

Draft Minutes of the Williams Lake Conservation Company (WLCC) Annual General Meeting – 28 October 2020 – via Zoom teleconference

Welcome and Introductions

The zoom webinar was hosted by webmaster Philip Howard, who welcomed attendees from the public, and invited them to submit questions to be answered by “chat” or Q&A at the end of the meeting. All WLCC members were able to vote on motions.

The meeting was called to order and chaired by President Murray Coolican, who thanked former director Karen Lyle, former Treasurer Melanie Dobson, and former President Robin Whyte. Murray welcomed councillor Shawn Cleary and MP Andy Fillmore to the meeting.

WLCC Business

Draft Minutes of the 2019 AGM were shared onscreen. Robin Whyte moved for adoption of the minutes; it was seconded by Melanie Dobson. The minutes were approved as read.

Debbie Hall presented the Treasurer's report, with details of the current WLCC bank balance of \$3202.56 as of 25 May 2020, and a review of expenditures and income. A motion to approve the financial statement, put forward by Melanie Dobson and seconded by Martha Leary, passed unanimously.

Melanie Dobson moved to create the ex-officio position of Honorary Director to recognize significant contributors to the WLCC. Leslie Randall seconded the motion, and it passed. Kathleen Hall spoke on Anne von Maltzahn's long involvement with the WLCC and her wisdom in guiding the organization as a director and Treasurer. Kathleen nominated Anne for the position of Honorary Director – it was unanimously agreed with congratulations to Anne.

Melanie Dobson spoke to the need to expand the number of directors, then put forward a motion to increase the minimum number of directors to 15. Debbie Hall seconded the motion and it was passed unanimously. Murray Coolican moved to approve the current panel of directors, including two ones: Ron Doleman and Craig Smith, former head of NCC's Atlantic office. Melanie Dobson seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Water Quality Report

Water quality testing results were reported by Melanie Dobson, with detailed maps of the watershed (with special thanks to Patricia Manuel and team). Critical areas to protect include Governors Brook which supplies Colpitt Lake from an enormous part of the watershed, and the stream from Colpitt to Williams Lake. Water has been sampled for comprehensive chemical analysis at 3 sites in mid-summer, every year for 40 years. Bacterial and coliform counts remain very low at the dam end; less so near Williams Lake Rd. Results from recent years show the effects of street run-off in increased alkalinity, also at the road end. Robin Whyte reported on the effect of road salting versus sanding or brining. When salting resumed there was a corresponding uptick in lake sodium levels. He urged local residents to report any signs of granular salt on roads where only brining and sanding are allowed, by calling 311.

Water Level Issues

Melanie Dobson reported on her water level monitoring since 2002. Although low water levels correlate with low rainfall, there is a historical trend towards dropping water levels, irrespective of rain. Regardless of how low the water level is, Lawsons Creek continues to flow, draining water from the lake into the Northwest Arm.

Cathy Vaughan reported on the activities of the Williams Lake Dam Association (WLDA), a local group working to bring attention to the state of the dam. These include sending educational letters to 500 members of the community, drafting a petition, providing contact information for local politicians and encouraging people to write, and meeting with all levels of local government. Shawn Cleary will bring a motion to council to study the best way to remediate the dam. The WLDA has drafted press releases to raise awareness and create pressure for action, and sent them to 3 television news stations, who have responded with on-air news spots. Next steps include publishing stories on people's personal involvement with Williams Lake.

Development of the Church of Christ Lands

Kathleen Hall presented an update on efforts to prevent development on this, the only unprotected undeveloped area of lake shore. Melanie displayed maps showing how crucial the land is to protect the watershed, specifically the stream flowing from Colpitt into Williams Lake. Kathleen outlined work done by Murray Coolican, Martha Leary and herself, including forwarding detailed information to HRM staff on waterflows, wildlife and the likely impact to Williams lake. Shawn Cleary's motion to Council stresses the importance of this land to the lake's health and requests a staff report on re-zoning the land to Urban Reserve.

HRM Regional Plan

Kathleen Hall reported on the Backlands Coalition's work regarding the Regional Plan Review: recommending changes in land use rules where current laws do not protect the environment, and firming up riparian buffer zone guidelines, among other initiatives. Shawn Cleary thanked everyone who provided him with information and background on the issues, and reported that he is reaching out to water experts at Dalhousie for further insight.

Question and Answer Period

A brief question period followed. Murray and Melanie invited attendees with further questions, ideas or a wish to get involved, to contact them via the WLCC website's Contact Us page.

Other Business

Murray thanked all volunteers, asked for any further business, and solicited a motion to adjourn the meeting. Melanie moved that the meeting be adjourned, and Craig Smith seconded the motion. The motion passed.