

Enviro Lac Gauvreau – Information Day 22 May 2021 – Draft Minutes

1. Call to order: The Co-president, John Leech, called the meeting to order at: 10:04
2. Attendees: Caitlin to supply list - 43
3. Introduction – John Leech:
 - a. The co-president, John Leech noted that this is an information meeting to inform members about what the plans there are for this upcoming year and for the next few years. Questions will be answered at the end of the meeting. The Mayor will join the meeting as soon as he can. JL also welcomed representatives from Lac Bernard. JL noted that Environs Lac Gauvreau received a significant Green Funds grant and acknowledged that assistance. JL then outlined today's agenda.
 - b. Mayor Lamoureux arrived about 10:50. He was asked to speak by the co-president. The Mayor asked if we had received responses to our letter. JL noted that we have received a list of residents. The Mayor noted that M. Louis Mongrain is new head of Environment for the municipality and that there will be further increases in capacity in this group to assist with lake associations as well as a Director of Sustainable Development. The municipality hopes to see a better approach to environmental and urbanism regulatory approaches. A new pamphlet on good practices will be published by Friends of the Gatineau River shortly. The Mayor offered to answer any specific questions.
4. The Current Situation – Michelle Labelle:

JL welcomed Michelle Labelle as the Lac Gauvreau scientific advisor. Her presentation is attached. She noted that the situation being shown reflects her visit in her canoe last fall. Lac Gauvreau is in a sad state based on her knowledge as a lake biologist. Signs of bad health include: water not clear, lots of matter in suspension; lake shores quite neglected unnatural; beaches that are where they should not be; Parent creek quite polluted; campsite too close to the lake. There was evidence of cyanobacterial blooms; Eurasian milfoil had spread a lot since the last inventory in 2013. She noted that there was excessive density of populations in the lake watershed. The survey in 2013 classified the lake as eutrophic. She stated that, for Lac Gauvreau, the lake is very aged and closer to a marsh than to a lake. Problems noted in 2013 have magnified since then. She noted that things have been done, but not enough. What will happen? We can expect rapid aging acceleration and we will be swimming in a "pea soup". Milfoil beds will spread in density and quantity; there will be an increased disease risk from toxins and other stuff. What can we do – ensure nutrients are not getting into the lake – too many nutrients coming into lake so septic installations need to be checked and updated. The camping area needs to be reviewed for compliance; and Parent creek plan revisited to ensure that it is done as needed. Beaches should be replanted. All grass and trees within 5 metres of high-water mark should not be cut. Residents need to understand their impacts on the lake. ML turned over the description of the Action Plan to JL.

5. Action Plan – John Leech:

JL reflected on ML's very serious assessment of the lake's status. The BoD has put together a three-year action plan. (Attached). Year one priorities include education and promotion; water testing – fecal coliform (ongoing x 20 years) and chemical testing (stopped by municipality five years ago – to be re-instituted); scientific advice; shoreline and habitat restoration; and Milfoil abatement. JL noted that the full Action Plan was on the website and focused on Milfoil for this meeting. Plans include increased signage, planning for direct treatment of weed beds, best practices for weed removal. The municipality is being asked to participate fully on the direct planning for weed bed abatement for all area lakes. Residents also have a responsibility to avoid all areas inside red buoys and work on redoing shoreline areas as per the next presentation.

6. Shoreline Restoration – Daniel Kobewka (Risk de Lange – team member):

DK (presentation attached) reiterated some of the points presented by Michelle Labelle. He showed his own property (he is a new resident) as an example of a badly managed shoreline. Suggested action includes: Working with appropriate experts, development of a plan on how to naturalize a shoreline. A workshop will be held at Dan's property to show what to do. After that, there will be a free consultation available to determine the specific needs at individual properties. To sign up, contact Daniel at: dkobewka@gmail.com

7. Communication – Comms team (Phil Allen, Monica Blalock, Réjean Belcourt):

PA did the presentation (attached). Outreach to members and others is ongoing – including other lakes with similar problems – on actions that can be taken. The history of communications has been sporadic in the past and the team plans to improve this. Priorities, as previously noted, were reiterated. This team is working on education, promotion, and inclusion. To promote activities such as the shoreline restoration project, to reach out to the membership, to inform, and to engage. All these areas of activity integrate with the others. Platforms – website, emails, newsletter, Facebook and door to door. A new website is coming to provide greater clarity and better organization. Emails will target one issue per message in an e blast fashion. Work is ongoing on a Facebook page to determine the best way forward. Regular mail will happen but be less intensive. Door-to-door will happen when it is possible to do so. A new logo has also been developed and will have a new branded name as Environs Lac Gauvreau while the provincially registered name will remain the same. PA then presented a glimpse of the new website which will present an easier navigation format. A parallel French website will also be available. The committee needs volunteers to help with the task of translation. Hopefully the website will launch in the middle of the summer.

8. Membership – Membership Team: (Caitlin McLaughlin and Matt Belanger)

CM presented a report. She noted the need for participation and trust. There are over 200 buildings in the watershed and we have 90 or so members. An effort is underway to

improve membership and once Covid 19 is under control, efforts will be made to hold face to face events such as community bar b q's.

9. Q and A – Moderated, answers from BoD Members:

JL state that CM will moderate the Q and A.

Monica Blaylock: Question to the Mayor, biologist, and committee: She is also working on the comms committee and is new to the lake as of October 2020. Re: three-year plan: Is there a municipal subcommittee working on new bylaws which will allow ELG to work with the municipality and to start on work compatible with the new bylaws? Mayor Lamoureux: Two aspects – first is to ensure respect of regulations via efforts of communication., enforcement is a challenge due to the size of the municipality so folks need to comply. Review of regulations is also underway and will continue over the next year or so. Associations can comment on their perspectives on the existing bylaws – what is needed, what is not needed. All reviews will have a mandated consultation process as well. MB thanked the mayor for this opportunity to work with the municipality.

Written Question – anonymous – What specific actions can property owners take to deal with Milfoil? JL noted that at present, the Ministry of Environment states that property owners may clear milfoil by cutting, pulling it out, or putting a covering over it but the Association must get a ruling from the Ministry of Flora and Fauna. A workshop on this subject may be planned in the future.

Manon Roux – Question related to the Rue Fortin housing development which has culverts that flood backyards and go directly to the lake as runoff. A study was done last year but it is unclear what will be done. Can the Mayor clarify this? The Mayor responded that he has also been in discussion with Dan Smith. The Mayor noted that, in general, the municipality can't intervene on private land including private roads such as Ch. Murray. A hydrogeological survey has been done. There is one place where the municipality can intervene – at the junction of Ch. Murray and Fortin. At that location, there has apparently been a significant increase in run-off. This is the only place where the municipality can intervene and is planning to do so. The Mayor also noted that the survey showed that run-off from other culverts has not increased significantly. WRT to tree cuttings on Ch. Fortin – this work was going on before approval of an allotment plan. The work has been stopped and the developer now must go through the proper approval process. The municipality is aware of the risk to Lac Gauvreau and will factor these concerns into the approval process. The run-off at the junction on Fortin and Murray will be redirected.

Anonymous from several members – for Michelle Labelle – Please clarify why it might be dangerous to swim in the lake? ML when I saw this, it was a intense late fall bloom covering the Murray Bay. Cyanobacteria release toxins when they die. Only 5% release harmful toxins. Of these 5% only 1 % of these can cause neurological issues – the incidence has been so low (only found once over many years of testing in Quebec lakes)

that these are no longer tested for by the Quebec Environment Ministry. The 5% can create skin rashes or abdominal cramps and diarrhoea if swallowed. ML stated that there is not a problem for swimming generally but she was approaching this from a personal perspective and it was probably OK to swim.

Anonymous: Have we done enough testing: ML noted that there is ongoing testing for coliform but there needs to be better testing biochemically. JL noted that e coli counts have been steadily decreasing over the last fifteen years and this is an indicator for safe swimming. The Association is trying to join a laboratory group which can do these analyses. Coliform count is excellent for swimming according to the Government interpretation scale.

Ian Rutherford: Beaver activity has increase enormously and they have cut many trees around the lake with new lodges being built. Is this associated with the eutrophication of the lake? ML – Colonies normally have 4 – 5 inhabitants but may have up to 15. ML suggested putting mesh to cover the first metre of the base of trees that you wish to save. Beavers create wetlands so are of value overall. The best action is to try to protect the trees. ML suggests protecting all new trees when we are doing revegetation programs and states that we need to learn to live with the beavers. Removal by trapping or other eradication means of one colony only means that they will be replaced by another colony ☹.

Time is up, so Caitlin noted that further questions can be sent to various media sites and directly to the Association.

JL thanked Mayor Lamoureux; Stuart Fraser, and Andrew Kerr for their website work; and Caitlin McLaughlin for her work on the Board as she will be moving to Aylmer and will leave the Board as on May 31.

10. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 11:40