



– APRIL, 2011 –

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Earth Day 2011

The Windsor Essex County Environment Committee took part in Earth Day celebrations at Mic Mac Park on Sunday, May 1st. Although the weather was a bit rainy and cool, many residents of Windsor-Essex came out to enjoy the festivities.

A new table top display was set up, along with our banner and some brochures. Resident's were able to vote on what they think the most important environmental issue in Windsor-Essex is. WECEC gave away free birdseed and people could sign up for a chance to win a birdfeeder or an eco-friendly Scepter gas can.

Thank you to Alan, John and his daughter, Tamara and her daughter, and Charlie for volunteering! Many people stopped at the WECEC booth to chat about what we do and what needs to be done in Windsor-Essex County.



ONGOING INITIATIVES

1. Windsor Essex Parkway

Members from the PSW sub-committee have begun to have relations with the Windsor Essex Mobility Group and we will continue to work with them on this project.

2. Black Oak Video

A representative from Axxess Design met with Phil at Black Oak to explore the area where they will be shooting video. Filming will commence shortly and a storyboard will be written and shared with WECEC for approval. Editing will occur and the video should be completed sometime in the summer.

3. Regional Growth Strategy

During the presentation by City of Windsor's Environmental Coordinator, Karina Richters, the Committee discussed re-introducing the concept of a smart, sustainable regional growth strategy for Windsor-Essex County. This has already been discussed in part by the Inter-Municipal Planning Consultation Committee (IMPCC). However, in previous years a regional approach to growth has not moved forward successfully.

WECEC can discuss how to approach this issue and speak with city and county planners to get started. Funding opportunities may be looked into in order to conduct an independent report on possible strategies for this area. Examples should be studied from Waterloo-Kitchener and the Niagara Region to gain a better understanding of regional approaches to Smart Growth principles.

4. Green Infrastructure Workshop

The Green Infrastructure Workshop held at the Ojibway Nature Center in April was a great learning opportunity for professionals, municipal officials and employees, as well as residents of Windsor-Essex. The Green Infrastructure Ontario Coalition did a great job of introducing concepts such as urban forests, greenways, rain gardens, bioswales, green roofs, wetlands, green walls, permeable paving and community gardens.

Attendees were able to discuss barriers to green infrastructure, the social, environmental and economic benefits of incorporating green infrastructure into municipalities, as well as how to best move forward in Windsor-Essex. Common concerns included support from municipal government and the large initial investment required. It was also noted that an attitude shift is required for Windsor residents to accept aspects of green infrastructure to be incorporated into traditional grey infrastructure. Suggestions for Windsor-Essex included developing a group to consider green infrastructure in the region, a champion company or individual, as well as municipal policy requiring green infrastructure aspects in all new development.

IMPORTANT UPDATES AND INFORMATION

1. Government of Ontario Policy Proposals (www.ebr.gov.on.ca)

a. *Drive Clean Program Enhancements Proposal*

Drive Clean is Ontario's mandatory vehicle emissions inspection and maintenance program. It improves our health and environment by reducing smog-causing pollutants through testing and repairing vehicle emissions systems. Drive Clean is committed to continuous improvement and is now proposing to make changes to the program.

The proposed changes would exempt vehicle owners from Drive Clean test requirements in certain situations and would have a negligible impact on the program's emissions reductions. The changes will allow the Drive Clean program to continue to focus on vehicles most likely to pollute. These changes are proposed to be in effect starting September 1, 2011.

This document is available for public comment until May 21st. To view the policy proposal, visit www.ebr.gov.on.ca. The EBR # is 011-2759.

b. *Guidance to support the application of subsection 10(1) (the habitat protection provision) of Ontario's Endangered Species Act, 2007*

Subsection 10(1) of the Endangered Species Act, 2007 (ESA) prohibits persons from damaging or destroying the habitat of species classified as endangered or threatened on the Species at Risk in Ontario (SARO) List in Ontario Regulation 230/08.

The Ministry of Natural Resources has developed proposed guidance for applying subsection 10(1) of the ESA (the habitat protection provision). The purpose of this guidance is to:

- clarify that not every activity that occurs within or near protected habitat will damage or destroy that habitat,
- explain how habitat protected under the ESA will be categorized to help ensure the various components of habitat receive protection,
- provide guidance on the terms "damage" and "destroy" within the context of subsection 10(1) of the Act, and
- provide a framework for assessing whether a proposed activity will damage and/or destroy protected habitat including several principles and considerations to help guide these assessments.

This document is available for public comment until June 13th. To view the policy proposal, visit www.ebr.gov.on.ca. The EBR # is 011-2841.

2. Newspaper articles

a. Reuters – April 8th: *Cancer cause or crop aid? Herbicide faces big test*

Critics say it's a chemical that could cause infertility or cancer, while others see it speeding the growth of super weeds and causing worrying changes to plants and soil. Backers say it is safe and has made a big contribution to food production.

It's glyphosate, the key - but controversial - ingredient in Roundup herbicide and the top selling weed killer used worldwide. For more than 30 years, glyphosate has been embraced for its ability to make farming easier by wiping out weeds in corn, soybean and cotton fields, and for keeping gardens and golf courses pristine.

But the chemical touted as a safe, affordable and critical part of global food production, is now at a crossroads.

Amid rising voices of alarm, regulators in the United States and Canada are conducting a formal review of glyphosate's safety, lawsuits are pending and some groups are calling for a global ban.

Agricultural seeds and chemicals giant Monsanto Co introduced the chemical to the world in 1974 and has made billions of dollars over the years from Roundup as well as from the "Roundup Ready" corn, soybeans and cotton the company has genetically engineered to survive doublings of glyphosate.

Environmentalists, consumer groups and plant scientists from several countries are warning that heavy use of the chemical over the years is causing dangerous problems for plants, people and animals alike.

The Environmental Protection Agency is examining the issue and has set a deadline of 2015 for determining if glyphosate should continue to be sold or in some way limited. The EPA is working closely with regulators in Canada as they also assess the ongoing safety and effectiveness of the herbicide.

It all spells potentially big changes for world agriculture and the profits of those companies playing in the chemicals and seeds arena.

b. Windsor Star – April 12th: *Clang, clang, clang went the Windsor trolley – a possibility*

A streetcar might soon be trolling Windsor's downtown for passengers. Coun. Al Maghnieh was in Toronto Tuesday, kicking the tires on that city's trolley car system and making inquiries of the Toronto Transit Commission.

Based on recent political discussions and decisions, Windsor's downtown could in the near future boast a family aquatic facility, Olympic pool and diving centre, a new museum and a new central library, an aquarium, more post-secondary campuses, marina and revamped Capitol and armouries entertainment venues, all or most of which would translate into challenges to efficiently move people around in the core.

A downtown trolley system was mentioned by a number of candidates in last fall's municipal election race. There have also been suggestions of using such a mode of transit to link the university and Olde Sandwich Towne — which once boasted a trolley in the early 20th century — to the downtown.

c. Windsor Star – April 12th: *Former General Chemical lands sold*

The former General Chemical buildings facing Front Road will be demolished under a \$7-million agreement announced Monday that hands over the contaminated site to a company backed by Honeywell Canada.

AHL was the preferred bidder to vie for the land because the company has "experience in dealing with situations like this," said trustee Stephen Funtig. It was also the only company to make a cash offer of \$7 million, unlike other proponents — such as Windsor's Sherway Contracting — which offered more for the property but stipulated payments would be made over time.

Under the agreement, the new site owners will have access to a \$20.4-million fund controlled by the Environment Ministry to clean up the 300-acre site's waste lagoons, asbestos-filled buildings and a 176-acre soda ash settling basin.

The new owner has 90 days to file its cleanup plan with the ministry. A public information session must be held during that period for community input and Honeywell also plans on launching a website to address questions or concerns related to the site.

TASKS FOR NEXT MONTH

1. Black Oak video

I will continue to work with Axxess Design to produce an educational video regarding the improper use of Black Oak Park. I will work with Axxess Design to produce a video script that WECEC approves of.

2. Improve relationships with Essex County

Meetings have been set-up with several County municipal planners to remind them of WECEC and all we have to offer. They will be encouraged to bring forward issues that are relevant to the committee.

3. Regional Growth Strategy

After discussion of this item at the May WECEC meeting, I will proceed with the strategy outlined by the Committee. This will likely include collaborating with City and County planners to ensure they are aware of the steps WECEC will be taking, as well as possibly securing funding for an outside consultant.

4. Community Fund

I will make any changes to the structure of the Community Fund and application process that WECEC suggests. A media event and promotion campaign will need to be developed and deadlines set for applications.