

Ausable Bayfield
Conservation Strategy Development Team

Notes (Draft) – First Meeting – Wednesday, September 22, 2010

The first meeting of the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Strategy Development Meeting began at 7:07 p.m. at Thompson's Ltd. board room in Hensall.

Attending were:

Muriel Allingham, Individual, Arkona
Jim Bearss, Interested citizen/Senior, Exeter
Stephen Boles, President, Kuzuka Ltd.
Ted Briggs, Great Lakes Advisor, Ontario Ministry of the Environment
Paul BATTERY, Environmental Health Specialist, County of Lambton
Ashley Cartwright, Interested Citizen, Huron Junior Farmers
Dave Crockett, Interested citizen, lakeshore
Jacquelyn Denham, President, Huron County Junior Farmers
Wayne Forgrave, Director, Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters
Dave Frayne, Municipality of South Huron
Jim Handyside, Individual
Lucy Hendrikx, Councillor, Municipality of North Middlesex
David Kemp, Staffa
Jack Kroes, Huron Christian Farmers
Jacqui Laport, Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs
Carol Leeming, Huron County Federation of Agriculture
Mike Leitch, Huron Fish and Game Association
George McEwan, Administrator, Avon Maitland District School Board
Sally McMullen, Huron County Planning Department
Paul Mennill, Interested Citizen, Shoreline
Jan Purvis, Bluewater Shoreline Residents' Association
Jim Reith, Middlesex Federation of Agriculture
Clair Soper, Interested Citizen, Huron Tourism Association board member
Joe Vermunt, Huron County farmer, Zurich
Jennette Walker, Individual, Zurich
Bailey Williams, Environmentalist, Community Health Services (Lambton)

REGRETS were sent by members who could not attend: Sharon Callan, Ted Jones, Stephanie Donaldson, others.

Jim Ginn, Chair of the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA) Board of Directors, welcomed the members. He thanked the community members for having a strong turnout at the meeting and he said he was pleased to be Chair of an organization doing watershed stewardship in partnership with the community.

Members of the team introduced the team member to their right.

Tom Prout, General Manager and Secretary Treasurer of the ABCA, and Tim Cumming, ABCA Communications Specialist, introduced themselves and provided information presentations for background on the work of the conservation authority and what a conservation strategy is.

Tom said that staff would be available to facilitate the discussions of the team but that the decision-making in preparation of a Conservation Strategy to present to the board would be done by the members of the group.

He said notes from the meeting would be posted on the website on the **abca.on.ca** website shortly.

Tom provided history on the conservation authorities and how municipalities created them and provincial legislation put them into effect. He described sources of funding for ABCA programs and services from lower-tier municipalities, Province of Ontario funding, Government of Canada funding, Trillium Foundation and other foundations, and donations by watershed residents of money, bonds or land. Some projects are entirely provincially funded, such as drinking water source protection, some projects are funded by the local municipal levy, and some are funded from outside sources such as foundations or service organizations.

Some team members said conservation authorities could benefit by having representatives other than municipal councillors and the question was asked if individuals could be part of the conservation authority governance structure to include more public members. Tom said appointments to the Board of Directors are municipal decisions and, in the case of the ABCA, there is currently one municipally-appointed representative who is not a councillor.

Tom said advisory boards were numerous in the early years, and declined in number, but that the development team could recommend their return. Also, the public is involved at the local watershed level through watershed planning such as Ridgeway, Port Franks, Bayfield North and Old Ausable Channel. Members of the public also sit on the Low Water Response Team.

It was also pointed out by a team member that municipalities often name municipal representatives because there is a need to be aware of priorities and funding expenses.

It was suggested a flow chart could be prepared showing how community groups currently participate in decision-making.

The team discussed what kind of document would be expected from the group's work and whether consensus or motions would be required for decision-making and, if motions were needed, what percentage of members would create a passing vote.

The question was asked whether staff facilitators could be used or whether outside facilitators would be required. It was suggested by one member that if votes were taken it would work with staff facilitators but if consensus was the governance model it might be challenging for staff to objectively facilitate the process.

Some team members wanted to know if there were other conservation strategies available to compare. More information was also requested on the ways a Conservation Strategy influences the direction and actions of the board.

The team discussed tentative locations for future meetings and group discussion seemed to suggest a single location would be best. The suggested location was in Exeter at the large South Huron meeting room above the Exeter library.

Members discussed best days of the week to meet and there were many differences among the team members about which days would work for each individual. It was suggested the date should not be a Monday-night council night, it was also suggested the day of the week could alternate between a Monday and a Wednesday so the same people did not always have to miss a meeting. At least one member said they could not attend Monday or Wednesday nights. Another member suggested no first or fourth Tuesdays, and someone said no second and last Wednesdays.

It was suggested the best way to accommodate so many schedules was to use 'Doodle' or 'Survey Monkey' systems to pick the meeting date. For instance, five dates for each month could be offered and people could pick the dates that worked for them. It was suggested to add 'don't care' option to survey. One member suggested adding first, second, or third Wednesday of the month and first or fourth Tuesday of the month.

There was discussion about whether to start the meeting at 7 p.m. or 6 p.m. The idea of afternoon meetings was suggested but several members said that would not work for them because of job commitments.

There was a great deal of discussion about how Wiki is a technology to allow people to provide comments on the existing Conservation Strategy. It was also stressed that a hard copy of the Wiki comments should be provided ahead of time to members so those not as comfortable with the technology would not feel they had less input. Tim and Jim will work together on setting this up. It was suggested that one section of the strategy at a time be put up for group input – for instance, start with vision and mission, or issues. It was also suggested the group look at how the finished document would be integrated with technology to be useful in the future.

Team members said it would be very important to have a report on what aspects of the previous *Conservation Strategy* (1993) have been implemented, what actions have not, what has been monitored, etc. There was also discussion that more information should be provided to show the team the work of the conservation authority ('What is a CA?') – its funding, its involvement in different areas of watershed life, its mandate and authority, roles and responsibilities, etc.

There was discussion about how to engage youth in the Conservation Strategy. Activities to date such as presentation to the OMAFRA environmental teacher summit were outlined. It was suggested involvement of Scouts would be beneficial. Webcasts in school were suggested, Facebook social media use, and recognition of after-hours community service work by students were suggested as a way to encourage youth involvement. Their values could be captured with the right facilitation and incorporated into the document, it was suggested. Team members also suggested reaching out to post-secondary institutions with students originally from this area, such as Sir Sanford Fleming College. Some young people don't know about opportunities like this. Perhaps several students could be encouraged to car-pool to a meeting. It was also suggested that some students might benefit from coming to a team meeting – such as the student trustees who attend school board meetings.

There was discussion about how work can sometimes be done effectively in small break-out groups of the larger group. It was also suggested flip charts could be used effectively.

ABCA General Manager Tom Prout called the meeting to an end at 9:03 p.m.