

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

Thursday, November 20, 2025

**Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority Boardroom  
Morrison Dam Conservation Area**

**HEARING  
Pursuant to Ontario Regulation 41/24  
(Prohibited Activities, Exemptions and Permits)**

**DIRECTORS PRESENT**

Ray Chartrand, Adrian Cornelissen, Joey Groot, Steve Herold, Dave Jewitt, Dave Marsh, Wayne Shipley, Marissa Vaughan

**DIRECTORS ABSENT**

Jaden Hodgins

**STAFF PRESENT**

Andrew Bicknell, Millie Ghorbankhani, Abbie Gutteridge, Davin Heinbuck, Brian Horner, Tracey McPherson, Jaden Schoelier, Ellen Westelaken

**OTHERS PRESENT**

Mr. Sal Pacifico, Mr. Wolfe Trinaistich – *Dillon Consulting Ltd.*, Mr. Ryan Langlois – *Dillon Consulting Ltd.*

**CALL TO ORDER**

Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABC) Chair Ray Chartrand called the Hearing pursuant to Ontario Regulation 41/24 to order at 10:02 a.m. for the consideration of Permit Application #2025-54 submitted by Pacifico Property Management, to order. The Chair welcomed the applicant and representatives, Board members and staff.

Chair Chartrand stated the procedures for conducting the Hearing and asked Andrew Bicknell, Manager of Water and Planning, to provide details on the application.

Mr. Bicknell introduced the applicant, Mr. Sal Pacifico to the Board of Directors, as well as his agent, Mr. Wolfe Trinaistich and Mr. Ryan Langlois, both engineers from Dillon Consulting Ltd. He advised that the application in question was for the installation of a shoreline protection wall, and regrading the bluff, the installation of a sewer outlet structure, as well as the construction of a maintenance

road at Pt. Lot 21, LRW Concession, in the Municipality of Bluewater. While these items are part of a broader development proposal for the property, these are the works that are proposed and located within the ABCA regulation limit and subject to an ABCA Regulation 41/24 permit. The broader development is subject to approvals under the Planning Act, which are not currently in place.

Mr. Bicknell noted that there are tests that need to be met to allow staff to issue a permit in regulated area. In this case, it means that the activity is not likely to affect the control of flooding or erosion and will not result in the damage or destruction of property. Mr. Bicknell also noted that, as per the ABCA Shoreline Management Plan, 2019 Development Guidelines, applications for shore protection shall include a mandatory review by a qualified Coastal Engineer which shows that the proposed works will not aggravate natural hazards. Mr. Bicknell reminded the Board that this area of the shoreline experiences higher rates of erosion relative to other areas, which means the rate of supply of sediment to the lake impacting the sediment budget can be higher. As such, staff also requested a third-party peer review of the technical report, as is permitted by the ABCA Policy and Procedure Manual. The Applicant has not authorized a peer review, and therefore staff are unable to conclude that the Dillon Consulting coastal assessment addresses the impacts on sediment in a satisfactory manner, or that the proposed grading and installation of the shorewall structure is not likely to affect the control or flooding, erosion or dynamic beaches or result in damage or destruction to property. Therefore, ABCA staff recommend the denial of Permit Application 2025-54.

Board members had some questions for Mr. Bicknell regarding the cost and timing of a peer review for the technical report. Mr. Bicknell advised that it is difficult for staff to offer advice regarding cost or timing to have a peer review conducted. ABCA staff sought permission from Mr. Pacifico to share the supporting engineering documentation with a third-party engineer for purpose of obtaining a cost estimate. Mr. Pacifico did not grant such authorization. There were also questions regarding shore protection on adjacent properties, to which Mr. Bicknell noted that there was some shoreline protection on properties to both the north and the south.

Chair Chartrand asked the Applicant and his agent to make their presentation. Mr. Trinaistich, P.Eng. reported that there was initial pre-consultation for the proposed works in June of 2024. The initial application was submitted in July 2025. He noted that staff asked for the third-party peer review, but that it was deemed unnecessary by the Applicant, as it would not guarantee the approval of the application. In lieu, a Letter of Opinion was obtained from Mr. Trinaistich, of Dillon Consulting Ltd., who had no prior involvement or knowledge of the project, which they believed would satisfy staff.

Mr. Trinaistich invited Mr. Langlois, of Dillon Consulting Ltd., to explain the details of the works to the Board, as well as his findings in his Letter of Opinion. He noted the length of the proposed shore protection, as well as the height and sediment composition of the bluff. The technical report explains that there will be very little impact on the sediment budget for the lake, as they based their calculations on the estimated sediment loss of 210 cubic metres per year (as per the ABCA Shoreline Management Plan). In his independent review, Mr. Langlois recalculated the loss to the sediment

budget based on the maximum estimated sediment loss of 315 cubic metres per year (as per the ABCA Shoreline Management Plan). Mr. Langlois agreed with the technical report that the impact on the sand budget would be negligible, and that the post construction monitoring that is to be implemented will be sufficient. As such, Mr. Trinaistich and Mr. Langlois reported that all technical and agency concerns have been fully addressed and respectfully requested approval of Permit Application 2025-54.

The Board of Directors had several questions for the Applicant and his Agent. Directors asked about the impact of lake levels, to which the Mr. Langlois answered that the study uses the average recession rate of the shoreline. There were also some questions regarding the regrading of the bluff and why it was needed. Mr. Trinaistich noted that it would be a stepped regrading, which would both stabilize the bluff, but also provide a communal feature for the property, and noted that the design meets standards for bluff stabilization. It was also asked as to why the Applicant did not go ahead with a true third-party peer review as requested by ABCA staff. Mr. Trinaistich reiterated that the Applicant felt that it would be a costly exercise that would not guarantee approval of the application. It was also noted that the grading was needed for the stormwater outfall, which was a highly regulated process.

Directors decided to go into Committee of the Whole to discuss the application and evidence as presented.

**COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE**

**MOTION #BD 75/25**

**Moved by Dave Jewitt**  
**Seconded by Wayne Shipley**

**“RESOLVED, THAT the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority Board of Directors go into Committee of the Whole at 11:15 a.m. to discuss the application with Davin Heinbuck and Abbie Gutteridge remaining in attendance.”**

**Carried.**

**MOTION #BD 76/25**

**Moved by Dave Jewitt**  
**Seconded by David Marsh**

**“RESOLVED, THAT the Committee of the Whole rise and report at 11:38 a.m.”**

**Carried.**

**MOTION #BD 77/25**

**Moved by Dave Jewitt**  
**Seconded by David Marsh**

**“RESOLVED, THAT the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority Board of Directors approves Permit Application 2025-54 as presented.”**

**Carried.**

**ADJOURNMENT**

The Hearing was adjourned at 11:40 a.m.

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING**

**DIRECTORS PRESENT**

Ray Chartrand, Adrian Cornelissen, Joey Groot, Steve Herold, Dave Jewitt, Dave Marsh, Wayne Shipley, Marissa Vaughan

**DIRECTORS ABSENT**

Jaden Hodgins

**STAFF PRESENT**

Andrew Bicknell, Millie Ghorbankhani, Abbie Gutteridge, Davin Heinbuck, Brian Horner, Tracey McPherson, Jaden Schoelier, Ellen Westelaken

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Ray Chartrand called the meeting to order at 11:41 a.m., welcomed everyone in attendance, and read the Land Acknowledgement Statement.

**ADOPTION OF AGENDA**

Davin Heinbuck, General Manager/Secretary-Treasurer, noted that due to the Hearing going longer than expected, Adam Skillen, who was to present an investments update, had to leave and would be added to the agenda for the December Board of Directors meeting.

**MOTION #BD 78/25**

**Moved by David Marsh**

**Seconded by Steve Herold**

**“RESOLVED, THAT the agenda for the November 20, 2025 Board of Directors Meeting be approved as amended.”**

**Carried.**

**DISCLOSURE OF PECUNIARY INTEREST**

There were no disclosures of pecuniary interest at this meeting or from the previous meeting.

**DISCLOSURE OF INTENTION TO RECORD**

None.

**ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

**MOTION #BD 79/25**

**Moved by Joey Groot**  
**Seconded by Wayne Shipley**

**“RESOLVED, THAT the minutes of the Board of Directors meetings held on October 23, 2025 and November 6, 2025, and the motions therein be approved as circulated.”**

**Carried.**

**BUSINESS OUT OF THE MINUTES**

**Proposed Changes to Conservation Authorities**

Davin Heinbuck reminded the Board of Directors about the proposed changes to conservation authorities in Ontario, including the creation of the Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency, and the proposed amalgamation the 36 conservation authorities into 7 conservation regions. As such, staff drafted a proposed resolution for the Board to consider. Davin and Chair Ray also took this opportunity to update the Board on the various meetings that have been held as a result of these proposed changes. They noted that there has been a posting on the Environmental Registry of Ontario, which poses five questions, and informed Directors that staff would be working on a comment from the ABCA.

The Directors were pleased with the draft resolution and were glad to endorse it. They also requested that it be sent out widely throughout Ontario. They also asked staff to continue to work on the ERO comment to be posted as soon as possible.

**MOTION #BD 80/25**

**Moved by Wayne Shipley**  
**Seconded by David Jewitt**

**“WHEREAS** the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA) Board of Directors acknowledges and supports the Province’s goals of improved efficiency of watershed management, through the implementation of digital applications and permitting system, consistent policies, flood standards, fees, and technology; and

**“WHEREAS** consistent policies, and resources across the existing Conservation Authorities boundaries could be achieved through direction and tools such as technical guidelines provided by the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks; or Conservation Ontario; and

**“WHEREAS** Conservation Authorities are locally based, grassroots organizations formed by municipal governments in response to the challenges posed by a changing landscape;

especially, the increased exposure to flooding and erosion hazards and the resulting risks to lives and property. In the case of ABCA, this vision has proved a successful model for 80 years; and

**“WHEREAS** the ABCA, with the guidance and support of our 12 Member Municipalities, demonstrates fiscal prudence in conservation delivery, ensuring stable growth through stable funding. ABCA has successfully leveraged funding to support programs and services that are locally important and are driven by community engagement through ABCA’s Conservation Strategy and the Watershed Based Resource Management Strategy; and

**“WHEREAS** Conservation Authorities across the Province operate efficiently by working in close partnership with approximately eight Member Municipalities for every one conservation authority. This structure enables resources to be directed toward on-the-ground initiatives that advance our mandate while addressing local community needs, achieving an effective balance in scale, management and service delivery; and

**“WHEREAS** plans to regionalize conservation authorities through consolidation would dilute local accountability and municipal partnership and is contrary to the basic principle that decisions are best made closest to the communities they affect. Effective representation by municipal partners remains core to the success of conservation authorities. The ABCA, while not unique among conservation authorities in this respect, is effective in working with our community to support sustainable development, and keeping communities safe; and

**“WHEREAS** being front-line means being responsive and accountable to the community by delivering the services that are essential and valued to the best interest of the community. The front line of provincial priorities on housing, the economy, infrastructure, and climate resilience are in the decisions between municipalities working together to address issues around floodplain (and hazard) protection and resilient upland and landscape management. Further, ABCA staff and Board Members are responsive and accountable to the needs of the watershed community, while meeting or exceeding provincial service standards, and are reachable through publicly available contact information. Local governance and direction combined with local service provision allows ABCA to continue to be responsive to our community; and

**“WHEREAS** consolidation will result in substantial transition costs, not the least of which is time. In all facets, that would divert resources from front-line service delivery and delay desired outcomes. Further, the loss of local watershed knowledge and community relationships will add greater uncertainty, loss of trust, and delay for our watershed residents. This includes the agricultural community, businesses, builders, developers, and our municipal partners that seek timely and effective local advice, which is provided through local pre-consultation; and

**“WHEREAS** a proposed regional watershed would create a geographically vast and administratively complex organization when joining northern municipalities with those that are rural, such as ABCA, where agriculture is the main economic driver. The differences are distinguishable between the Lake Superior and Georgian Bay watersheds to those in Southwestern Ontario on the shores of Lake Huron. The ABCA serves Southwestern Ontario agricultural

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communities facing vastly different geographies, climate, and infrastructure realities which would be ill-served by a broad regional administrative structure. This would be considerably worse if local offices do not remain available and accountable to its membership, partners and the communities they serve.

**“THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:**

**“THAT** the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority Board of Directors does not support the proposed “Huron-Superior Regional Conservation Authority” boundary configuration as outlined in Environmental Registry Notice 025-1257; and

**“FURTHER THAT** meaningful modernization can occur within the current watershed-based governance framework; and

**“FURTHER THAT** the ABCA Board endorses further provincial evaluation of a more focused specific model as a geographically coherent, cost-effective and locally accountable alternative that advances the government’s priorities of efficiency, red-tape reduction and timely home construction; and

**“FURTHER THAT** the Board asks that the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks engage directly with affected municipalities and conservation authorities across Southwestern Ontario through a working group before finalizing any consolidation boundaries or legislative amendments; and

**“FURTHER THAT** a forthcoming ERO response at the approval of the ABCA Board be forwarded to the Environmental Registry of Ontario consultations; and

**“FURTHER THAT** a letter from the Chair containing this resolution, and ERO response, be forwarded to:

- the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks and his Opposition critics,
- the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks (CA Office),
- Ontario’s Chief Conservation Executive,
- local Members of Provincial Parliament,
- local Members of Parliament,
- Local Municipalities and Counties,
- The Association of Municipalities of Ontario, and the Rural Ontario Municipal Association,
- Ausable Bayfield Conservation Foundation, and
- Conservation Ontario and all Conservation Authorities in Ontario.

**Carried.**

**2026 Fee Schedule and Pay Grid Approval**

Davin Heinbuck advised the Board of Directors that the changes to the Fee Schedule and pay grid increase of 2.5% was incorporated into preparing the proposed budget for 2026. The direction from the Board was that the pay grid increase remain as presented, but that staff develop a policy to tie the pay grid increase to the May – July average CPI.

**MOTION #BD 81/25****Moved by Adrian Cornelissen**  
**Seconded by David Marsh**

**“RESOLVED, THAT the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority Board of Directors approve the proposed 2026 Fee Schedule as presented, and**

**“FURTHER, THAT the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority Board of Directors approve the pay grid increase of 2.5 % as presented.**

**Carried.**

**PROGRAM REPORTS****1. (a) Development Review**

Andrew Bicknell, Water & Planning Manager, presented the Development Review report pursuant to Ontario Regulation Ontario Regulation 41/24 *Prohibited Activities, Exemptions and Permits*. Through the application process, proposed developments within regulated areas are protected from flooding and erosion hazards. Staff granted permission for 7 *Applications for Permission* and 11 *Minor Works Applications*.

**(b) Violation/Appeals Update**

Andrew Bicknell noted there were no violation updates at present.

**MOTION #BD 82/25****Moved by Dave Jewitt**  
**Seconded by Wayne Shipley**

**“RESOLVED, THAT the Board of Directors affirm the approval of applications as presented in Program Report # 1 – a) Development Review and receive the verbal Violations and Appeals update as presented.”**

**Carried.**

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

None.

**CORRESPONDENCE**

- a) Reference: Resolution from Essex Region Conservation Authority  
File: A.5.2  
Brief: The Essex Region Conservation Authority shared a resolution from their Board of Directors regarding the proposed consolidation of Conservation Authorities.
- b) Reference: Resolution from the United Counties of Stormont, Dundas & Glengarry  
File: A.5.1  
Brief: A resolution from the Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry regarding the proposed consolidation of Conservation Authorities.
- c) Reference: Letter of Concern from the Heavy Construction Association of Windsor  
File A.5.1  
Brief: A letter of concern sent to Andrew Dowie, MP for Windsor Essex and the Minister of Environment Conservation and Parks regarding the proposed amalgamation of conservation authorities.
- d) Reference: Email from Huron County  
File: A.9  
Brief: An email from Huron County to the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Foundation, noting that they are the recipient of the Huron County Accessibility Committee Award of Merit for Barrier-Free Access in the Public category for the Trail Mobile on the South Huron Trail.

**NEW BUSINESS**

1. Chair Ray Chartrand noted that ABCA staff have been invited to both the Municipalities of Huron East and South Huron to speak to Councils regarding budget at the proposed changes to conservation authorities. Davin Heinbuck reminded directors that staff are willing to come to speak at Council meetings at such times that Municipalities would like to hear from them.
2. Davin Heinbuck shared a request from Perth County for ABCA to provide a letter of support for Perth County and its review of the Forest Conservation By-Law. Staff drafted a letter that was presented to the Board for review.

**MOTION #BD 83/25****Moved by Joey Groot  
Seconded by Wayne Shipley**

**“RESOLVED, THAT the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority Board of Directors endorses the letter of support to Perth County regarding their Forest Conservation By-Law, as presented, and directs it to be sent to Perth County.”**

**Carried.**

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

None.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned by Wayne Shipley at 12:23 p.m.

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Ray Chartrand  
Chair

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Abigail Gutteridge  
Secretary

*Copies of program reports are available upon request.  
Contact Abigail Gutteridge, Corporate Services Coordinator*