

# Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority

## TERMS OF REFERENCE

### Public Advisory Committee

**Date of formation: February 19, 2014**

**Date of Board approval: September 18, 2019**

**Revised: July 16, 2020**

**Committee Type: Standing Committee (NPCA By-Law Section 4.4)**

#### **Committee Purpose and Role:**

The purpose of the Committee is to provide collaborative local perspective, guidance and expert advice in the implementation of NPCA policies, plans and/or other issues as the Board may request. Members will serve in a non-governance capacity with a focus on providing advice and recommendations for consideration by NPCA Board, which are aligned with the approval annual workplans from each Division – Corporate Services, Operations, Watershed Management and Communications/Engagement.

Key roles and responsibilities include:

- Act as Champions/Ambassadors for the NPCA
- Advise on potential partnership opportunities
- Provide a conduit to the local community within their sector
- Identify barriers and opportunities in the community within their sector
- Advise on opportunities to communicate information from the NPCA to their sector partners
- Advise on issues from within their sector

#### **Watershed Floodplain Sub-Committee**

A Sub-Committee of 4-6 interested NPCA Public Advisory Committee members will be established to act as a Watershed Floodplain Sub-Committee. Interested NPCA Board members can request to join the Sub-Committee subject to formal approval by resolution of the NPCA Board.

Key roles and responsibilities will include:

Review and advise staff and NPCA Board of Directors on all matters relating to watershed floodplain mapping projects, with respect to the implementation, study, or reviewing of existing



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or new floodplain mapping exercises or projects throughout the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority Watershed through:

- Attending strategy meetings as required;
- Setting out a process to allow transparent public input;
- Review of peer opinions, technical and other information as appropriate
- The review of policies with respect to implementation of watershed floodplain mapping;
- Development of a process to disseminate the floodplain mapping lines and information.

### **Member recruitment Sub-Committee**

A member recruitment sub-committee of the Public Advisory Committee comprised of the NPCA Board Chair, the Committee Chair and one Public Advisory Committee member in good standing will be established when there are vacancies on the Public Advisory Committee. In the absence of a Committee Chair, the NPCA Board Chair will approve a 2<sup>nd</sup> Public Advisory Committee member in good standing for the Sub-Committee.

Key roles and responsibilities will include:

- Advising staff on recruitment strategies;
- Review of submitted applications;
- Attending meetings as required;
- Recommend members for appointment to the NPCA Board of Directors.

### **Committee Authority and Decision Making:**

Committee will be governed by NPCA Administrative By-Law and Code of Conduct. Recommendations made by the Committee will be sent to the Board of Directors for review and approval.

### **Membership:**

The NPCA Public Advisory Committee shall consist of up to FOURTEEN (14) members comprising multi-stakeholder representation including planning, business, agriculture, environmental, development sectors and representation from Indigenous communities, the general public and will include the Chair and Vice Chair in an ex-officio capacity.

Members of the NPCA Public Advisory Committee will be appointed to serve for a term of TWO (2) years beginning in January of that year. Positions vacated will be filled through a “Call for expression of interest” to be conducted as required. In the event of a vacancy during a regular term, the vacancy may be filled for the remainder of that term.

Representative Seat Structure:

The Public Advisory Committee shall consist of the following representation:



- THREE (3) members from the public-at-large (with knowledge of NPCA mandate and related programs including heritage, education, restoration and health being an asset)
- ONE (1) member representing Métis Niagara
- ONE (1) member representing a Chamber of Commerce or the Tourism industry
- ONE (1) member representing agriculture/value-added agriculture sector from the north part of the watershed
- ONE (1) member representing agriculture/value-added agriculture from the south part of the watershed
- ONE (1) member representing the development sector
- ONE (1) member representing the environmental sector
- ONE (1) member representing First Nations
- ONE (1) member representing urban/rural planning (must have Registered Professional Planner designation)
- ONE (1) member representing volunteers/users (e.g. hikers, hunters, campers, anglers, etc.)
- TWO (2) Members from the NPCA Board of Directors comprised of the NPCA Board Chair (ex-officio) and NPCA Board Vice-Chair (ex-officio)

### **Roles and Expectations of Members:**

- Review meeting materials in advance of the meetings and arrive prepared to provide a broad perspective on the items under consideration.
- Submit agenda items to the Committee Chair and staff a minimum of TWO (2) weeks prior to the meeting date for approval.
- Make every effort to attend regularly scheduled meetings. If not available, notify the Chair and staff contact on inability to attend at least one day prior to the meeting date.
- Agree to describe, process and resolved issues in a professional and respectful manner.
- Provide constructive input to help identify future projects or strategic priorities for consideration, respective of their sector representation
- Members are encouraged to go back to their respective sectors with information received at Public Advisory Committee meetings to notify of public opportunities to provide feedback where appropriate.
- In the event of an extended absence in writing, a surrogate may be pre-approved at the discretion of the Committee Chair and NPCA Board.
- Members may cease to be a member of the Committee if they:
  - Resign from the Committee;



- Fail to attend TWO (2) consecutive meetings without providing reasons of significance to the Committee Chair;
- No longer objectively represent their sector;
- Breach of confidentiality or violate the Code of Conduct;
- The Committee Chair may recommend a member be removed from the Public Advisory Committee if they are no longer meeting their responsibilities.

## **Leadership:**

To provide a conduit of communication, the NPCA Board Chair and Vice-Chair will be ex-officio members of the Public Advisory Committee. A Committee Chair shall be elected by the Public Advisory Committee to serve for a period of TWELVE (12) months. The Committee Chair may serve for TWO (2) consecutive terms.

The Committee Chair responsibilities include:

- Building consensus;
- Providing leadership and ensuring the fair and efficient functioning of the Committee;
- Scheduling meetings and notifying the Committee members;
- Inviting special guests to attend meetings when required;
- Guiding the meeting according to the agenda and time available;
- Ensuring all discussions items end with a decision, action or definite outcome;
- Review and approve draft minutes before distribution

The NPCA Board Chair and Vice-Chair responsibilities:

- Act as a conduit between the Public Advisory Committee and the Board
- May be asked to Chair Public Advisory Committee meetings if the Committee Chair is absent

## **Committee Meeting Requirements:**

The Public Advisory Committee will meet at least quarterly for a duration of approximately TWO (2) hours. Exceptions may occur from time to time to deal with significant items. Meeting quorum will be 50% + 1 of current filled Committee seats.

Meetings of the Public Advisory Committee are public, and members should be aware that their names will be posted on the NPCA website and when requested by members of the public. Personal information, other than name and resident municipality, will be kept confidential in accordance with Provincial legislation.



Internal or external persons may be invited to attend Public Advisory Committee meetings at the request of Committee Chair, on behalf of the Committee, to provide advice and assistance where necessary. These attendees will have no advisory privileges and may be requested to leave the meeting at any time by the Committee Chair. NPCA Board members are encouraged to attend Public Advisory Committee meetings but will carry no voting power and will not receive a per diem for attending.

### **Administration and Reporting:**

The NPCA Community Outreach and Volunteer Coordinator will provide administrative services for the NPCA Public Advisory Committee, including preparation and distribution of agendas, recording of meeting minutes/notes, reports and general information as required to Public Advisory Committee. The Executive Coordinator to the CAO and Board may also provide administrative support to the Public Advisory Committee.

Minutes shall be recorded and circulated to members. Draft unapproved minutes may be submitted to the NPCA Board of Directors at their earliest meeting following a Public Advisory Committee meeting if members are given 2 weeks to review the draft minutes. Actionable items to be carried forward by NPCA Board Chair in a timely fashion.

The Community Outreach and Volunteer Coordinator will coordinate reports on the Public Advisory Committee activities for inclusion in NPCA Board meeting agendas. From time to time, the Public Advisory Committee Chair may be asked to present items of significance to the NPCA Board of Directors.

### **Application Process:**

Potential applicants will be assessed and recommended for appointment based not only on if there is an available seat but also on their ability to meet the roles and expectations of a member. Seats may remain vacant until candidates with the requisite background and skills can be identified.

Calls for Expression of Interest will be fully transparent and made public through the following measures:

- NPCA website and engagement portal
- Social media venues
- Local print media
- Direct contact with appropriate community organizations/groups related to the vacancy (e.g. Homebuilders Association, Nature Clubs, Agricultural organizations)



Applications will be submitted to the NPCA Community Outreach Coordinator with the following information:

- Contact information;
- Area of expertise/sector they want to represent;
- Why they want to serve on the Committee and prior Committee experience;
- Educational background (if applicable to role);
- Professional/employment experience and professional designations (if applicable to the role).

Applications will be evaluated by the Public Advisory Committee Member Recruitment Sub-Committee and final recommended candidates will be submitted to the NPCA Board of Directors for appointment. The NPCA maintains a strong policy of equal opportunity and recognizes diversity as a source of strength and works to champion inclusive attitudes and encourage adoption of inclusive approaches that lead to full and meaningful participation of all.

Applicants will be evaluated based on the following:

- Knowledge and experience related to the sector representation;
- Knowledge of the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority;
- Experience working on multi-sector Committees;
- Relevant volunteer/community service work related to the seat they are applying for.

### **Meeting Location:**

Meetings will be at the NPCA Head Office (250 Thorold Road West, Welland), Ball's Falls Conservation Area, or at a location determined by the Committee Chair.

### **Resources and budget:**

The budget for the NPCA Public Advisory Committee will be allocated at \$2500 to cover meeting expenses and recruitment processes.

### **Amendments:**

The Terms of Reference and the role of the NPCA Public Advisory Committee shall be reviewed and assessed every FOUR (4) years by the incoming Board of Directors. The Terms of Reference may be amended to meet the ongoing needs of the NPCA, by agreement of the majority of Board members.

