Region of Peel
Working for you

MA-D2

REPORT
General Committee

DATE: May 13, 2010

REPORT TITLE: **DELEGATION TO PROVINCE ON CONSERVATION ISSUES FOLLOW-UP REPORT**

FROM: David Szwarc, Chief Administrative Officer

RECOMMENDATION

That implementation of the actions proposed in the Notice of Motion adopted by Council on March 4, 2010 (resolution 2010-214) be delayed indefinitely.

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- In March 2010 Council adopted a motion that directed the Region of Peel to invite select representatives from municipalities, conservation authorities, Association of Municipalites of Ontario (AMO) and food producing landowners to collectively delegate to the Premier of Ontario
- The delegation was directed to request a number of things from the Provincial Government including additional provincial funding for Conservation Authorities
- Given the current economic environment and the discussions between the parties that have transpired since the Motion was adopted, it is recommended that the delegation proposed in the resolution be delayed indefinitely.

DISCUSSION

1. Background

In March, 2010 a Notice of Motion was presented to Council that recommended that the Region of Peel request that selected representatives of Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) and the Greater Golden Horseshoe: Regional Chairs, Mayors, food producing landowners and conservation authorities (CA's), delegate collectively to the Premier. The delegation was directed to request the Premier to:

- assemble an inter-ministerial task force of pertinent resource ministries to hear from the food producing landowners on the financial impact of single and cumulative environmental legislation and develop mutually acceptable solutions to ensure local food production remains viable in the Greater Golden Horseshoe;
- recognize the provincial interest in the environment in Ontario and match the municipal dollar contribution to conservation authorities ;

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- review the environmental implementation roles of Ministry of Environment (MOE), Minisitry Natural Resources (MNR) and CAs with a view to providing an even greater one window of environmental delivery locally through CAs;
- establish a Conservation Authorities Division in the MNR with an Assistant Deputy Minister Conservation Authorities and sufficient and appropriate support staff.

The motion was carried at the March 4 2010 Regional Council Meeting.

2. Proposed Direction

Since the motion was adopted discussions and meetings have continued between the Conservation Authorities, the municipalities, the Provincial Ministry of Natural Resources and landowners, on issues directly related to the intent of the resolution. The tone of these discussions have been positive, and the issues related to funding, environmental regulation and agriculture, provincial policies etc, are now well known by all parties. What has also become exceedingly clear is that the Provincial Government has an operating deficit and is unlikely to establish any new funding commitments or Ministry Branches as proposed in the resolution.

For these reasons, staff at CVC in conversation with Regional staff are suggesting that the delegation proposed in the resolution 2010-214 be delayed indefinitely. Regional staff supports the suggestion and have also reviewed it with staff at the Toronto Region Conservation Authority who concur with this direction. If at some future point it is believed that the investment of time to organize such a delegation would have a positive impact on the issues outlined in the resolution, staff will return to Council and recommend that it proceed.

In the meantime, staff requires Council approval not to move forward with the direction in resolution 2010-214.

David Swarc

D. Szwarc, Chief Administrative Officer

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APPENDIX I

APPROVED AT REGIONAL COUNCIL
March 4, 2010

Notice of Motion Regarding Provincial Environmental Downloading and its Impact on Food Producing Landowners and Municipalities through their Financial Support of Conservation Authorities

Moved by Councillor Thompson,
Seconded by Councillor Palleschi;

Whereas, municipalities and the Province have addressed downloading in some sectors but not the significant provincial environmental downloading on food producing landowners, and municipalities through their financial support of local conservation authorities;

And whereas, in addition to the local interest in the environment, there is also a provincial interest in the environment;

And whereas, the municipalities and local residents have had to pay the full cost of the municipal and provincial interest;

FOOD PRODUCING LANDOWNERS

And whereas, the food producing landowners in the Greater Golden Horseshoe consider implementation of single and cumulative environmental legislation has had an impact on their ability to make a living and provide food;

And whereas, local food production and protection of farmland is a priority and necessary for the greater good of all Ontario residents especially in light of the need to adapt to climate change;

And whereas, landowners have recently been faced with increased costs for such provincial environmental and necessary programs such as nutrient management, Greenbelt, Oak Ridges Moraine, Conservation Authority regulation, Species at Risk legislation, Green Energy Act and soon, the Clean Water Act source water protection plans;

And whereas, food producing landowners are often individually incurring costs related to environmental protection which benefit the greater good and which are more fairly incurred by the greater population;

And whereas, there is a need for the Province to conduct an impact assessment of these cumulative pieces of legislation on viable agricultural production;

And whereas, these pieces of legislation are important for the greater good and are impacting farming which is also important for the greater good;

And whereas, there is a need for the Province to address these impacts and find viable solutions including compensation programs after assessing the total

package of grants, tax incentives and grants available to the food producing landowners;

CONSERVATION AUTHORITIES

And whereas, conservation authorities (CAs) are the main provincial/municipal mechanism for delivery of provincial and municipal environmental protection locally;

And whereas, all costs of conservation authorities have been downloaded to local taxpayers and have been collected by municipalities since about 1996;

And whereas, there is a provincial interest in preserving the local environment in such things as climate change adaptation with regards to flooding and erosion and natural hazards, preservation of species and ecosystems, quality and quantity of water and tree planting;

And whereas, the mandate of conservation authorities is being reviewed and described in the soon to be completed plan review guideline process for conservation authorities (CALC) which included representative municipalities, environmental groups and developers;

And whereas, the conservation authorities report jointly to the Province through the Ministry of Natural Resources and to their municipally appointed Boards of Directors;

And whereas, it is important to maintain conservation authorities as an effective mechanism to manage water bodies that pass through multiple municipal boundaries and can significantly impact downstream communities in terms of flooding, erosion, sedimentation, water quality and fisheries;

And whereas, municipalities are paying about $250 million to support environmental work through the conservation authorities, representing about $20 per person/per resident per year in large authorities;

And whereas, the provincial contribution is about 75 cents to $1.50 per resident per year in a large authority including source water protection and land securement;

And whereas, the conservation authorities need the Ministry of Natural Resources to provide greater legislative, regulation, and policy support; co-ordination of environmental research; co-ordination of data collection and standards;

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And whereas, environmental protection by the Province and conservation authorities could be better defined and coordinated and would benefit from a review of Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Natural Resources and Conservation Authority roles for streamlining and cost efficiencies with respect to policy development and "on the ground delivery" providing a greater one window natural environmental program delivery for the public;

And whereas, conservation authorities are important in that they are delivering the majority of the natural environmental agenda in southern Ontario and developed areas of the near north and have about one third the human and financial resources of the Ministry of Natural Resources;

And whereas, the Ministry has insufficient staff at insufficient levels to support and co-ordinate the efforts of conservation authorities and deal with issues of environmental program delivery common to all authorities;

FOOD PRODUCING LANDOWNERS, CONSERVATION AUTHORITIES and MUNICIPALITIES

Therefore be it resolved, that the Regional Municipality of Peel requests that selected representatives of Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) and the Greater Golden Horseshoe: Regional Chairs, Mayors, food producing landowners and conservation authorities, delegate collectively to the Premier;

And further, that the Premier of Ontario be requested to assemble an inter-ministerial task force of pertinent resource ministries including Ministry of Environment (MOE), Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR), Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH), Ministry of Agriculture and Food (MAF), to hear from the food producing landowners on the financial impact of single and cumulative environmental legislation and develop mutually acceptable solutions to ensure local food production remains viable in the Greater Golden Horseshoe;

And further, that the Province be requested to recognize the provincial interest in the environment in Ontario as delivered locally through the conservation authorities including their important role in adaptation to climate change and match the municipal dollar contribution to conservation authorities as they did for 45 years;

And further, that the Province be requested to review the environmental implementation roles of MOE, MNR and CAs with a view to providing an even greater one window of environmental delivery locally through CAs;

And further, that as conservation authorities are the main natural environmental delivery mechanism in southern Ontario and the near north, that the Province be requested to establish a Conservation Authorities Division in the Ministry of Natural Resources with an Assistant Deputy Minister Conservation Authorities and sufficient and appropriate support staff.

Carried 2010-214