

Friends of Gatineau Park—Annual General Meeting

October 24, 2015

Draft minutes

12:41 pm volunteer luncheon ~18 people

12:45 pm Mario Simard invites all to hear Marie-Michèle Dallaire, presentation ~22 people

1:30 pm AGM begins with greetings from President Graeme Roderick

Members: 22 present, 5 Board members/directors including 1 from NCC, 1 staff member, 4 Chairs of committees, and one guest speaker.

Election of Secretary to take AGM minutes. Propose Chris Paci as Secretary, all in favour. Moved.

Speaker: Catherine Verreault, previous board member, with NCC Gatineau Park, paid position for 8 years or longer, from student to Manager of Land and Natural Resources. Regular park user.

Trail slides. June 2014. 200 km of official trails, over ~200 km of informal trails. Public consultations with focus on revised recreational use in the park, status of conservation of the park, and concern for habitat fragmentation. Park is too small to be self sustaining and so requires ecological services of surrounding areas. Urban impacts are intensive in the south and urbanization is growing more intensive up and around the park. Gatineau Park is the second busiest park, next to Banff, but busiest when measured by most visitors per KM square. The park has many fragile habitats and there are species at risk living in the park. It is a federal park, covered by both Quebec and federal legislation. To protect a species you have to protect an ecosystem, full food chain is considered. Exotic invasive species, there are five species being monitored. You will see at P7, tarps to control the dog strangling vine. Lac Philip there are water plant species, most invasives are near trails, this is where you find a lot of the exotic invasive species, trails are a great vector for species. Corridors around the park need to be protected, connection to northern forest, Ottawa and Gatineau rivers, etc. Trails are like roads, there are different impacts for interior and edge species, imbalance depending on the fragmentation. Eardley Escarpment has the ~70 species at risk in Quebec, they rely on the escarpment. For example, looking at frogs around Lac des Fees. Lots of users in the park. Lots who are organized, and many want access into the park from their back yards and neighbourhoods. Ecological sensitivity, requests being analyzed. Working to reduce fragmentation, lessen unofficial trails by including users, habitat for active species, better quality of habitat and less invasives. Next steps, sub groups of users. Most sensitive areas will be closed, there are trails being created. We need to maintain some and not open new ones. Cow parsnip, giant hogweed, invasive, Meech river valley, cross loop. Eradication strategies. Long term planning and opportunities to stabilize.

2:12 pm. Merci à Catherine.

Graeme: Confirms that notice went out as per the bylaws.

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Quorum has been reached.

Ask for a Motion to adopt or make changes to the agenda? Motion to approve the agenda as is, moved by Mario, all in favor.

Adoption of the minutes of 2014. Walk through and overview of the minutes which are draft from last year, items arising, enjoined as we proceed. Questions. No Questions no changes. Motion to adopt the minutes of last year, moved by Ken Bouchard, all in favor.

2:16 pm

Next item annual report, full report is on the website. Circulated highlights from 2014-15. NCC programming was suspended during the last year, during winter a new contract was entered into for April 1, 2015. Interpretive Plan and the Strategic Plan are tools to implement the Master Plan. Needed to fit late winter and long term plan between Friends and the Park. As a registered charity we are more than a not for profit, we raise funds to meet the mission of the organization. Membership fees are part donation and part is a benefit. We issue a tax receipt for the membership fee portion, that is a donation. \$97,000 in donations over the last 15 year period.

We have more activities and more frequency in activities. On Facebook there are lots of pictures. Julien has done a masterful job marketing Friends activities. Catherine has explained for two or three years the long term strategic plan, to move our administrative capacity along from administrative assistant to greater depth of interpretive and other administrative capacity. There were 4-5 interpreters last year, this year we have 15. This created challenge around coordination and oversight is larger, greater responsibility. Having an Interpretive background strengthens that. In previous years there was more NCC oversight. That has switched over so Friends now administer and does all the scheduling. Fundraising efforts will be covered by the fundraising report.

Numbers of volunteers we have and frequency we call on them is increasing. Thank you to all our volunteers, we call on you more frequently, variety of tasks, level of responsibility we could not do without you. 8 events, 45 volunteers. Dusk series, etc. Goal and interpreters are in our data base, sent to members and volunteers. 139 members, 37 new members since March 31, 2015. Adopt a trail compared to years past, we adopted more, 171 visits to 18 trails this year. Number of issues identified is also up 45-50, significant changes.

Graeme introduces Programs report, Gershon is Chair. He also highlighted standards and engaging, courageous new programs. Program committee imagines new programs and find a way to implement it. Confidence to stage and run. Gershon's task to think about that.

Gershon: every year, logical grouping, dusk series, snowshoe under the stars, interpretive hikes, explore the trails, combined ski and history and nature walk on ridge road, good turn-out. Guided walks on

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trails, 3 hours, longer walks than the sugar bush trail, history of the park and nature. Carvide Wison, what trails do you think would be interesting and elements of natural and human cultural history on the trails, your thoughts are welcome. Give feed back to Gershon.

Communications: Bulletin was issued twice last year, it is on the website. Facebook and photos are being used. Michel, thank you, your contributions are noted. Challenge for the website is to publish in French and English at the same time. Greater capacity to be bilingual. Julien did alot of this service to the organization.

Report by Finance and fundraising: Sarah, Ray and Margaret report is coming later in the afternoon. Last year we had Roxanne Parent and now Marie-Michèle as office staff, contribution, managed by all these people. Donations received over the last ten years we have been used to fund the research grant (s) up to 2,000\$/year. Over 600 people took part in our programs. Over 2,480 hours of interpretive services to the NCC. Half of this goes to MacKenzie King estate, followed by summer programs at Lac Philip.

November 21, 2015 is the Research forum.

Nomination committee report was circulated. Questions?

Those are the reports, all in favour of reports, all in favour. Reports accepted.

Next item of business is the Financial Report. Financial statements posted. Sarah, as a result of the changes of CRA and law on charities we undergo a Review engagement , sufficient for our type of charity. The engagement is posted, on the first page, notes from auditor of what a review engagement is, generally accepted rules, not a full audit, but it is acceptable for a charity of our size.

Picture of the year ended March 31, 2015. Still a very healthy organization, a little additional surplus. Canoe we received, valued at \$12K, we will carry this capital asset that, it will stay on our books.

Operating statement, our annual budget is around \$90K, we balance pretty well every year. A little change from year over last. Some was a result of changes with NCC, otherwise we are financially very stable. Auditor commented on how healthy an organization we are. We have about a base of \$50K, if we ever liquidated. As a volunteer based organization we are pretty healthy.

2 items: interpretive activities were not done in January to April so there is a drop in revenue and expenses during that time. Administrative support has changed and that is going up with more hours committed to admin coordination. We expected that and it is in the Strategic plan, it is more likely to go up into the \$20Ks, based on numbers of days worked, but only as we are financially able to do so we will increase this. Having admin in house is very good, this is an investment, so the financial support will grow and this enables us to advance and manage the coordination of Friends mission on education and

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outreach in the park. Full time professional administration is a big part of what makes us a healthy organization.

Audience: What is the 10K?

Answer: \$5K is core and \$5K for special projects/specific projects. We also get \$7K for office space. This enables the organization to imagine new possibilities.

Audience has the \$10K stayed the same. G: it was \$15K, years ago, then shrank and stayed at \$10 for the last few years. Was not affected by the NCC contract change.

Last page is cash flow and not much to explain here. Challenges are working to ensure we have contractors who are interpreters, for example during the summer at MacKenzie King. We just wrote \$23K in cheques, and that will be reimbursed in a month or so. We need a balance for the transactions, funds going in and out. Explanations at the end of the review have not changed significantly.

Motion to post and adopt the financial statement. Sarah moves to approve, all in favor. So moved.

Sarah was asked last year at the AGM to look at operational statement. Professional fees for book keeper and auditor. Asking to approve fees for next year. Sarah reported from your request from last year. Are these fees competitive?

Sarah, I did a global search of fees. Generally costs are \$5-10K. As such we are getting good value. The added benefit of Ray is useful. He volunteers time to the organization, we are not charged for every hour. Fees for 2015-16 are forecast to be around 2,400\$. Any questions about that?

Motion to have a Review Engagement for 2015-2016 and to appoint Ray Folkins' company to next year's Review Engagement. All in favor. Motion passes.

Catherine, fundraising, strategic plan from years ago. There are two main elements, renew programming, we have done and what we strive to do. Engagement as well, the full spectrum of activities, restoration, programming, two key functions communications and fundraising. Comms have made leaps and bounds. Financing and fundraising, we still struggle and Sarah and Catherine have stood up to Chair and we have an Action plan. Objective is to develop more revenue and to report on what we are doing with what you give us. Sources are substantive, but not super diversified, we need to diversify and consolidate to increase funding to do more. Need to ensure what we would do if something didn't come through. Base of funding for a high calibre staff, leverage, professionalize, grant applications, more funding. For example, we used funds from Special projects to hire Marie Claire Lemay as a contractor to develop bus tours, interpreters were secured, this makes a difference.

Financial autonomy for the organization is possible. Three key revenue streams are: programming (fees and sponsorship), donations (cash and in kind), grants (there is a whole world out there of foundations and granting agencies we need to tap into).

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Bus tours and other programming for example, these can generate revenues, but it takes funding to build programs like guided tours and so there is risk to generate funding. We are also looking at sponsorship of programs to increase revenues.

Message sent out around donation campaign, work place campaign.

Grant data base and capacity to develop. Not just environmental funding, but also cultural heritage grants and funding.

We will be developing a fundraising package, value added, return on investments. We are going to look at best practices and what other Friends organizations do, we are seeking advice from those who have done grant applications. If anyone in the membership has experience and wants to work with us on this please let us know. Action planning, need help to join the committee?

Report of the nominations committee. Catherine and Graeme need approval as the bylaws, to permit them to serve another year. This motion is needed each year, we must make an exception as they exceed the six year limit. Motion to allow continuous service past the six year mark. Motion to allow Catherine and Graeme to serve. All in favour, accepted.

Calling for nominations from the floor: Diane Schreiner (sp), Parks Canada pre retirement. Nat Peters, others? Motion to accept report of nomination committee as amended, accepted. All in favor.

Nominations committee requires members, membership on the nominations committee. We need one member at large to sit with NCC, as ex officio, we need someone willing to contribute up to 10 hours 2-3 meetings. Claudelle Crowe volunteered. Motion to appoint, Catherine moved. Motion accepted.

Recognition of Marie Boulet who retired October 7, she is off to China. We named her an honorary member. We have also recognized Julien as Volunteer of the year.

Trail for Gershon, guided interpretive trail, Bill, Ken, tour around Brown lake and Carman lake, old trouse trail is unofficial. Biased for Wolf, escarpment. Bill has another one, Keogan on Mcinstry. Lac des Fees, Elizabeth. Skyline trail and taking off. Looking for natural and cultural history. On line survey will be produced. Gershon will survey the membership.

Sarah, pitch, special project on the recipe book. Needs help from members to put the book together on recipes. Eating in Gatineau Park, what are your favorite memories and times when you found good eats in a chalet, at the camp ground, etc. Send in photos and stories, and your recipes. Please

Motion to adjourn, JoAnn Gagnon, former president. All in favor

3:13 pm