



POLICY AND PRIORITIES ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Via Zoom

MINUTES

April 30, 2021

MEMBERS PRESENT:

J. Atkinson, Chair
F. Campbell, Vice-Chair
R. Darling
J. Inglis
J. Karau
C. Kelsey
J. Mason
K. Thompson

MEMBERS ABSENT:

B. Holmes

STAFF PRESENT:

S. McIntyre, General Manager
M. Craig, Manager, Planning and Regulations
S. Gutoskie, Community Relations Coordinator
A. Symon, Watershed Planner
E. Levi, Recording Secretary

OTHERS PRESENT:

J. Atkinson called the meeting to order at 1:01 p.m.

PPAC30/04/21-1

MOVED BY: J. Inglis

SECONDED BY: G. Gower

Resolved, That the Agenda for the Policy and Priorities Advisory Committee meeting be adopted as presented.

“CARRIED”

BUSINESS:

1. **Minutes – Policy & Priorities Advisory Committee Meeting – March 26, 2021**

PPAC30/04/21-2

MOVED BY: F. Campbell

SECONDED BY: K. Thompson

Resolved, That the minutes of the Mississippi Valley Policy & Priorities Advisory Committee meeting held on March 26, 2021 be received and approved as amended.

“CARRIED”

2. Update of MVCA Development, Interference with Wetlands and Alterations to Shorelines and Watercourses Policies Interference

M. Craig reviewed Staff Report 3130/21. He highlighted the proposed housekeeping and administrative changes.

J. Karau noted his support of best practices being codified in policy as it provides clarity and guidance.

M. Craig reviewed a proposed new policy that would identify the circumstances under which an access route may be permitted through a Provincially Significant Wetland. He commented that there is some risk associated with the proposed change, but the intent is to allow some landowners to reach areas of their property that are not currently accessible.

J. Mason asked what potential risks may arise. M. Craig gave his opinion that some cases may be mitigated or compromises could be achieved. His concern is if access is granted, the area may be left open for further development on the land which could lead to more intense use of that land within 120 meters of a PSW.

S. McIntyre noted another challenge will be to clarify and keep clear the responsibilities of MVCA from area municipalities. Permitting a driveway through a PSW is an MVCA responsibility; however, it is a municipal decision whether the land may be further developed based upon that access.

J. Karau commented that he does not support vehicle access through PSWs. He is concerned it may set a precedent for more than just MVCA. When moving forward with Watershed Plan, MVCA recognized the importance of PSWs, so if this policy is adopted, it creates confusion. He stated there is a fiduciary duty for MVCA to do whatever it can to preserve PSWs.

M. Craig commented that one other CA has a generic access policy but does not distinguish between unevaluated wetlands and PSWs. In Eastern Ontario, other CAs do not regulate all wetlands and policies on PSWs are non-existent.

J. Atkinson read the motion as presented in the staff report. J. Karau proposed removing item one from the proposed motion.

The committee discussed the role of the regulations committee and the potential impact that changing the policy may have on their ability to make effective decisions. J. Karau questioned if there was a compromise to allow for consideration on case by case basis so as to keep the strength of the policy but also allow for approval in some instances.

M. Craig noted that 75% of cases that make it to a hearing aren't supported by staff. However, he advised that even if the policy says something is not permitted, staff can provide rationale for reasons why it should be.

K. Thompson commented that if the policy indicates no permission should be granted, then that is how it should remain, but also saw value in evaluating on case by case basis.

R. Darling agreed and stated if policies say no, then staff's hands are also tied. She commented that decisions can't be arbitrary and that criteria are required. Our mandate is conservation, but we also don't want to sterilize land.

S. McIntyre explained that all MVCA regulations prohibit development and other activities within regulated areas unless a permit is obtained. And, that to obtain a permit, applicants must meet certain criteria to get a permit. What is proposed is no different—a laneway would not be permitted unless specific conditions were met. The proposed policies provide space to have the conversation about whether access may be allowed, but do *not* obligate the Authority to issue a permit.

J. Karau suggested staff reexamine the matter to improve the approach and language, and that the matter be deferred until a later date. J. Karau withdrew his proposed amendment and indicated his intent to replace it with a motion to defer.

PPAC30/04/21-3

MOVED BY: J. Karau

SECONDED BY: F. Campbell

Resolved, That the decision be deferred.

“CARRIED”

3. **Draft Mississippi River Watershed Plan**

A. Symon reviewed Staff Report 3131/21 regarding the Mississippi River Watershed Plan. She reviewed the work that has been completed to date to produce the draft Plan and the steps to be taken to have it approved by the Board in July. She advised that the General Manager, S. McIntyre, will present the draft Plan to each municipal council. Public engagement will be promoted through multiple channels, with a comment deadline of June 30, 2021. The consultation will be directed to all of the groups and individuals that were consulted in the previous round of engagement.

J. Mason thanked staff for an excellent watershed plan which provides a wealth of information about how the watershed works as a whole.

Staff were directed to continue to consult with the Public Advisory Committee.

PPAC30/04/21-4

MOVED BY: K. Thompson

SECONDED BY: F. Campbell

Resolved, That the Policy & Priorities Committee recommend that the Board of Directors direct staff to release the Draft Mississippi River Watershed Plan for public

consultation and return with final document for approval.

“CARRIED”

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 2:25 p.m.

PPAC30/04/21-5

MOVED BY: R. Darling

SECONDED BY: J. Inglis

Resolved, That the meeting be adjourned.

“CARRIED”

“E. Levi, Recording Secretary

J. Atkinson, Chair”