

# Minutes



## Annual General Meeting

March 2, 2024

### Hawk Ridge Golf & Country Club, Severn, ON

The 2024 Annual General Meeting (AGM) was called to order by Executive Director Dorthea Hangaard at 2:02 p.m. Those in attendance were 212 members and guests.

<b>1. Call to Order &amp; Welcome</b>	Lead: Dorthea Hangaard
Discussion/Conclusions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Welcome given.</li><li>• Appreciation given to the members of the Indigenous Community and local politicians that attended this AGM:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Chippewas of Rama First Nation members Mark and Christine Douglas;</li><li>○ MP Adam Chambers;</li><li>○ Severn Township, Mayor Mike Burkett and Councillors Mark Taylor and Wanda Minnings;</li><li>○ Orillia Councillor Jay Fallis; and</li><li>○ Ramara Township Councillor Dana Tuju.</li></ul></li><li>• Welcome given to guest speaker, Waubgeshig Rice.</li><li>• Recognized the signed Williams Treaties and the Indigenous territories we stand on.</li><li>• Poem <i>The Moment</i> by Margaret Atwood read.</li></ul>	
<b>2. Review of Agenda Items</b>	Lead: Dorthea Hangaard
Discussion/Conclusions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Slide presented with the agenda.</li></ul>	
<b>3. Review of the AGM Minutes from March 4, 2023</b>	Lead: Lisa Neville
Discussion/Conclusions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Secretary Lisa Neville read highlights from the 2023 AGM minutes, which were posted on The Couchiching Conservancy's (CC) website in the AGM pre-reading materials and provided in the printed handouts.</li><li>• One correction identified by the Secretary – page 3 within item #6 Treasurer's Report, the figure \$17,300 to read \$217,300.</li></ul>	

- No discussion or further corrections arose and the minutes for the March 4, 2023 AGM were accepted as revised.

**Motion:** To approve the minutes of the 2023 Annual General Meeting of The Couchiching Conservancy as revised in this meeting.

Moved by: Lisa Neville

Seconded by: Neil Gray

Vote: **Carried**

#### 4. President's Remarks

Lead: Kathy Hunt

Discussion/Conclusions:

- President Kathy Hunt spoke of the passion, dedication and hard work of so many individuals that make up the CC community.
- Presented some highlights of the past year, including:
  - Sweetwater Farm Nature Reserve dedication;
  - Deverell-Morton Nature Reserve acquisition and property tour;
  - CC events – “Night Out for Nature”, a Passport to Nature paddling party, “Nature Counts”, a volunteer picnic;
  - Partner events – “BluMoose Alvar ride”, Rustica Pizza Vino dinner; and
  - The Board of Directors Advance meeting.
- Recognition and appreciation given to departing board member, Lisa Neville.

#### 5. Treasurer's Report

Lead: Jack Booth

Discussion/Conclusions:

- Treasurer Jack Booth reviewed *The Couchiching Conservancy Financial Statements For the Year Ended October 31, 2023* as posted on CC's website in the AGM pre-reading materials and provided in the printed handouts. Highlights included:
  - Revenue and Expenses:
    - Increase in both revenue and expenses mainly from property and easement acquisitions. The large increase is partly due to \$286,000 in easement donations delayed from 2022.
    - Recovery of the financial markets during 2023 resulted in investment income of \$61,000.
  - *Statement of Operations and Changes in Net Assets For the Year Ended October 31, 2023* (p. 5):
    - Donation income and wages and benefits expense over budget because the budget does not incorporate an amount for volunteer time. This increased the actual figures of both by \$66,000.
    - Grant income over budget due to grants obtained to facilitate acquisitions.
    - Subcontracts expense under budget because of, 1) work being done by staff and volunteers instead of contractors and the donation of materials for the Grant's Woods accessible trail, and 2) the methodology for restoration of habitat for species at risks is under review and, as such, no subcontract work occurred during 2023.
    - Net result was an income of \$103,400 for the year - \$92,000 of this amount was contributed to the Stewardship Endowment Fund as required.
  - *Statement of Financial Position As at October 31, 2023* ('Balance Sheet' p. 4):

- The increase in short-term investments was from investing a portion of the Youssef-Warren Foundation multi-year grant received to support the Community Science program over the next eight years.
- Endowment assets increased by \$192,000, with \$92,000 contribution to the Stewardship Endowment Fund and \$100,000 in donations made to the Heartwood Endowment Fund.
- Liabilities up significantly from the previous year due to deferred revenue of \$265,000 from a multi-year grant received, and \$235,000 raised toward future property acquisitions.
- Net Assets increased with the acquisition of the Deverell-Morton Nature Reserve and the Frantzke-Williamson and Hancock Hermitage Easements by \$757,000.
- CC continues to be in a strong financial position with no long-term debt and just under \$1,800,000 in the reserves and endowment funds.
- Appreciation given to supporters, volunteers, staff and board members, as well as Jennifer Man and Debbie Trickey of Hehn Trickey for their year-end audit.
- No questions arose and Treasurer Jack Booth moved two motions.

**Motion:** To receive the Financial Statements for the year ended October 31, 2023.

Moved by: Jack Booth

Seconded by: Neil Gray

Vote: **Carried**

**Motion:** To appoint Hehn Trickey Professional Corporation Chartered Professional Accountants as auditor for the year ending October 31, 2024.

Moved by: Jack Booth

Seconded by: Doug Christie

Vote: **Carried**

**6. Investment Report from The Community Foundation**

Lead: Michael Gordon

Discussion/Conclusions:

- Board Member Bob Sullivan introduced Michael Gordon, Chair of the Board/President of The Community Foundation of Orillia and Area (The Foundation).
- Presentation by Michael Gordon:
  - A public foundation that invests charitable donations and manages endowment funds for donors and charities. Also have provided grants to 155 registered charities.
  - The Foundation has several types of charitable endowment funds. CC has received grants from three of the six Donor Directed Funds.
  - The pooled funds of The Foundation are managed by investment advisor, Connor, Clark & Lunn. The Foundation helps to increase diversification with lower management costs - CC's fee is at 0.05%.
  - CC's funds are within the Designated Funds and Managed Funds. CC's investments have grown from \$270,000 in 2016 to more than \$2 million now. 25% invested in non-market assets, e.g. solar farms, real estate.
  - Net of fees, CC has earned 6.1% on its investments since inception. Returns are posted quarterly on The Foundation's website.

<b>7. Election of the Board of Directors</b>		Lead: Dorthea Hangaard
<p>Discussion/Conclusions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Biographies of the <i>Proposed slate of Directors for 2024</i> distributed electronically ahead of the meeting and posted on CC's website.</li> <li>• CC's Nominations Committee has recommended the following slate of candidates: Kathy Hunt as President, and Directors Jane Bonsteel, Jack Booth, Neil Gray, Morris Ilyniak, Dale Leadbeater, Janet Machan, Bob Sullivan, and Susan Crowe.</li> <li>• Dorthea Hangaard asked three times: "Are there any nominations from the floor?" Not receiving any from the floor, the motion was read.</li> </ul>		
<p><b>Motion:</b> To accept the slate of candidates as recommended by the Nominations Committee for 2024-25 Couchiching Conservancy Board: President Kathy Hunt, and Directors Jane Bonsteel, Jack Booth, Neil Gray, Morris Ilyniak, Dale Leadbeater, Janet Machan, Bob Sullivan, and Susan Crowe.</p>		
Moved by: Adam Thomson	Seconded by: Mark Bisset	Vote: <b>Carried</b>
<b>8. Executive Director Report</b>		Lead: Dorthea Hangaard
<p>Discussion/Conclusions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognition and appreciation given to AGM coordinator, Madeleine Fournier, mentor Courtney Baker, and mentor and Annual Report creator, Tanya Clark.</li> <li>• After hard work by staff, taking years in some cases, six new properties were permanently protected in 2023; slides of each property and their donors presented: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Frantzke-Williamson Easement – Bass Lake Corridor, 44.5 acres (18 hectares). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Neighbour to the Hancock easement; the landowners are dedicated stewards of the land.</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Hancock Hermitage Easement – Bass Lake Corridor, 47 acres (19 hectares). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ On the Oro Moraine with a stand of endangered black ash trees and forest interior habitat.</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Turnbull Ranch Nature Reserve, Road Allowance Addition – Carden Alvar Corridor, 7 acres (3 hectares). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Road allowance land acquired from the City of Kawartha Lakes; removes an artificial barrier on the landscape and helps CC to provide protection from its development or use.</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Deverell-Morton Nature Reserve – Carden Alvar Corridor, 417 acres (169 hectares). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ High quality alvar with nature reserves to the north and east. Land has been in the family since the 1800s.</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Mitchell Bruce Nature Reserve – Black River Wildlands Corridor, 85 acres (34 hectares). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Located beside the Alexander Hope-Smith Nature Reserve. Memorial to the donors' son Mitchell.</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Cedar Grove Nature Reserve – Bass Lake West Corridor, 7 acres (3 hectares). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Donated by the Orillia Horticultural Society. Connected to the Grant's Woods Nature Reserve by a stream; contains a wetland and meadow.</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Total of 608 acres (246 hectares) protected thanks to generous land and financial donations.</li> <li>○ A round of applause to the donors given.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• CC's 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary:</li> </ul>		

- The founders of CC sought to reverse the commodification of the land by buying back the best habitats to protect them forever. They identified 10 areas around Lake Couchiching in need of protection. Their success inspired a network of Land Trusts across the province.
- Played a short video of the stories the CC founders told recently at a gathering.
- CC Founders, Adam Thomson, Shirley Thomson, Peter Gill, Ken Thomson, Janet Grand, Ron Reid, Si Lowry and Gord Ball (absent), recognized for their outstanding volunteer contributions over the past 30 years.
  - Bur oak seedlings from 300-year-old Ontario heritage trees' acorns, presented to each founder – acorns provided by Dale Leadbeater and germinated by Toby Rowland.
- Since 1993, 57 nature reserves and easements totalling 14,934 acres (6044 hectares).

## 9. Guest Speaker: Waubgeshig Rice

### Discussion/Conclusions:

- Executive Director Dorthea Hangaard introduced the AGM's guest speaker, Waubgeshig Rice, an author of three novels and a short story collection, including *Moon of the Crusted Snow* and *Moon of the Turning Leaves*.
- Presentation by Waubgeshig Rice:
  - Member of the bear clan of the Wasauksing First Nation; Anishinaabe and Canadian descent; author and journalist.
  - Books are in the spirit of conservation with the land being more than a setting. We are born of the land and sustained by it, and the second book acknowledges respect for the land.
  - Read a passage from his latest novel, *Moon of the Turning Leaves*.
  - Summary of responses to questions answered during the presentation:
    1. Anishinaabemowin, the language of the Anishinaabe, is woven throughout the books as an opportunity to learn the language for both the reader and author. Imagined that the language continues and grows into the future for the second book. YouTube video was made to help with the pronunciation. Welcome everyone to the Indigenous languages.
    2. Book 3 to the series is possible, but have other stories to do first.
    3. People turned to the post-apocalyptic genre during the pandemic in part because the stories have a finale and it helped them to imagine the future. Also, apocalypses are not a new thing for the Indigenous people and they have overcome them previously, e.g. forced removal from homeland and then saw it changed, developed and denuded of trees, children taken from their homes and forced into residential schools.
    4. Land protection initiatives important for the future to ensure the land is preserved for everyone. Need to bring everyone together to share resources and ensure everyone is on the same discussion page.
    5. The books touched on shared family/community experiences, provided it was appropriate and permission granted, e.g. ceremonial knowledge. The general Indigenous community dynamics is based on experience, e.g. council size, population size. Tried to be authentic to current life.
    6. Would love to learn how to and/or see how a book is adapted to TV or a play.
    7. Specific species and terms used to create or invoke something familiar to the readers. Land is more than a setting and is a reconnection to the land for the characters.

<b>10. Wrap-up</b>		Lead: Dorthea Hangaard
Discussion/Conclusions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Everyone welcomed to enjoy the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary cake.</li> <li>• Waubgeshig Rice stayed on to sign purchased books and talk to attendees.</li> <li>• Meeting adjourned at 4:08 p.m.</li> </ul>		
<b>Motion:</b> To adjourn the 30 <sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting of The Couchiching Conservancy.		
Moved by: Eric Bennet	Seconded by: Neil Gray	Vote: <b>Carried</b>

Minutes Recorded by: Lisa Neville, Board Secretary