

Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority

TERMS OF REFERENCE

PUBLIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Committee Type

Advisory Committee

Purpose

To champion the implementation of NPCA's Strategic Plan and other watershed strategies through collaborative action working closely with NPCA staff and community. To provide collaborative, local sector-based perspectives on specific projects/programs and/or other conservation authority matters, as determined by the NPCA Board of Directors or its staff.

Committee Mandate

The PAC is an advisory committee of the NPCA. The Committee advises NPCA Board and staff on local environmental/watershed matters of community interest. Recommendations made by the PAC are provided to staff and the Board of Directors consideration or approval. The PAC is not a formal commenting body regarding review and approval of permits under Section 28 of Conservation Authorities Act.

Membership

PAC membership will be determined through an established recruitment and evaluation process with an aim to have equal geographical and demographic representation as well as diverse backgrounds and experiences. All PAC members, except the Métis and First Nations representatives, will be recruited based on a Board-approved process as per Terms of reference, and appointed by the Board.

The PAC shall consist of up to SIXTEEN (16) citizen members comprising of multi-stakeholder and community representation, as follows:

- Up to THREE (3) Public-at-large
- ONE (1) Conservation Areas user and/or volunteer
- ONE (1) Youth
- ONE (1) Academic/Science/Research
- ONE (1) Business/Industry
- ONE (1) Planning
- ONE (1) Development/Building
- TWO (2) Agriculture
- ONE (1) Environment
- ONE (1) Urban Indigenous
- ONE (1) Métis citizen appointed by Niagara Regional Métis Council
- TWO (2) members appointed by First Nations with a Treaty or historical affiliation to the watershed

Note: Indigenous representation on the PAC does not fulfill or replace the NPCA commitments for engaging with Indigenous communities, nor do they affect protocols created by Indigenous Peoples for engaging government, industry or others, or for gathering, documenting, management or sharing Indigenous knowledge.

Member Roles and Responsibilities

The PAC is governed by NPCA's Administrative By-Law (Sec. 4, Committees). All committee members shall follow the NPCA code of conduct and media protocols.

A PAC Chair and Vice Chair will be elected by members of the PAC to serve for a period of TWO (2) years, and may serve for a maximum of TWO (2) consecutive terms (or 4 years). In the event of a resignation or termination of the PAC Chair, the Vice Chair will fulfill the remaining term of the Chair and a Vice Chair will be elected for the remainder of their term.

Chair and Vice Chair

The Chair will:

- Work with NPCA staff liaison to draft and coordinate committee meeting agendas, work plan and associated documents
- Preside over PAC meetings and aim to build consensus as needed
- Ensure all discussion items end with a decision, action or definite outcome
- Serve as spokesperson for the PAC, only with respect to group recommendations based on consensus during meetings

The Vice Chair will:

- Preside over PAC meetings in the absence of the Chair, or should the Chair be unable to fulfill their duties.
- Fulfill Chair duties as needed in the event of an extended absence.

Members

All Members, including Chair and Vice Chair will:

- Review meeting materials in advance of the meetings and arrive prepared to provide broad perspective on the items under consideration
- Submit agenda items to the PAC Chair or staff liaison a minimum of two (2) weeks prior to the meeting date for consideration
- Make every effort to attend regularly scheduled meetings. If not available, notify the Chair or staff liaison at least one day prior to the meeting
- Agree to describe, process and resolve issues in a professional and respectful manner
- Bring forward potential partnership opportunities that align with NPCA strategic priorities
- Act as a liaison with their respective sectors/community/organizations with information and opportunities to provide input where appropriate
- Adhere to the NPCA Administrative by-law, Code of Conduct and media protocols as well as NPCA policies and procedures for volunteers
- Notify the NPCA in writing should they no longer be able to fulfil their term or wish to resign

Meetings

Regular meetings will be held up to 4 times per year subject to agenda content and need. Additional meetings or workshops may be held at the discretion of the Chair and staff liaison if required for timely matters.

Meetings of the PAC will be open to the public.

The PAC will set the meeting schedule annually at their first meeting of the year. An annual workplan for the PAC will be developed and endorsed by its membership, at the beginning of each year.

Meetings may be held virtually, in-person or hybrid, to be determined by PAC Chair, Vice-Chair and staff liaison.

In-person meetings will be held at either NPCA Head Office (250 Thorold Road West, Welland), Ball's Falls Centre for Conservation (3292 Sixth Avenue, Lincoln), or at another location determined by the Chair and staff liaison.

Meetings are expected to take approximately one and a half (1.5) hours. Exceptions may occur from time to time to deal with significant items.

A quorum will consist of minimum of 50% + 1 of members (excluding vacant positions). Consensus-based decision making is preferred procedure and formal decisions will be based on majority vote.

Member Recruitment

When recruitment of PAC members is required, a recruitment working group will be formed. The working group will comprise of NPCA staff, with recommendations for appointment being brought to the Board for approval. The group will be dissolved once members have been recruited.

Applications from watershed residents will be solicited through a public recruitment process including announcements in newsletters, local newspapers, websites, volunteer networks, community groups and various social media and engagement platforms as appropriate.

Applications will be evaluated by the recruitment group using standardized criteria relevant for filling positions on the PAC. Recommended individuals will be submitted to the NPCA Board of Directors for approval and appointment. All appointed members of PAC will be required to qualify based on policies and protocols applicable to volunteers.

Applicants will be assessed and appointed as needed based on vacancies, except for externally appointed members (i.e., First Nations and Métis representatives). Seats may remain vacant until candidates with the requisite background and skills can be identified.

Termination

The NPCA may, or upon receipt of a recommendation from the Chair, Vice Chair or CAO, terminate a member's appointment based on a careful review of conditions including:

- Breach of NPCA Administrative By-law, Code of Conduct and media protocols;
- Absence at PAC meetings (3 meetings in continuation) without satisfactory reason.

Administration

Secretariat Support

An NPCA staff liaison will be assigned to the PAC by the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO). As designated by the CAO, appropriate NPCA staff shall provide administrative support, including taking minutes, the distribution of minutes and agendas and the general administrative coordination of meetings, posting of vacancies and communication with the PAC. Staff from various NPCA divisions may provide support to the PAC, including background information, briefings, and formal memos, presentations, and reports as required.

Reporting

Meeting minutes shall be recorded and circulated to members for their review. Draft (unapproved) minutes will be submitted to the NPCA Board of Directors for information at their earliest meeting, as deemed appropriate, following a PAC meeting.

Approved minutes will be made available to the public on the NPCA website, subject to requirements of the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Personal Privacy Act* (MFIPPA).

On occasion, the PAC Chair (or another member who best represents the topic) may request, or be requested to present and speak on behalf of the PAC at NPCA Board meetings with approval from the Board Chair and/or NPCA CAO.

Travel Expenses & Budget

Members that travel to attend meetings in-person will be compensated for their mileage, in accordance with the established rate for the NPCA, and where these are not covered by other agency or source. Provision of per-diem or honorarium is not available to members of this committee.

The PAC will be allocated \$2,500.00 to cover meeting expenses to be reviewed annually. The budget allocation will be administered by the NPCA staff liaison.

Amendments

The PAC Terms of Reference shall be reviewed and updated every FOUR (4) years. The Terms of Reference may be amended to meet the ongoing needs of the NPCA, through a recommendation by the PAC and by agreement of the majority.