

EAC's and strategic processes for sustainable development

BY TUNDE OTTO-HARRIS
THE COMPASS

In 1996 changes to the Planning Act (PA) shifted more land-use decisions to municipal governments and local citizens. The Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) accompanied this new legislation to establish where provincial interest in land-use planning lies. This provides a renewed opportunity to reflect local community support for conservation of natural areas in Regional and Municipal Official Plans (OP) and land-use planning.

In some communities this has, in part, been mitigated through Environmental Advisory Committees (EAC). An EAC is a way for a local municipal council to receive environmental community input into its land-use planning activities. EAC provides council with a sounding board, and constitutes a source of independent advice and expertise from the local community on environmental aspects of land-use planning. The mandate of EACs

vary; committees may advise municipal council on environmental aspects of land-use planning and/or deal with other environment issues of local interest and importance. More information can be found in *Protecting Nature Close to Home*, by the Federation of Ontario Naturalists. The first Ontario EAC was established in Waterloo 25 years ago, the next in Halton shortly after and then Niagara Region.

About 80 people attended the second annual Conference of EACs in Ontario was held on May 2, 1999 at The University of Western Ontario, London.

The conference was hosted by the McIlwraith Field Naturalists of London with support from the Federation of Ontario Naturalists. The theme was partnering with private and public interests for conservation and management of a natural heritage system through the municipal planning process. Several EACs were represented including both

newly started and well established.

More than 25 EACs presently exist with new ones arising. In Halton Region, The Region, Town of Halton Hills and Burlington have EACs (i.e., Ecology and Environment AC, TEAC, Sustainable Development Committee, respectively). However, Milton and Oakville do not as yet.

During a panel session Theresa McClenaghan of the Canadian Environmental Law Association noted that, "Everyone is holding the land for the future." Mark Dorfman, an independent planner currently advising SOR, emphasized the relevance of both "time and space" with respect to the natural environment. He highlighted three fundamental principles he uses as his guide and that are underlying the PPS - economic prosperity, environmental protection and social well being. The PPS does not state these specifically and the government of the day truly


determines PPS interpretation. Consequently, Mark emphasized that, "The municipal politicians need support to understand how to balance the three principles and EACs can help." The official plan is as good as council wants it to be. PPS is the minimum standard and local decision-makers play a great role in going beyond this through developing, amending and using their official plan.

Three afternoon sessions consisted of three sessions of each of the following: planning (i.e., opportunities for ecosystem based planning PA, PPS; roles of both EACs and community groups; moving beyond the PPS as minimum standards), securement (i.e., mechanisms for stewardship, conservation easements, acquisition; local example of securement; rural land, private ownership and the natural heritage system), and management (i.e., state of the environment reporting, Burlington's educational approach; Dorchester Mill Pond

restoration, education, management; class Environment Assessments and multiple use open space, roads, sewers and storm water management in stream corridors).

The role of the municipal Class Environment Assessment revisions, watershed planning and the official plan were discussed at length. If the council, community, staff, Conservation Authorities and any other relevant participants are all part of the evolution of a strategic process for sustainable development then there will be greater success, partly because it provides an education process for all.

The conferences are productive toward improving the role of EACs through providing an EAC support network and sharing of ideas and experiences (future website to come through FON). The Caledon Environmental Advisory Committee (1996) volunteered to host the next forum in the year 2000.



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A Roosted goose?



On April 30 when Marshall Neilson was clearing brush from the stream, he noticed a gander nearby under a tree. The bird didn't leave and was protective of the area. He could hear the goose scolding but couldn't see her.

Looking up, he noticed she was on a broken willow limb about 25 feet above the ground. Neighbour Lois Knight came to witness the unusual sight and took a photo.

Goslings were visible in the nest. In about 20 minutes two

balls of fluff plummeted to the ground. The gander immediately took protective charge of the goslings and shortly afterward four more arrived. The goose immediately came down and the parents guided the six goslings to water about ten feet

away. They started foraging on watercress and weeds as they headed downstream.

If you happen to be playing golf at Hornby one day soon, you may see the family on one of the ponds!

Submitted by Betty Brounridge

Limehouse Memorial Hall reopens


BY GLENDA BENTON
THE COMPASS

The Limehouse Memorial Hall held an official reopening on Sunday, May 16. The Colour Party from Georgetown Legion was in attendance and approximately 100 people came to see the newly renovated building.

The Limehouse Memorial Hall was built in 1876 and was the Methodist Church and later the United Church. Mr. William Goudy, a prominent businessman, purchased the property. In 1945 The Limehouse Women's Institute bought the property to be used as a Memorial Hall in memory of the local boys and girls who served in the European war. The Women's Institute maintained the hall until 1996. There was no running water in the building and no washroom facilities. If it was to be kept as a useful facility a well needed to be dug, a septic system installed and the kitchen improved. At an open meeting in November of that year the community decided to keep the building and update it. The funds were raised through a successful Community Canvas, donations from many friends and the financial support of the Georgetown Kiwanis and Women's Institute in Limehouse.

A Corporation was formed in October 1997 so that the running of the Hall could be managed by a board of nine elected trustees who are elected each November from within the Limehouse boundaries. Eric Knoespel of Arctcast in Georgetown, who is a resident of Limehouse, donated a plaque recognizing the contributions to this project which was unveiled at the official reopening.

The community, friends and volunteers were recognized, with special mention to the major contributors such as the Georgetown Kiwanis Club, Blue Circle Aggregates, J. C. Duff Ltd., Rothman's Benson & Hedges, and the Limehouse Women's Institute. This well-constructed one storey building made of stone hauled from the nearby quarries and woods is now once again going to be an integral part of the Limehouse Community.



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