPA investigated the MDEQ for a lack of wetlands protection and found MDEQ lacking.

In response to resulting questions a motion was passed and carried that:

BPAC will write a letter to the St. Clair County Board of Commissioners in support of the preservation of wetlands. The letter should indicate that the Loss of Fish and Wildlife Habitat is an identified BUI in the St. Clair River AOC. Additionally, the letter should indicate that the preservation of wetlands will contribute to restoring other related BUIs in the St. Clair River AOC.

9. Committee Reports

i) SPAC

Patty Troy reported that she had attended a legislative day and talked with various political representatives about the need to move environmental legislation forward in both houses. SPAC will also be receiving monitoring data for Algonac. Patty indicated that there are or will be, three documents on the website: www.GLC.org. These are: Restoring The Great Lakes; SPAC Action Agenda; and Frequently Asked Questions (soon to come out). Patty reminded BPAC of the importance of contacting the representative and congressman regarding the importance of filling positions that are important to the RAP and BPAC such as the MDEQ Water Quality Specialist position. It was moved and carried that:

The BPAC Chairs write a letter to U.S. legislators to request that they continue funding for water quality issues.

Sharon Bender announced that it is the final call for information for the SPAC Newsletter.

ii) Friends of the St. Clair River

Bud West summarized the status of the Friends' projects: Countdown to Delisting; Long Term Habitat Management Plan Implementation Strategy; and the Website Redesign. He also indicated that Friends presently is seeking members for the Environmental Awards Committee. He indicated the possibility of including U.S. individuals as recipients of Environmental Awards. The municipality of Chatham-Kent is presently picking a representative to sit on BPAC, however we are presently having difficulty contacting the municipality (Bela Trebics to follow up).

10. Other Business

Modris Zandbergs made BPAC aware of the recent Sarnia Summit.

Stewart Thornley agreed to look into the status of the latest RAP update, the **"St. Clair River RAP Progress Report, Volume 1 – Synthesis Report, January, 2004"**

Patty Troy agreed to approach the U. S. EPA to make a presentation at the next BPAC meeting on their Lake St. Clair and St. Clair River Management Plan.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:30 p.m.