



Saugeen Valley Conservation Authority

Minutes – Board of Directors Meeting

Date: Thursday July 17, 2025, 1:00 p.m.

Location: 1078 Bruce Rd 12, Formosa, ON, N0G 1W0 and hybrid

Chair: Tom Hutchinson

Members present: Barbara Dobreen, Sue Paterson, Moiken Penner, Jennifer Prenger (virtual), Larry Allison, Bill Stewart, Paul Allen, Steve McCabe, Kevin Eccles, Dave Myette, Bud Halpin, Greg McLean, Mike Niesen

Larry Allison left the meeting at 2:55 p.m., Moiken Penner left the meeting at 3:51 p.m.

Members absent: Peter Whitten

Staff present: Erik Downing, Donna Lacey, Matt Armstrong, Jody Duncan, Ashley Richards, Don Moss, Katie Thomas, Adam Chalmers

The meeting was called to order at 1:01 p.m.

1. Land Acknowledgement – read by Larry Allison

We begin our meeting today by respectfully acknowledging the Anishinaabeg Nation, the Haudenosaunee, the Neutral, and the Petun peoples as the traditional keepers of this land. We are committed to moving forward in the spirit of reconciliation with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples.

2. Adoption of Agenda

Motion #G25-48

Moved by Steve McCabe

Seconded by Bill Stewart

THAT the agenda for the Saugeen Valley Conservation Authority meeting, July 17, 2025, be adopted as amended.

Carried

3. Declaration of Pecuniary Interest

There were no declarations of pecuniary interest relative to any item on the agenda.

4. Adoption of Minutes

4.1 Authority meeting – May 15, 2025

Motion #G25-49

Moved by Larry Allison

Seconded by Paul Allen

THAT the minutes of the Saugeen Valley Conservation Authority meeting, May 15, 2025, be adopted as presented.

Carried

5. Delegation – Dan Timbers, Varney Conservation Area

Dan Timbers, a community member, provided a delegation to the Board expressing public interest in contributing to a long-term solution for Varney Conservation Area. He reported that a community meeting had been held, during which participants indicated support for enhancing the property's appeal to visitors and expressed willingness to explore fundraising, charitable status, or partnership opportunities to support maintenance or acquire the property.

Mr. Timbers was thanked for his presentation.

6. Matters Arising from the Minutes – none

7. New Business

7.1 Correspondence – Town of Puslinch, Town of Parry Sound

Correspondence related to Bill 5, with resolutions from the respective councils of the Town of Puslinch and the Town of Parry Sound.

7.2 GM-2025-05: SVCA Operational Plan

The GM/S-T highlighted portions of the SVCA operational plan, noting that Hearing Training would be complete as of that morning, Low Water program is underway as well as a Critical Failure plan. Director Eccles inquired why Varney Conservation Area was still on the list for an application, and it was explained that this item needs to be updated to reflect current board direction. Manager Lacey clarified that, as per Board direction, there is no current direction for staff to undertake upgrades at the property, which remains under the standard maintenance program for the conservation area as a non-revenue park.

7.3 GM-2025-06 Program Report

Directors Halpin, Stewart, and Prenger expressed appreciation for staff efforts and their commitment to conservation and community engagement. Director Eccles raised concern regarding the alignment of community events with the Authority's mandate and inquired about the presence of six SVCA vehicles in the parking lot. Director Dobreen called a point of order.

Chair Hutchinson advised that staff could prepare a report for the Board addressing director questions related to SVCA's mission, mandate, strategic direction, and the classification of Category 1, 2, and 3 programs and services.

7.4 Ward and Uptigrove Health and Safety Presentation – Jenn Goertzen

Senior HR Specialist Jenn Goertzen (Ward and Uptigrove Human Resources Solutions) provided an update on the final draft deliverables for the SVCA Organizational Health and Safety Redevelopment Project. She reported that the Joint Health and Safety (JHSC) course had been revised, efforts are underway to reduce administrative burden, and the JHSC committee is performing well. Project deliverables include a new employee handbook, standard operating procedures (SOPs), and various supporting documents.

Discussion followed regarding the absence of dedicated HR staff at SVCA and who is ultimately responsible for document ownership. Goertzen advised that a single administrative owner should

be designated for records management purposes, to ensure consistency with AODA and language standards.

Director McLean commented that the project provides a strong foundation and emphasized that health and safety is a shared responsibility among all staff. Director McCabe asked how the project aligns with other conservation authorities and Conservation Ontario. Goertzen confirmed that the project reflects current best practices and that external models are considered as appropriate.

Director Dobreen asked whether staff find the new policies easy to follow. The General Manager/Secretary-Treasurer responded that staff had completed an initial review and that documents had been simplified, with ongoing engagement. Director Dobreen noted the importance of continued staff involvement.

Director Myette inquired about the inclusion of the right to refuse work. Goertzen explained that while SOPs address work refusal procedures, it is not established as a standalone policy.

7.5 EPR-2025-08: Permits Issued for Endorsement

Manager Armstrong presented 56 permits issued between May 1 and July 2, 2025 for endorsement by the Board.

Director Halpin inquired about permit processing times. Manager Armstrong confirmed timelines remain consistent, and the GM/S-T noted that permit processing statistics are summarized in an annual report to the Board. Director Myette inquired about the permit refusal process. Staff explained that the pre-consultation process plays a key role in identifying potential issues early. Applicants whose proposals are unlikely to be approved typically do not proceed.

Director Dobreen requested confirmation that SVCA staff do not refuse permits. Manager Armstrong confirmed that permits can only be declined by the SVCA board of directors. Director Dobreen inquired why townships are no longer listed in the permit endorsement table. Manager Armstrong explained that the new content management system used to generate the report references municipalities rather than townships, and that the system significantly improves efficiency for the department.

Motion #G25-50

Moved by Larry Allison

Seconded by Paul Allen

THAT SVCA permit applications 25-047 to 25-101 as approved by staff, be endorsed by the SVCA Board of Directors.

Carried

7.6 LAN-2025-05: Forest Management Plan

Staff were directed to draft an updated 20-year Forest Management Plan, gather stakeholder and public feedback, and return a revised draft to the Authority for approval.

Manager Lacey confirmed no external consultants are required and that the plan will follow provincial standards. She noted the Managed Forest Tax Incentive Program and Conservation Lands Tax Program benefit SVCA. In response to questions, she confirmed fire risk exists but is mitigated by firebreaks, landscape features, and species mix across SVCA lands.

Motion #G25-51

Moved by Steve McCabe

Seconded by Bill Stewart

THAT staff be directed to draft an updated 20-year Forest Management Plan; AND THAT, staff be directed to gather stakeholder and public feedback on the draft plan; AND FURTHER THAT, staff bring a revised draft to the Authority for consideration and approval.

Carried

7.7 WR-2025-04: Collaborative Water Data Viewer

Flood Forecasting and Warning Coordinator Duncan provided an overview of the Collaborative Water Data Viewer (CWDV), developed by the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority and made available through the Western Ontario Data Hub at no additional cost to SVCA. The platform provides public and municipal access to real-time data from SVCA's hydrometric network, including water levels, air temperature, and precipitation. A demonstration of the tool was given. Future training for municipal staff is planned, along with potential expansion to include water quality and groundwater data.

7.8 Other Business

The GM-S-T informed the SVCA Board of Directors that an updated agreement between the SVCA and the Children's Safety Village is underway, and will be in place before expiry.

7.9 Closed Session

Motion #G25-52

Moved by Bud Halpin

Seconded by Greg McLean

THAT the Authority move to Closed Session to discuss a potential litigation matter affecting the Authority and plans to be applied to negotiations carried on or to be carried on by or on behalf of the Authority; AND THAT Erik Downing, Donna Lacey and Ashley Richards remain in the meeting.

Carried

Motion #G25-57

Moved by Kevin Eccles

Seconded by Bill Stewart

THAT staff proceed as directed in closed session.

Carried

8. Adjournment

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 4:00 p.m. following a motion by Steve McCabe and seconded by Paul Allen.

Tom Hutchinson
Chair

Ashley Richards
in lieu of Recording Secretary