

SAULT STE. MARIE REGION CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

FORT CREEK CONSERVATION AREA MEETING

Wednesday, May 18, 2016

Centennial Library – Program Room

The meeting commenced at 6:02 p.m.

Welcome

Marchy Bruni, SSMRCA Chair, welcomed everyone and thanked them for attending. He introduced SSMRCA staff members Rhonda Bateman, Deane Greenwood and Christine Ropeter.

SSMRCA presented the text and design for the new closed trail signage as recommended by their legal counsel. A new metal guardrail will be erected soon along with the new signage. There was vocal opposition to the signage.

Reference was made in regard to a recent incident that took place in Southern Ontario where a municipality was found liable in an accident due to insufficient signage.

Discussion

Mr. Bruni suggested that a Citizens Group could be involved in fundraising efforts towards the cost of an engineered bridge. Other funding options were also discussed including Trillium Funding. Applications must have a lead agency and the SSMRCA has the ability to partner but it cannot be the lead applicant.

A participant suggested that a Citizen's Group could possibly undertake minor maintenance. A suggestion of a corporate sponsor was proposed. Perhaps one of the company's involved in the Hub Trail construction could be approached.

The idea of industry involvement was accepted, there was a caution that the SSMRCA has to be careful of potential perceived conflicts with industries or companies that require permits administered under our regulation, "Development, Interference with Wetlands and Alterations to Shorelines and Watercourses", Ontario Regulation 176/06.

Attendees asked about the budget and staffing levels for trail maintenance at the SSMRCA. Rhonda explained that most of the trails are naturalized. Gravel and wood chips are applied in some areas when needed and when staff time allows. Hazard trees are also removed when they are reported to the SSMRCA office.

It was repeated by residents in attendance that people will continue to use the section of the Plateau Trail that is closed regardless of signage or barriers. A request was made to remove the trees across the trail that are currently being used as a barrier.

Due to liability concerns, the removal of the current tree barriers must be discussed at the Board level.

There was further discussion regarding the formation of a Citizens Group and it was decided that the next meeting would be initiated to invite interested individuals to volunteer.

One of the people in attendance asked about the possible expansion of the Hub Trail by the City of Sault Ste. Marie resulting in the paving of a portion of the trail from the Finnish Resthome to the Dam. Deane Greenwood stated that it would be dependent on City budgets. He also briefly discussed the Trans Canada Trail initiative.

Rhonda advised that the SSMRCA has been undertaking Dam Maintenance at Fort Creek. The recent Dam Safety Review has resulted in recommendation to remove vegetation off the dam in order to maintain it's integrity. Field staff will be working with equipment during the scheduled maintenance, the public has been requested to keep a safe distance during this process as this area is a worksite.

Next Steps

An email for the next meeting will be sent out to initiate the formation of a formal Citizen's Group. The meeting will also be posted on the SSMRCA website, Facebook page and Twitter feed. The meeting date will be June 14th at 7:00, location to be determined.

Handouts will be created advertising the formation of a Fort Creek Community Working Group including the date and location of the meeting. Marchy Bruni will distribute the handouts to three of the participants for further distribution to their neighbours.

The meeting ended at 7:15 p.m.