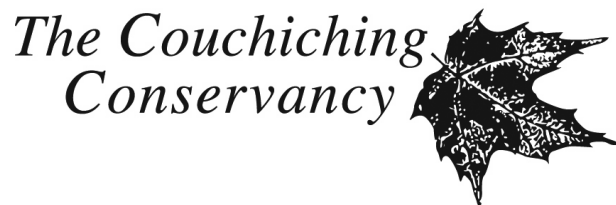


Minutes



Annual General Meeting

March 7, 2020

Hawk Ridge Golf & Country Club, Severn, ON

The 2020 Annual General Meeting (AGM) was called to order by Executive Director Mark Bisset at 3:00 p.m. Those in attendance were over 260 members and guests.

1. Call to Order & Welcome Guests	Lead: Mark Bisset
Discussion/Conclusions: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Welcome given.• Acknowledged that the land on which we gather is the traditional territory of Haudenosaunee, Anishnaabeg, Wendat and Metis Peoples. This territory is covered by the Upper Canada Treaties.• Welcome and appreciation given to the political guests:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Chippewas of Rama First Nation – Tracey Snache, Sharday James, Mark Douglas, and Gary Pritchard;○ MP Simcoe North – Bruce Stanton;○ Severn Township – Mayor Mike Burkett, Judith Cox, Mark Taylor, John Betsworth and Jane Dunlop;○ City of Orillia – Mayor Steve Clark and Jay Fallis; and○ Ramara Township – David Snutch	
2. Orillia Vocal Ensemble	Lead: Mark Bisset & Brian Adams
Discussion/Conclusions: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Brief performance by the Orillia Vocal Ensemble.• Spring concert on May 23, 2020 being held to support The Couchiching Conservancy’s Angela Rehorn Citizen Science Fund to aid in continuing Angela’s legacy.• This is also the last concert by musical director, Roy Menagh. Encourage all to attend to support the Conservancy and continue its citizen science work, as well as pay tribute to Roy.	
3. Review of Previous Minutes	Lead: Lisa Neville
Discussion/Conclusions: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lisa Neville read highlights from the 2019 AGM minutes.• Minutes for the 2019 AGM accepted as provided in the AGM handouts and as posted on the	

website in the AGM pre-reading materials.

Motion: To approve the Minutes of the 2019 Annual General Meeting of The Couchiching Conservancy.

Moved by: Neil Gray

Seconded by: Janet Grand

Vote: **Carried**

4. President's Remarks

Lead: Jamie Ross

Discussion/Conclusions:

- Encourage all to read the 2019 Annual Report.
- Thank you to/for the:
 - staff for their hard-work and dedication;
 - expert support provided by Ron Reid, Kathy Connor and Ginny Moore;
 - advice and fundraising efforts from the Advisory Council and Past Presidents Council;
 - Board members' work on duties and committees; and
 - members for your time, donations, ideas, knowledge and the next generation.
- Jamie Ross reflected on his monthly donation of \$20 to the Conservancy being affordable and barely noticeable, allowing him to be a long-term contributor and providing much needed monthly income to the Conservancy. Also, an added benefit of never having to remember when membership fees are due. Jamie Ross encouraged all to consider this method of donating.

5. Treasurer's Report

Lead: Jack Booth

Discussion/Conclusions:

- Jack Booth reviewed *The Couchiching Conservancy Financial Statements for the Year Ended October 31, 2019* provided in the AGM handouts and posted on the website in the AGM pre-reading materials. Highlights included:
 - Total revenue – 89% from grants and donations:
 - Over 80% was from environmentally-minded individuals and organizations,
 - Current year consistent with 2017; 2018 was unusually high with the purchase of the Ron Reid Nature Reserve (RRNR).
 - *Statement of Operations and Changes in Net Assets* (p. 5):
 - Acquisition of the Pitts & Milligan Nature Reserve (Pitts property) at year-end in October 2019 created a deficit, but this deficit has subsequently been covered by a \$102,000 grant received. A \$52,000 contribution to the Stewardship Endowment Fund has also been made for the Pitts property,
 - Increase investment revenue (\$47,500 for 2019) is the result of more funds being invested through the Community Foundation of Orillia and Area,
 - Additional operating grants and the increase investment revenue allowed for the hiring of additional staff to support the organization's growth, which was reflected in wages and benefits being \$57,000 over the budgeted amount.
 - *Statement of Financial Position* (Balance Sheet p. 4):
 - Heartwood Endowment Fund increased to \$305,000; since year-end \$70,000 further has been received,
 - The Pitts property increased capital assets by \$273,000; overall net assets increased to \$6,170,000 with just over \$5 million in properties and easements,

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Strong financial position with no long-term debt and over \$1 million in Reserves and Endowment Funds. • Thousands of volunteer hours contributed not reflected in these financial statements. Active volunteer base combined with dedicated staff continues to be a key factor in allowing for both the growth and the long-term success of this organization. • Jack Booth thanked all supporters, volunteers, staff and board members for their commitment, as well as the auditors Hehn Trickey for their timely work. 		
<p>Motion: To receive the Financial Statements for the year ended October 31, 2019.</p>		
Moved by: Neil Gray	Seconded by: Adam Thompson	Vote: Carried
<p>Motion: To appoint Hehn Trickey Professional Corporation Chartered Accountants as auditor for the year ending October 31, 2020.</p>		
Moved by: Ted Duncan	Seconded by: Harry Hall	Vote: Carried
6. Heartwood Fund Report		Lead: Heather Gaudie
<p>Discussion/Conclusions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investment money from the Heartwood Fund provides structure to keep the organization strong. • Goal is \$10 million for forever protection of properties. • Recognition of donors can be found on the website. Heather Gaudie spoke of why her name is on that list even though she believes hers is a small donation; they all add up and the fund is currently at \$2.5 million in pledges and donations. She urged all members to donate for conservation. 		
7. Advisory Council Report		Lead: Jason Stewart
<p>Discussion/Conclusions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jason Stewart presented a brief update of the Advisory Council: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Formed in 2016 to fundraise, research, provide expert advice, and raise the Conservancy's profile in the region and Greater Toronto Area. ○ Special mention to Jean Iron, Dale Leadbeater, Michael Drescher, and Ellen Larsen for their contribution and important role in the Strategic Plan presentation and leading Passport to Nature events. ○ Fundraising brought in \$229,000 by \$63,000 new foundations, \$91,000 renewed foundations and \$75,000 from foundations supporting the RRNR acquisition. ○ New initiative includes the Development Committee for fundraising – coming will be a challenge fund for the Black River Wildlands Campaign, Major Gift Leaders program, and additional foundations. • Thanked all staff members for their work and support. 		
8. Executive Director Report		Lead: Mark Bisset
<p>Discussion/Conclusions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spoke about 2 cycling events participated in that were fundraisers for the Conservancy – BluMoose event and Carden Challenge – and will be participating again this year. 		

- Mae, new granddaughter: tough questions she and her generation may ask in the future about climate change and what we did to fight it.
 - Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change graph of 4 potential temperature scenarios.
 - If we do everything possible right now and protect, restore and fund Nature, could be seen as part of the greatest human cohort in history, but if not, what will Mae think then?
 - Winston Churchill and Battle of Dunkirk – an almost impossible situation but for the actions of hundreds of ordinary people.
- Case Study of Evelyn Frantzke and Robert Williamson: their story illustrates how the different elements of the Conservancy’s work come together to achieve the prime goals of land protection and stewardship.
 - Initially connected to us through an Ambassador booth, then a Passport to Nature event (portal for new people to enter the community);
 - started volunteering with the Citizen Science program and connecting with members; and
 - now a letter of intent has been received for a conservation easement on their property.
 - The Conservancy’s Acquisition Strategy with 5 priority areas assisted in showing how their land could help create natural connectivity and become something bigger ecologically.
- Black River Wildlands Corridor campaign:
 - Launched in August and to date raised \$445,00 in cash and pledges; about one third of the way to the goal of \$1.2 million
 - Closed on two properties, for a total of 215 acres; news of a third property coming in the summer.
 - John Pitts property – buffers a wetland to the north and is also very diverse habitat and species on its own; two nationally imperilled species and at least six provincial species at risk identified.
 - Norm and Irene Whitney property – adjacent to the Mclsaac Wetland and a hotspot for bats as identified by Citizen Science volunteers.
- Strategic Plan (2020-25):
 - The compass; completed after months of consultation with focus groups, interviews and an online survey.
 - Pam Fulford and the steering committee worked hard to build this plan.
 - Added a new section entitled, *Declaration of Shared Principles* to express the “why” not just the “what” of the work.
 - Vision – to change our relationship with nature to one of responsibility, respect and reciprocity.
 - Highlights – accelerate the pace of acquisition and protection, engage with Indigenous community and work together and become a conservation leader.
- The Conservancy is not alone – 154 land trusts in Canada and more than a 1000 in the U.S.; plus, millions around the world working on small projects/places for conservation.

9. Recognition of Volunteers	Lead: Wendy Lowry
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Discussion/Conclusions:

- On behalf of the Board, staff, members, Wendy Lowry recognized departing Board members, Bob Sullivan and Pam Fulford, and six individual volunteers - Paul Laver, Jason Stewart, Marilyn Clark, Noella Storry, Harry Hall and Alan Smale - for their time, ideas, energy, heavy lifting, guidance, knowledge, friendship, and inspiration.

10. Election of New Board		Lead: Mark Bisset
<p>Discussion/Conclusions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biographies of the proposed slate of directors for 2020 provided in the AGM handouts and on the website in the AGM pre-reading materials. • The slate of nominees for the 2020-21 board are: Jamie Ross as President, and Doug Christie, Jack Booth, Lisa Neville, Wendy Lowry, Kathy Hunt, Neil Gray, Jane Bonsteel and David Homer as Directors. • Mark Bisset asked three times: “Are there any nominations from the floor?” Seeing none, the motion was read. 		
<p>Motion: To accept the slate of candidates as recommended by the Nominations Committee for 2020-2021: President Jamie Ross, and Directors Doug Christie, Jack Booth, Lisa Neville, Wendy Lowry, Kathy Hunt, Neil Gray, Jane Bonsteel and David Homer.</p>		
Moved by: Margaret Pomeroy	Seconded by: Sandy Agnew	Vote: Carried
11. Guest Speaker: Rick Beaver		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kathy Hunt introduced the AGM’s guest speaker, Rick Beaver, an internationally recognized Michi Saagiig Ojibway artist and ecologist from Alderville First Nation in Ontario. • Presentation by Rick Beaver: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Need cooperative effort engagement and to celebrate success. ○ The ways forward – informed by information, intent (why), understanding (science, tradition), and measures of success (mileposts). ○ Dealing with – hybridizing land use and management approaches between Indigenous traditional practices and western science; managing the land collectively; species at risk; invasive species and population densities; impacts of development; resource management, etc. ○ Land restoration settlements and Indigenous sovereignty need to be recognized; one size does not fit all. ○ Three important Anishnaabeg Principles: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 1) be good human beings, ▪ 2) take care of this place/planet, and ▪ 3) everything is connected to everything else. ○ Traditional knowledge is about survival and shared over generations, which needs to be integrated. ○ Current biodiversity loss rapid; experiencing sixth greatest extinction. ○ Need to cooperate; 40% of species at risk found on First Nation lands, which constitute only 0.1% of country’s land mass. ○ Alderville First Nation – approach to managing species at risk includes classification of habitats/inventories, traditional ecological knowledge surveys and species surveys, mapping leading to recommendations to guide land development. ○ If want to begin a project with First Nations – meet with Consultation Protocol Officer or other representative first before Chief/Council, see if already doing conservation work, find mutual environmental concerns, and understand land ownership rules/management. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Need to understand how the information will be used and controlled. ○ Questions from audience: 		

- When are water ceremonies and are they accessible? Information about water ceremonies can be learned by referring to the women who conduct them in the community and Trent University Indigenous Studies Department.
- Is there expertise of ecologists for First Nations available across Canada? Question needs to be asked, but traditional ecological knowledge available.

Meeting adjourned at 5:17 p.m. by Lisa Neville

Minutes Recorded by: Lisa Neville, Board Secretary