

Full Authority
16 January 2025
Agenda Item: 9

Limerick Township/McGeachie Maintenance Assistance

Background

Please see the attached letter and by-law from the Township of Limerick.

Current Status

The McGeachie Conservation Area (MCA) is approximately 538 acres with a cottage and trail network. It is open to the public 365 days a year. The CVCA has worked with volunteers and organizations in past years and currently to provide a recreational destination for the benefit of local residents and to attract tourists to the area. The Steenburg Lake Cottage Association, Hastings Destination Trails Inc., Bancroft High School and the Norwood High School have been instrumental to make MCA a success and jewel in Hastings County to promote economic growth in the area.

One of the prime supporters of MCA and hence the CVCA for many years has been the Township of Limerick, headed by former Mayors Dave Golem, Carl Stefanski and now current Mayor Kim Carson.

In addition to this combined support, CVCA staff and volunteers have also tackled extra work on the property as well. This was never more evident than the herculean effort to clean up the damage from the derecho that laid waste to McGeachie in 2022.

Currently, staff continue to maintain the property, which includes spring cleanup, cottage maintenance, cutting grass, clearing downed trees and ensuring the property is ready for summer rentals.

In the spirit of cooperation, municipal assistance has included snow plowing, cutting grass at the trailhead parking lot, removing garbage at the trailhead and cleaning the portables.

It is with these combined efforts McGeachie has become one of the destination anchors in Hastings County.

It has always been my understanding Limerick Township recognized this value as an environmental destination for its residents and visitors to the area and was committed for the long term as a valuable supporter. Hence, the By-Law was passed in 2021 affirming its contribution and supporting the CVCA. Other CVCA municipalities have done the same, making a “Crowe Valley watershed solution” unique in the province. In fact,

perhaps it may even be considered a model for other municipalities and conservation authorities in the future.

However, should the maintenance from Limerick Township waver, then the CVCA and its volunteer network will need to reassess the contributions from the remaining supporting groups, individuals and organizations. There are other solutions other than paying for municipal support, especially since this expense would directly impact the CVCA budget.

I am confident this network would not allow the maintenance to be ignored. This is a resilient committed group.

Board Decision

TP