



The Environmental Advocate

www.conserversociety.ca

Conservers Annual General Meeting—Thursday March 31st

The Conservers Society of Hamilton & District Inc. invites members and friends to our annual general meeting .

The board has arranged for an interpretive hike lead by members of Friends of the Eramosa Karst. Presentations will also be provided by Dr. Joe Minor on protecting the Eramosa Karst, and from Jen Baker of the Hamilton Naturalist Club on a Conserver-sponsored program called Monarchs & Milkweed.

Looking forward to seeing you there!

Date and Time:

Thursday March 31st, from 5:30 to 8:45

Location:

Valley Park Community Centre—970 Paramount in Stoney Creek.

Agenda:

5:30—Meet at Valley Park Community Centre

5:45—Car pool to the Eramosa Karst for an interpretive hike lead by Friends [of the Eramosa Karst](#)

6:00—Interpretive hike.

6:45—Return to Valley Park.

7:00—Light sandwiches and snacks.

7:20 Presentations:

Dr. Joe Minor: Protecting the Eramosa Karst

Jen Baker (HNC): Monarchs and Milkweed program (funded in part by the Ed Smee Fund)

8:00—Annual report and financials

8:30—Adjourn

We will have cider and snacks available for participants.

Bring a friend! - non-members welcome. Memberships are available at the event. See you there.

RSVP:

contact@conserversociety.ca

Questions:

contact@conserversociety.ca.

March 2011

Conservers Society of Hamilton and District

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Friends of the Eramosa Karst

Working to Expand Stoney Creek's Area of Natural and Scientific interest (ANSI)



Moving is Not An Option

Moving is not an option is a program of the Conserver Society and Environment Hamilton, funded by the Hamilton Community Foundation.

We're often asked "How did your project get that name?" It came about when Environment Hamilton began working with residents living in industrial parts of our city. We found several patterns: in some cases people bought their homes not realising the problems they might face: and in others, residents were there before industry moved in.

Once pollution issues emerged, several things happened. Firstly, their home plummeted in value and it became im-

possible for them to sell. And secondly residents who were already settled in their community became indignant. Why should they move? In the end, the answer was the same: Moving just wasn't an option.

Our program now works with residents who want to enjoy living where they are - and to ensure neighbouring businesses comply with environmental regulations.

There's also an educational component to what we do, and we're now developing a new menu of environmental programming for schools to meet the demand of teachers and students who are

We need your membership more than ever, please join the Conserver Society of Hamilton & District today!



In a recent workshop, students from Annunciation of Our Lord Catholic Elementary School consider if we could live without plastic in our everyday lives.

hungry to do more about climate change.

One project that's grabbing the attention of high school students in particular is our Supermarket Tour. What could be more fun than going grocery shopping? Teaming up with Juby Lee, one of our Eat Local experts, we take students into their local grocery stores to examine everything from canned food labels to what's in the produce counters and meat sections.

Some of the questions raised include Food Miles – how far an item has travelled and how nutritious it could be – to why does a box of mac and cheese list about 15 ingredients, when you'd only need 3 if you made it yourself.

Another new program centres around plastic and its creeping prevalence in our lives. What kind of containers did our grandparents use for soap and what did they wrap round their sandwiches in the days before plastic? We got students thinking about where plastic can end up (inside the majority of sea creatures) – and asked them and their families to try a pledge to use three non-plastic alternatives instead.

For more information please contact Program Manager Julia Kollek at movingisnotanoption@environmenthamilton.org or call 905.549.0900

Ed Smee Funding

The Conservers are happy to announce that the Ed Smee Funding Committee is accepting applications for proposals up to \$2,500 for the 2012 calendar year.

If you have an idea for a program, please let us know:
contact@conserversociety.ca

*A big thanks from the Board to the
Ed Smee Committee members:*

Pine Ridge Trail Plans Halted at the Public Meeting

Inspired by a visit to a woodlot under threat in Ancaster, bordered by Shaver Road and the 403, and responding to a request of a long time citizen activist to participate in its protection, representatives of the Conservator Society and the Hamilton Naturalist's Club rose to attention.

The initiative to investigate and develop a trail system through this woodlot was that of our local councillor. He was proudly determined to give his tax payers value for their money. Consultants were hired by the City to evaluate and propose the development of trails in an area bounded by urban development, in part to address the visible intrusion by young people intent on carving out dirt bike paths, and to give the local residents a wilderness to walk through.

During the public meeting, mandated by the consultation process, it was pointed out by many, that perhaps the problem with youth and their intrusion in the area would be better addressed in another forum with different stakeholders.

The proposed trail system, detailed in the presentation, showed its construction would have greater intrusion on the watershed and destroy habitat that at present supports many species of indigenous and rare flora and fauna.

Concern was expressed that improved access to human traffic might facilitate rather than deter dirt bike path development and exacerbate vandalism and littering. No guarantees could be given that the youth problem would be solved.

It is important to know that we were informed, passionate, and willing to participate in this public process. We made our site visit, gathered information on what we saw, plugged into the political process, listened to the proposal, and contributed our collective perspectives in a respectful and persuasive manner.

Many of the undecided in the audience recognized growing doubts about the trail's feasibility and registered their disapproval. One of the woodlot's neighbours called for a vote at the end of the meeting to ensure that the presiding councillor got the prevailing message. He got the message. An overwhelming majority told him not to develop the trail system. We waited with baited breath that the decision would stick. The e-mail from the consulting firm the next day confirmed the group's position.

On another important note: prior to the public meeting, we were informed that the tax base for this proposal was not area rated, that in fact, its development and maintenance would be born by the City's general revenue. You could argue, as many did, that the cost to evaluate the proposal was already too much to spend.

Wouldn't it be great if we were part of a community of first steps to the City's consulting process? Think of the money we would not spend as tax payers and the victories we could realize at the beginnings instead of the endings of such plans?

Christine Brown

Dundas Condo Proposal at the OMB

CATCH News – February 21, 2011

Final arguments are scheduled for March 7 in the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) hearing over controversial proposals for “two ten-storey apartment buildings with some commercial use” on the Dundas property of St Joseph’s Villa. Over two dozen people have spoken during the eight days of hearings that began on February 8 before OMB officer Jan Seaborn.

The twin condominium towers proposal near Ogilvie Street and Governors Road was endorsed by city planning staff but eventually rejected unanimously by city councillors in the face of massive opposition by Dundas residents and city environmental organizations. It took three meetings of the planning committee, each attended by at least 80 residents, and each presented with a newly modified proposal by St Joseph’s, before a final council decision in March of last year.

The Villa’s initial proposal was announced in December 2008 and generated over 100 letters by the January 6, 2009 deadline for public comments. Hundreds more signed a petition arguing that the proposal eliminated well-used gardens and greenspace on the property, threatened an adjacent Environmentally Significant Area (ESA), and would result in unacceptable densities, traffic problems, and building heights.

An initial statutory public meeting in September 2009 heard from 16 resident delegations and lasted nearly four hours before councillors deferred a decision in hopes of that a compromise could be

found. Several speakers argued that city planners had ignored their own rules in recommending approval of the towers – including intensification plans to meet provincial targets. Councillors subsequently expressed similar concerns about their planners’ endorsement of rule exceptions that were then rejected in an OMB hearing.

A second multi-hour public meeting in March 2010 on a somewhat modified proposal heard a dozen and a half presentations and again put off a decision. That was eventually made on March 23 and confirmed at the March 31 council meeting – one day after St Joseph’s filed an OMB appeal charging that the city had taken too long to make a decision on their applications.

They have presented a modified proposal to the OMB which includes a reduction of the tower adjacent to the ESA to eight storeys (from the previous ten). The change has not mollified opponents living in the single-family homes in the shadow of the tower.

“The Villa had already made several changes to the original application before appealing the matter to the OMB,” noted Walnut Grove resident Zoe Green in her submission to the hearings last week. “How many more ‘kicks at the can’ will they be allowed?”

Hers was one of eighteen participant statements made to the hearing, including two others from Walnut Grove two from the Creekside neighbourhood, and nine from residents of the existing St Joseph’s Estates apartments located on the Villa property. They were sup-

2009-2010

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Conserving the environment for over 22 years in Hamilton.

The Environmental Advocate is published 2 or more times a year by the **Conserver Society of Hamilton and District Inc.**, a non-profit, non-partisan citizen organization concerned with the environment in the region at the western end of Lake Ontario.

Editor: Pete Wobschall

Submissions for the Newsletter are invited and should be sent to the mailing address or to the editor at contact@conserverociety.ca (Email submissions preferred, please)

ported by representatives of the Conserver Society and the Hamilton Naturalists' Club, as well as an officer of the Local Health Integration Network (LHIN).

"The Villa proposes to build on the only accessible flat open space, space that is currently used and enjoyed by the elderly residents of the Estates, even those with restricted mobility, as well as by residents of St. Joseph's Villa," argued Shirley Williams.

Her husband James submitted a detailed critique that contended the Villa proposal contradicts the Dundas and regional official plans as well as the city's urban structure plan and the provincial rules that guide these documents.

The Villa's witnesses have included planner John Ariens of the IBI Group and several consultants led by lawyer Scott Snider. City council's position is being defended by its counsel, Michael Kovacevic, and an outside planner.

CATCH (Citizens at City Hall) updates use transcripts and/or public documents to highlight information about Hamilton civic affairs that is not generally available in the mass media. Detailed reports of City Hall meetings can be reviewed at hamiltoncatch.org. You can receive all CATCH free updates by sending an email to <http://hamiltoncatch.org/newsletter/?p=subscribe>. Sharing links are available on the hamiltoncatch.org.

Call for Nominations

The Conserver Society Board is seeking Board of Directors members.

If you are interested and able to contribute, please contact Alison Healing, Nomination Committee at contact@conserverociety.ca.

Being a board member involves spending between 5-6 hours a month to prepare for and attend meetings in the Hamilton area and contribute to projects that the Society plans and implements.

Call for Nominations

Conservator Society of Hamilton & District 2011 Membership Application or Renewal Form

Your membership fee enables us to be an effective voice for a healthy, sustainable environment in Hamilton and the surrounding area. As a member in good standing, you will be entitled to receive the Environmental Advocate (our newsletter), participate in projects and activities of the Society and its chapters and vote at our Annual General Meeting.

The Conservator Society is a non-partisan, registered charitable organization. We gratefully accept donations above the basic membership fee. You will receive a tax receipt for the amount of your membership fee and any donations you choose to make.

Please print this form, fill it out and return it with your cheque to:

Membership Director

Conservator Society of Hamilton & District

Box 89002, 991 King St. West

Hamilton, Ontario, L8S 4R5

Yearly (2011) Membership Fee Individual _____ \$20 Family _____ \$30 Organization _____ \$40

(Individuals or families on low incomes are entitled to request a 50% reduction in fees.)

I would like to make an additional tax-deductible donation of \$ _____

I am submitting a total of: \$ _____

Cheques should be made payable to Conservator Society of Hamilton & District.

Member Information

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

Date: _____ Check here if this is a membership renewal: _____

Please direct the chapter portion of my membership fee to the following chapter:

_____ Ancaster _____ Dundas _____ Hamilton

If you do not specify a chapter, your entire fee will be directed to the parent body and allocated to Conservator Society activities as needed.

Thank you!