



Agenda Green Advisory Committee

September 21, 2023

5:30 pm

Municipal Operations Centre

408 James Street South, St. Marys

YouTube Link - <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCzuUpFqxcEl8OG-dOYKteFQ>

Pages

1. **CALL TO ORDER**
2. **DECLARATION OF PECUNIARY INTEREST**
3. **AMENDMENTS AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the September 21, 2023 Green Advisory Committee meeting agenda be accepted as presented.

4. **DELEGATIONS**
5. **ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES**

3

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the June 15, 2023 Green Advisory Committee meeting minutes be approved by the Committee, and signed by the Chair and the staff liaison.

6. **BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES**
7. **REPORTS**

RECOMMENDATION

THAT PW 54-2023 Future Naturalization Projects – Follow Up report be received; and

THAT the Green Advisory Committee recommend to Council:

THAT Council approve the establishment of a naturalized area at the Municipal Operations Centre and existing areas as detailed in this report; and,

THAT Council consider any future proposals from staff with respect to establishing long-term planting areas on private lands.

8. OTHER BUSINESS

9. UPCOMING MEETINGS

Thursday, October 19, 2023 at 5:30 p.m. (Municipal Operations Centre)

Thursday, November 16, 2023 at 5:30 p.m. (Municipal Operations Centre)

10. ADJOURNMENT

RECOMMENDATION

THAT this meeting be adjourned at _____ pm.



Minutes

Green Advisory Committee

June 15, 2023

5:30 pm

Municipal Operations Centre

408 James Street South, St. Marys

YouTube Link - <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCzuUpFqxcEI8OG-dOYKteFQ>

Member Present	Katherine Moffat, Chair Councillor Aylward Teresa Barresi Lynette Geddes Fred Stam Steve Vivian
Staff Present	Jed Kelly, Director of Public Works Morgan Dykstra, Public Works and Planning Coordinator

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Chair called the meeting to order at 5:35 pm.

2. DECLARATION OF PECUNIARY INTEREST

None declared.

3. AMENDMENTS AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Moved By Steve Vivian

Seconded By Lynette Geddes

THAT the June 15, 2023 Green Advisory Committee meeting agenda be accepted as presented.

Carried

4. DELEGATIONS

- 4.1 Upper Thames River Conservation Authority - Upper Thames River 2022 Watershed Report Cards

Cathy Quinlan, Terrestrial Biologist for the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority presented the Upper Thames River 2022 Watershed Report Cards and responded to questions from the Committee.

Moved By Fred Stam

Seconded By Teresa Barresi

THAT the delegation from the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority regarding the Upper Thames River 2022 Watershed Report Cards be received.

Carried

5. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

Moved By Teresa Barresi

Seconded By Steve Vivian

THAT the May 18, 2023 Green Advisory Committee meeting minutes be approved by the Committee, and signed by the Chair and the staff liaison.

Carried

6. BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES

None.

7. REPORTS

- 7.1 PW 41-2023 Cemetery Turf Maintenance and Threatened Bird Species (Bobolink)

Morgan Dykstra and Jed Kelly spoke to the report and responded to questions from the Committee.

Moved By Fred Stam

Seconded By Councillor Aylward

THAT PW 41-2023 Cemetery Turf Maintenance and Threatened report be received; and

THAT the Green Advisory Committee does not proceed with recommending to Council the delaying of mowing activities at the St. Marys Cemetery for the purpose of creating a suitable habitat for the Bobolink bird species.

Carried

8. OTHER BUSINESS

None.

9. UPCOMING MEETINGS

Thursday, September 21, 2023 at 5:30 p.m. (Municipal Operations Centre)

Thursday, October 19, 2023 at 5:30 p.m. (Municipal Operations Centre)

10. ADJOURNMENT

Moved By Lynette Geddes

Seconded By Teresa Barresi

THAT this meeting be adjourned at 6:45 pm.

Carried

Katherine Moffat, Chair

Jed Kelly, Committee Secretary



FORMAL REPORT

To:	Chair and Members of the Advisory Committee
Prepared by:	Morgan Dykstra, Public Works and Planning Coordinator
Date of Meeting:	21 September 2023
Subject:	PW 54-2023 Future Naturalization Projects – Follow Up

PURPOSE

The Town of St. Marys needs to develop a long-term planting plan to accommodate the enhancement of the tree canopy via the naturalization of vacant or underutilized lands.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT PW 54-2023 Future Naturalization Projects – Follow Up report be received; and

THAT the Green Advisory Committee recommend to Council:

THAT Council approve the establishment of a naturalized area at the Municipal Operations Centre and existing areas as detailed in this report; and,

THAT Council consider any future proposals from staff with respect to establishing long-term planting areas on private lands.

BACKGROUND

The Town has a Forestry Management Plan. The Plan services as a guidance document for staff and is intended to help maintain & enhance the urban forest on Town Lands.

The Plan makes reference to trees in the modified environment (i.e., the boulevard), and trees in natural areas. The Town is of the opinion, that the Town can achieve greater tree canopy increases via planting in natural areas. As such, the Town has focused on creating new naturalized areas, for example, in 2021 the Green Advisory Committee and Council established a new naturalized area at Meadowridge Park with the intention of it being a multi-year mass planting location. The concept plan proposed the planting of 520 trees and shrubs within the designated 30,000 sq ft area. At the time of approval in April 2021, it was anticipated that the planting area would have capacity until 2024, however, capacity was realized in spring of 2022 (less than one year). Having a designated location for tree planting was ideal, as any tree planting opportunities had a shovel ready location. Trees and monetary contributions were sourced from various sources, making the project very collaborative. Contributions include, grant funding opportunities (i.e., TD Tree Days), corporate donations (i.e., St. Marys Cement), service club donations (i.e., The Rotary Club), and private donations (Town of St. Marys Tree Donation Program). The Town continues to receive tree planting opportunities and need to pivot to identify lands that can be intensified, for instance the Fall 2023 TD Tree Days trees (100 to 150 trees) are being planted at the St. Marys Cemetery along the existing property line forestry buffer.

To ensure the Town can consistently respond to and accommodate tree planting requests, the Town needs to establish a long-term approach, which includes the identification of lands for the purpose of establishing natural areas. This does not mean that the Town will stop or reduce its efforts with respect to planting and maintain trees in the modified environment.

At the May 2023 Green Advisory Committee meeting Town staff presented to the Committee a report that discussed various methodologies for determining suitable planting sites, they are as follows:

- Option A: Expand Existing Naturalized Areas on Town Lands
- Option B: Establish New Naturalized Areas on Town Lands
- Option C: Consider Public-Private Partnerships

After some discussion, the Committee made the following resolution:

Moved By Councillor Aylward

Seconded By Fred Stam

THAT PW 37-2023 Consideration of Future Naturalization Areas report be received; and,

THAT staff investigate the details of Option A and Option C as presented in PW 37-2023 Consideration of Future Naturalization Areas report and bring further information back to the Committee.

Carried.

The purpose of this report is to follow up on the above resolution and make tangible location recommendations for the Committee's consideration.

REPORT

Since the May meeting, Town staff have been discussing suitable tree planting locations that are appropriate on public and private lands. Staff's recommendations are as follows:

Long-Term Naturalization Approach – Private Public Partnership

The Town's overall goal is to improve and enhance the tree canopy, the canopy extends to private lands in addition to public lands. Therefore, the Town has an interest in growing the canopy on private lands that are currently vacant and have no future use, and therefore at no risk of future removal.

Town staff are currently in conversation with a private property owner with respect to identifying a segment of vacant land that can accommodate a long-term naturalized project that includes, mass tree planting, trails, pollinator gardens etc., and meets the criteria for grant programs such as the Federal Government's Natural Climate Solutions Fund. The Town anticipates that the lands could be ready by 2025.

Discussion of the purchase or leasing of private property is outside the Committee's jurisdiction, and therefore staff cannot disclose the location of the proposed lands or the property owner.

Should the proposal be approved by Town Council and the property owner, Town staff will consult with the Committee regarding a proposed design for the lands, identification of grant opportunities and long-term plans for the property.

Short-Term Naturalization Approach – Municipal Operations Centre

While the Town finalizes its long-term naturalization area, the Town requires an interim location to accommodate immediate planting needs (i.e., 2024 and early 2025). Staff have completed a review of available lands and have determined that vacant land at the Municipal Operations Centre is suitable. The Municipal Operations Centre is located at 408 James Street South and is the primary location for all public works activities. Currently, there is vacant strip of land on the property between the salt shed (green barn), and the northern property line that has no future use and acts as a buffer between the municipal building and neighbouring industrial use. Staff suspect that the site could accommodate between one and two mass plants (a mass plant is between 100 to 200 trees). Any tree planting opportunities would be directed to this location.

Since this naturalized area is not accessible to the public, the Tree Donation Policy would need to be amended to allow for donations to be applied to this initiative, while any recognition, like plaques, would remain at the Meadowridge Park Natural Area.

Essentially, this area would be used in the immediate future while a long-term naturalization area is finalized.

Figure 1.0 Proposed Municipal Operations Centre Naturalized Area



Ongoing Naturalization Approach – Existing Naturalized Areas and Flood Plain

In addition to establishing new areas, the Town needs to continue to ensure the health of its existing naturalized areas. Staff are proposing that small scale plantings be dedicated to existing areas like Sparling Bush (interior planting), along the river / and Town Lands within the flood plain, along the Town's trail system, and the Town's Landfill Site. A small-scale plant is usually considered less than 50 trees. The locations would be determined on a case-by-case basis.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Conceptual ideas are being presented at this time. Further consideration will be given to the cost to procure and plant trees, however that will be derived from the Town's annual tree planting budget, donations, and grant opportunities.

SUMMARY

The Town needs to develop a long-term planting approach for natural areas. Town staff are recommending that the Town create a naturalized area at the Municipal Operations Centre to

accommodate immediate tree planting needs, consider a private-public partnership on private lands for long-term planting, and continue to enhance and maintain existing spaces when small planting opportunities exist.

STRATEGIC PLAN

☒ Not applicable to this report.

OTHERS CONSULTED

Todd Thibodeau, Public Works Manager – *Town of St. Marys*

John Hahn, Parks Team Lead – *Town of St. Marys*

Vanni Azzano, Community Education Supervisor – *Upper Thames River Conservation Authority*

Report Approval Details

Document Title:	PW 54-2023 Future Naturalization Projects - Follow Up.docx
Attachments:	None.
Final Approval Date:	Sep 18, 2023

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Jed Kelly