

# MGWA News

Autumn 2004

*"Preserving significant environment and property rights in north Cambridge..."*

A lot has happened since the last issue of the MGWA News. The Working Committee held its open house, it held its final meeting, and the whole thing culminated at the Special Meeting of Council.

Thanks and congratulations to all who supported the cause over the recent months. It's been a grueling process, though we are thankful for the dedicated members of our Committee, and to the many who became involved and stayed the course right through to the Council meeting. We thank the members of Council for doing the right thing.

## **Open House...**

At the Wanner Church on September 16, this was attended by approximately 90 people, including the following members of City Council:

- Mayor Doug Craig
- Rick Cowsill
- Linda Whetham
- Ted Fairless

Karl Kiefer sent regrets, as did Ben Tucci. We did not receive contact from Gary Price, who had attended the Steering Committee of the flawed watersheds study.

## **Working Committee wraps up ...**

The final meeting of the HWSS Working Committee was a marathon which went from 3:30 through 10 PM on Tuesday September 28th. Several parts of the Summary Report were not even available until after that date, so were not reviewed by the Working Committee.

The Ministry of Natural Resources was supposed to have recalculated the Maple Grove Wetlands Complex scoresheet, removing several high quality wetlands and natural areas that had been mapped right in the middle of Arriscraft's sand pit. We have never seen the results of this.

The mapping of the wetlands complex also

included areas west of Fountain St. This really stretches the limits of the criteria. The complexing was rationalized by a section of road side ditch and storm sewer, which is said to provide a theoretical hydraulic connection. Nearby residents say this sewer has never been used to divert overflow from the swamp since its construction four years ago.

All in all, the Summary Report in spite of a few warts, represents a remarkable improvement over what was first served as a watershed study.

## **Special Council meeting Oct 26<sup>th</sup>...**

At the special meeting of Cambridge City Council on October 26 we had a number of presentations, including a compelling case by the MGWA. Estimates of attendance were about 120 people, indicating that people do take an interest in municipal affairs. We are particularly thankful to the members of Council who took the time to understand the issues and voted in our favour.

The staff recommended motion for overly general 30m buffers was defeated and a more reasonable buffer policy was tabled. Our Ward Councillor, Rick Cowsill, tabled the amendments and requested a poll vote. In a poll vote, everyone is required declare their position for the record. The vote went as follows:

- Rick Cowsill, supported.
- Ben Tucci, supported.
- Linda Whetham, supported.
- Karl Kiefer, supported.
- Ted Fairless, opposed.
- Gary Price, opposed.
- Doug Craig, opposed.

By the end of the evening, we achieved reasonable buffers, the exemption of existing estate residential lots, future representation, and flexibility on future municipal boundaries.

### ***Since the Council Meeting...***

The local newspapers have been seen parroting City bureaucrats. As a result what has been reported has been rather lop-sided; truth being the first casualty.

Mayor Doug Craig has already attempted to bring this back to Council, because he would like to see the general 30m buffers adopted. We had trouble digesting this news, at first, and contacted him to verify this. He does confirm that he had tried to convince some of the Councillors to recant their positions and vote down the reasonable buffers they had passed on October 26<sup>th</sup>. This would have required a 2/3 majority. We are pleased to report that the Councillors have chosen to do the right thing, and they are sticking to their guns.

Nevertheless, the interest of the Mayor to try to have Council revisit the buffer issue is a concern that will keep your Committee on its toes. Your continued participation and vigilance are key to preventing loss of the gains we have made. Only by unified action can we influence the decisions of those we elected to manage our government affairs.

### ***Regional Committee Meeting...***

December 7, 2004, 9AM, at the Regional Planning and Works Committee on Frederick St, Kitchener, the battle raged on, conniving to overthrow the democratic decision we had received on October 26th.

Your Association appeared as the only delegation on the issue, and we appealed for the Region not to tamper with the democratic decision. Regional Council/Committee members, including our own Mayor, voted against the will of the community. They approved a Regional staff recommendation which will 'advise' City of Cambridge that the

buffers will be 30m, like it or lump it.

The Regional Council meeting which approves this will likely be on Wednesday December 15th. If you are planning to speak to this issue, you will need to register as a delegation. Information and agenda is available on the Region's web site.

### ***Watch for the Community Plan...***

The planning stage in which these watershed study details are turned into zoning, the stage which can impact your property values significantly, is called the community plan.

If you own property between Hespeler Rd and Fountain St, bounded by #401 and Maple Grove Rd, you need to be especially vigilant. Watch the City's web site, and the local newspapers for the announcements regarding this process in the coming weeks.

It has been our recommendation that it would be best for a member of the community to be appointed to the Community Plan Steering Committee. Each of you will need to lobby your elected representatives now in order to get that to happen early in the new year.

### ***Chilligo Ck Subwatershed Study...***

The inside track on this is that this is being planned to go ahead in about a year. It will probably be a joint effort between the Region and the GRCA, rather than the City.

If there are any lessons to be learned from the Hespeler West Subwatersheds Study fiasco, it is the need for members of the community to be aware, get involved early, and get private citizens onto the steering committee. And, above all, make sure that bureaucrats and consultants are held accountable for things like written trespass permissions, and for any errors, before the bill gets paid.

### ***About the MGWA News***

The MGWA News is published four times a year by the Maple Grove Wetlands Association, in Cambridge, Ontario. It is made possible by the generous contributions of members like you. Opinions expressed herein are the authors', and may or may not reflect those of the Association. For more information please contact the Maple Grove Wetlands Association:

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