

Greenspace Alliance of Canada's Capital 2019 Annual Report (May 2018 – April 2019)

The Greenspace Alliance of Canada's Capital has been active in the last year in its work to protect and preserve greenspace and shape and influence federal, provincial and municipal policy and plans that have an effect on greenspace, while continuing to maintain itself and develop as an effective advocacy organization.

Our action starts with monitoring threats and developments to greenspace in Ottawa-Gatineau and also keeping abreast of new or revised policy or plans that touch on local greenspace. We are assisted in this by the eyes and ears of our members, of our list subscribers and of community members at large, to whom we are indebted for their care and concern for greenspace. We also get a steady stream of information through subscriptions to email alerts from the City of Ottawa, the National Capital Commission, the Ontario Environmental Network and many others groups and organizations.

We then educate ourselves and others regarding the issues that arise from this monitoring so that we can better focus our action, which is mainly to advocate. We do this through the preparation of briefs and submissions, appearances at committee and council meetings and participation in public consultations. In certain cases, we may take it a step further and participate in events such as demonstrations and marches, or launch letter writing or media campaigns meant to influence public opinion and sway decision makers. In rare cases, we may go as far as taking cases to appeal and adjudication bodies for review.

This annual report is meant to provide something of a report card on our action over the period of May 2018 to April 2019. What did we do in terms of protecting and preserving greenspace and how successful was it? It will be presented under the headings of threats to greenspace that were faced during the year, policy and plans that we shaped or influenced, and our own governance as an organization.

Two threads stand out from this year's annual report. First the Greenspace Alliance was especially true to its name this year, acting as an alliance in concertation with many other environmental organizations more closely and more frequently than ever. Many instances of collaboration with partners, old and new, are documented in this report. Secondly, this was a banner year for media coverage. At certain times of the year, our stories were everywhere, on the Internet, on the radio, on TV, not only locally, but with national reach as well. The fight to save the Centenary elm on Parliament Hill was the most visible, but we also had coverage for the protection of the Goulbourn Provincially Significant Wetlands, our position on the Official Plan, and even for our campaign to keep the Local Planning Appeal Support Centres open. We have learned a lot from both these developments, which we intend to carry over into the new year.

1. THREATS TO GREENSPACE

a. Rural greenspace

i. Chalk River

Throughout the year, the GA continued to support the citizens' groups that are trying to raise awareness and counter the federal government's plan to build a giant mound of radioactive waste near the Ottawa River at Chalk River, and to entomb a nuclear reactor nearby in cement. We participated in a "Red Canoe" march on August 22 in downtown Ottawa to help keep the issue in the news. Later in the year, we contributed financially and in kind to the publication, as a full-page ad in The Hill Times, of an open letter to the PM and all parliamentarians urging them to put a halt to this project, in which SNC Lavalin is involved, and to develop Canadian nuclear waste policies that meet international standards. The current policies only cover spent nuclear fuel.

ii. Goulbourn Provincially Significant Wetlands

We continued to follow the now twenty year effort to properly protect this large wetland area in south west Ottawa. The GA Chair was interviewed on local CBC television about landowners' concerns regarding the designation of the Goulbourn PSW in the City's Official Plan. We are on the record in this longstanding controversy urging the City and the Conservation Authority to protect these wetlands. The designation in the Official Plan of this PSW was further delayed into spring 2019 to allow time for Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry staff to revisit wetland boundaries disputed by some landowners. Friend of the GA Ken McRae has been instrumental in keeping on top of developments in the area.

iii. Earl Armstrong Road Extension Environmental Assessment

The City plans to extend this arterial road through and around wetlands and greenspace in south east Ottawa sometime after 2031. These environmental assessments get done far in advance so as to include such projects in the Transportation Master Plan, the next version of which will extend beyond 2031. The GA provided comments on the initial stakeholder group consultation material. Because of its frequent participation in such infrastructure consultation processes, the GA is recognized by the City as an important stakeholder in projects that affect greenspace. As a result, it was invited by the project team to a one on one briefing on the consultant's final draft report, providing it with an opportunity to make final comments and suggestions.

b. Major urban greenspace

i. New campus of the Ottawa Hospital on the Central Experimental Farm

The final site selected for the new campus of the Ottawa Hospital was a brownfield site at the extreme eastern end of the Central Experimental Farm. It was previously the site of the Sir John Carling Building, and two Second World War era temporary buildings, later converted to an open space along Carling Avenue and a parking lot at Dow's Lake. The GA decided to remain engaged in the Hospital project to prevent any kind of backsliding onto the CEF proper, to protect farm greenspace around the perimeter of the site and to promote retention or creation of greenspace as part of the new hospital design.

To allay concerns that any type of structure or facility other than a hospital could be built on the site, a zoning amendment was proposed to change the Mixed Use zoning of the parcels fronting on Carling Avenue, a legacy of the Preston/Carling Secondary Plan, to Institutional. The GA supported this amendment. The zoning bylaw amendment was part of an application that covered the entire 50 acre parcel and included a number of holding provisions.

The GA Chair was asked, and accepted, to sit as co-chair on the Campus Engagement Group, representing the greenspace interest in the planning and design of the new hospital. This group of 20 community representatives reports directly to the hospital's Board of Governors and will be engaged throughout the planning phase, which is expected to stretch into 2021.

The group meets monthly. To date, it has developed a process and principles framework to guide their deliberations of the substantive issues on which they will engage, deliberated over the fate of the West Annex of the Sir John Carling Building, a heritage structure that was not demolished when the SJC came down, and have started deliberating on transportation and access issues for the hospital, one of the key holding provisions of the ZBA.

ii. Wesley Clover Parks zoning by-law application

Wesley Clover Parks submitted an application to allow additional uses for the leased lands where the equestrian park and campground are located on Corkstown Road, in the Greenbelt. The zoning application submitted sought to add listed permitted uses listed in the existing zoning to align with uses that are already occurring on the site, in accordance with their lease with the NCC. No new facilities or construction is currently planned, and none could be without NCC approval. The GA contacted the NCC, the City, the park operator and the local community representatives to validate that they share a common understanding of the application.

While we were reassured that no structures will be erected or permitted as a result of the zoning application, we remain very concerned about the scale of the operations being proposed, in particular outdoor music performances intended to attract 25,000+ spectators. This we indicated in our submission to Planning Committee. The application was approved. Individual events still need to be approved by the City on a case by case basis and GA will want to monitor any such application in the future.

iii. KNL zoning by-law application

The GA reviewed the details of the planning application for this large new development in the Kanata Highlands, which was the site of the massive forest clearing we opposed in 2017. All the expected greenspace retention seems to be confirmed, in accordance with the 60/40 development to greenspace agreement which applies to this property. However, questions remain concerning the stormwater management plans for Phases 7 and 8 of the development, the transfer to the City of the EP land in the northeast part of the property and of the Monk Environmental Forest on the southeast.

iv. Soundstage development on part of former Greenbelt Research Farm

A private sector proposal came forward to convert some unused structures and open spaces, on the former Greenbelt Research Farm, at the corner of Hunt Club Rd. and Woodroffe Ave., into a film and sound production hub. The development would cover 9.6 ha of the no longer operational Research Farm's total 886 ha surface area. The NCC was open to this change in land use and proposed a number of measures to compensate for any loss of greenspace: Black Rapids Creek would be re-naturalized (7 ha) and trail connectivity west of the Rideau River would be improved; and, the former Capital Golf Course in the Pine Grove Sector would be re-naturalized (21.5 ha). The GA had no objection in principle to this repurposing of Greenbelt land and supported the scale and the location of the compensation greenspace.

v. Kanata Golf and Country Club development proposal

Minto and Richcraft, in association with ClubLinks, the current operator of Kanata Golf and Country Club, which runs through the Kanata Lakes residential area, floated a proposal to convert it to a residential development. The golf course is accounted for as greenspace under the 60/40 (residential to greenspace) agreement entered into by the former City of Kanata in the 1980s and assumed by the City of Ottawa upon amalgamation. It is under the terms of this agreement that the KNL lands were cleared in January 2017, as the agreement covered the entire Kanata Lakes development, including Phases 7, 8 and 9 which are now in development after a 40 year hiatus (see item iii above). There is no way the terms of the 60/40 agreement can be met if the golf course is developed. We will strongly support the community in opposing this.

We met with the new Kanata North councillor, Jenna Sudds, on this subject at the end of January 29. She has taken a strong stand against the proposal and is supported by a fully engaged community. The GA obtained a copy of the 40% greenspace/60% development agreement entered into in 1981 by the former City of Kanata and Campeau Corporation and, if still enforceable, it seems bullet proof in terms of protecting the 40% greenspace.

The City has written a letter to ClubLinks and developers Richcraft and Minto advising the notices and announcements that they had made to date were to no effect and that a formal development application would trigger the operation of the 60/40 agreement, whereby the ownership of the golf course would be transferred to the City. A long court battle seems in the offing.

vi. Old Richmond Road widening through Stony Swamp

Construction work started on this project in February. The GA has had a longstanding involvement in the controversy around expanding the footprint of this road through sensitive wetlands in the Greenbelt. A number of mitigation, design and compensation measures had been demanded by the NCC and agreed to by the City. The GA will continue to monitor this project to ensure these measures are fully implemented.

vii. Centenary Elm on Parliament Hill

Early in 2019, we heard through our network that a centenary elm and many other mature trees on Parliament Hill may be cut down as part of the Centre Block renovation project. Our information was that the elm was in good condition, despite claims to the contrary. The GA resolved to investigate and try to preserve this very visible, high profile greenspace.

Correspondence with the NCC and PSPC, uncovered, layer by layer, what was going on and the story started to attract media coverage. This culminated with a face to face meeting with the PSPC Director General responsible for the Centre Block Rehabilitation project at the end of February. It became clear that the tree was to be removed regardless of its health as the plans for a below grade visitor welcome centre, a mirror image of the one built at the western end as part of the West Block rehabilitation project, required that the entire area be excavated several storeys deep. None of this information was public and it took great effort and diligence to get this far. It became clear as well that we had exhausted bureaucratic channels to deal with the issue and that we would have to take it to the political level. With the backing of the membership and partner organizations Ecology Ottawa, the Ottawa Field Naturalists' Club and Community Associations for Environmental Sustainability, and the help of members Daniel Buckles and Debra Huron, the GA launched a political campaign to save the elm. The campaign included a petition via the Change.org platform, which was promoted through our network and social media; attending the youth strike for climate on the Hill to alert those in attendance to the plight of the tree; a number of press releases; letters to the Minister and senior bureaucrats of PSPC and the NCC, the Speakers of the House and Senate and to members of the Parliamentary Committee on Procedure and House Affairs (PROC). There resulted quite a bit of media coverage and we obtained access to the highest placed decision makers on the file. We were invited to appear before the Parliamentary Committee on Procedure and House Affairs on March 21, at an emergency meeting scheduled specifically to deal with the issue of the removal of the elm. This meeting was postponed until April 2 as it conflicted with the Opposition led overnight voting on the Budget which occurred on March 20-21. The GA finally appeared before PROC on April 2, along with PSPC senior officials, to make a statement and answer Members' questions. Here is an interesting vignette of how it all played out, through the eyes of the GA chair, who represented the GA and the three other partner organizations.

“The Liberals on the committee had already decided they would not act on this issue, likely to protect Carla Qualtrough the Minister responsible for the project, and especially Catherine McKenna, the local MP and Minister of the Environment. They did not want this bothersome issue to get any further than PROC.

Before starting, the Chair read out one of the opinions on the health of the tree obtained by PSPC last September, which was the most negative of the four opinions received between May and September 2018. This was odd.

After my opening statement, the questions to me from the Liberal members were kind of flabby and lame, many focussing on the condition of the tree, (Graham: If the tree is found to be dead, would you support cutting it down? Lapointe: When talking to the young people on the Hill

during the student strike, did you tell them the tree was very sick?), whereas the questions from the Opposition members were on point and clearly supportive of our position.

When PSPC's turn came up, a similar pattern continued. It became clear eventually that the Liberals were running out the clock, with Scott Sims asking even more inane questions focused on condition.

When that became evident, the NDP member tabled a motion in line with our two demands: 1) delay the removal until leaf out so that a definitive assessment of the tree could be made, and 2) reconsider the location of the visitor centre extension.

That motion was read into the record but Liberal members started calling for adjournment, repeating that it was 1:00. There was a moment of confusion as the Chair tried to figure out what to do, which morphed into an agreement to vote on the motion, without debating it.

Just then, a fifth Liberal member showed up. The motion was read out again for his benefit. The Chair was about to call for the vote, but a Conservative member called for a recorded vote. Ruby Suhota got up and whispered something in the new arrival's ear. He had not been present for any part of the meeting but immediately voted no, as did the other four Liberal members in turn. The vote was lost 5-4, with the Chair not having to cast a vote.

We were counting on the reputed non-partisan nature of this Committee for them to take a stand as Parliamentarians even if it meant going counter to the government's direction, that the desire to express Parliament's autonomy in these matters would outweigh partisan affiliation. It was always a reach, and it didn't pan out."

We were not successful in saving the elm. It was cut down on April 13. However, this action created a stronger bond between the partner organizations and beyond into the community, highlighted the plight of mature trees in the City core being taken down for construction projects and reinforced the position of the GA as one of the lead environmental campaigners in the region. As regards the elm itself, one of our proposals when meeting with the DG at PSPC was for them to engage with the Elm Recovery Project at the University of Guelph to have them collect genetic material from this native American elm so that it could be propagated, whether it was eventually preserved or taken down. We facilitated this engagement and witnessed the taking of cuttings at the site. We were happy to learn that 10 saplings have taken and are under the care of the Arboretum at the University of Guelph, intended for future replanting on Parliament Hill.

c. Other greenspace

The GA is alerted and deals with many more threats to greenspace at a more local level, each as equally important to local residents as the major greenspace tracts referenced above. Here is a sampling of some of the issues we followed during the course of 2018-19.

i. 3930 Riverside Drive

A development application was submitted for a residential development on 20 acres for 3930 Riverside Drive, including a retirement residence, hotel, a car dealership and a private school, the Westboro

Academy, on greenspace on the banks of the Rideau River. The local community has voiced its opposition to these plans. We attended a public meeting on June 11. The single access to the development would be from Riverside Drive, 370 metres north of the Hunt Club intersection. The main concern of residents was traffic and road access, given the existing congestion on Riverside Drive and Hunt Club. The proposal for car dealerships at that location was particularly not well received. As part of the approval, 5 of the 20 acres, fronting the Rideau River, would be ceded to the city and rezoned as EP. This would provide a green link along the river, joining up to a naturalized storm water facility to the north, and extending towards the riverfront greenspace adjoining McCarthy Woods and meadow. We agreed not to oppose the development generally, to support the transfer to the City of the 5 acre riverfront parcel and to advocate for alternative retail uses rather than car dealerships.

There were a number of revisions made by the developer and in the end the use for a private school was dropped but the proposal remained essentially the same. We prepared a brief submission for Planning Committee when the application came up for consideration. The application was approved without change.

ii. Urban expansion areas

OPA 76, started in 2007 but finally approved in 2013, expanded the urban boundary and added 1104 ha, in ten urban expansion areas, into the urban area. We resolved to keep track of the development of these areas to ensure that adequate greenspace was created or preserve in these new developments. During 2018-19, the following areas were on our radar.

- Development application KNUEA (Area 1)

Plan of Subdivision and Zoning Bylaw Amendment was submitted for this property, on which we submitted comments. The GA had participated in the development of the CDP for this area, and unsuccessfully appealed its adoption (OPA 173) in previous years.

- South March Highlands Urban Expansion Area (Area 2)

The GA attended an information session on May 29 at which Richcraft presented its latest concept plan for development on the site. Adjustments were made in response to the feedback provided at the previous information session. In particular, the plan now reflected updated flood plain mapping for this reach of the Carp River. Also, a naturalized storm water management facility has been expanded to handle runoff from another development east of Terry Fox Drive, which corresponds partly to a suggestion made by the GA at the previous information session. As regards other greenspace issues, rather than a sports field type park, a treed linear park is planned along the base of the South March Highlands ridge. In compensation for building on or near Blanding's Turtle and Bobolink habitat, a large rural parcel across the Carp River from the development will be ceded to the City and maintained as protected habitat. This is probably as good a result as can be obtained in the face of the imperative of developing this parcel. However, there was talk at the session of expanding the engineered naturalization of the Carp River seen south of Richardson Road to this site as well, and that would be an even better outcome if it could be realized.

The plan of subdivision was approved by Planning Committee on September 11, 2018. We did not make representations as we estimated that a number of changes were made to the proposal by the

proponent as the result of public input, including our own, at a series of open houses over the last two years. We still feel this area should never have been identified for urban expansion in OPA76.

- Barrhaven South Urban Expansion Area (Area 7)

The Community Design Plan for the Barrhaven South Urban Expansion Area was approved by Planning Committee on May 22 followed shortly by Council approval. While there was little potential for conserving or expanding greenspace at this location, we are still concerned that the City approved a land swap, bringing a developable rural parcel into the urban boundary and swapping out an urban parcel that was not developable in the timeframes of the Official Plan. We are of the view that changes to the urban boundary can only be made as a result of a comprehensive review as per the Planning Act. We made a submission in this regard.

iii. Carp River Wetland Environmental Area

GA Member John Almstedt has been following this item closely over many years. Arising from the Carp River Restoration Project, this new environmental area opened to the public on June 19. It features paved walking paths and signage along the newly meandering Carp River, wet meadows and other naturalized features that were built jointly by the City and the Kanata West Owners Group.

iv. Stonebridge Golf Course development

A local community association contacted the GA concerning development plans put forward by Mattamy that would convert parts of the Stonebridge Golf Course as new residential development. We aligned with the residents to prevent this loss of greenspace, but in a matter of weeks, Mattamy had withdrawn this application.

v. 21 Withrow Avenue (Kilmorie)

For many years, we have supported the efforts of community members in City View to save a two acre greenspace and a heritage home at 21 Withrow Avenue, known as Kilmorie. The story continues. Following the Committee of Adjustment's decision to turn down the developer's application to proceed with four housing starts on part of the property, the City View Community Association started raising funds in an attempt to acquire the property as part of a plan to turn it into a nature and cultural centre. The GA agreed to pledge \$250 to the Kilmorie Heritage Trust Fund.

However, the developer appealed the Committee of Adjustment's minor variance refusal. The GA was recognized as a party at the LPAT hearing. The proponent had proposed a 14 unit housing development on the site. The Committee of Adjustment denied the proponent's application to split off four units from this plan of subdivision in order to undertake its development ahead of Planning Committee's consideration of the plans for the full property. Members of the local community association, the Poets' Pathway and the Greenspace Alliance argued that the CoA was correct in denying the application. It was a gruelling 12 hour hearing, in one sitting, hardly reasonable. Many months passed but a decision was delivered in May 2019 allowing the appeal, but attaching many stringent conditions to the development.

vi. James Street tree damage by Hydro Ottawa

Local residents and community association in Centre town documented and reported severe damage done by Ottawa Hydro to mature trees along a stretch of James Street. This was posted to the GA list and elicited a lot of response. While recognizing the need to maintain clearance for overhead wires, we are of the view that Ottawa Hydro needs to do a better job of communication and community engagement, along the lines of the protocol recently adopted by Hydro One and the Beaverbrook Community Association. This message was conveyed City staff in the Natural Systems and Resiliency group.

2. POLICY

City Hall

a. Significant Woodland Policy

The GA's multi-year engagement in the development of this policy came to its culmination in the last year so a fairly extensive accounting of it will be provided in this annual report. As a member of a stakeholder working group, we contributed significantly to the development of this new policy, which was approved by Council in 2017. Its implantation was suspended however as it was appealed by a number of developers and land owners. The working group nevertheless continued working on the implementation guidelines for the Policy, in the anticipation that it would eventually be adopted. We learned at an OMB pre-hearing conference in May that the appeal of OPA 179, by which the Significant Woodland Policy was adopted, would not be heard until 2019. As a result, the output of the Working Group would not be considered until the start of the new term of Council in 2019.

A first draft of guidelines for implementing the Significant Woodland Policy, reflecting the discussions of the working group, was issued in September. We reviewed and submitted comments by the deadline set by the City. The final draft of the Significant Woodland Policy guidelines laid out the different criteria for designating significant woodlands in the urban and rural areas of the city. Once identified as significant, any development in or around these urban woodlands would take into account their ecological, economic and social benefits on a no net loss basis. The guidelines provide a detailed methodology for evaluating these benefits.

As we had participated as a member of the working group tasked with the development of these guidelines, most of our input was already reflected in the final draft. We only commented on the size threshold for woodlots in the rural area.

The final version of the Guidelines for the application the Significant Woodland Policy was published by the City in February 14, along with a staff report that included a proposed settlement agreement with the parties who had appealed the Policy (OPA179). This was tabled at Planning Committee on February 28. The main concession was to raise the age criterion at which urban woodlands of 0.8 ha or larger would be considered significant from 40 years old to 60 years old. We had circulated a note to all GA members ahead of the meeting with an analysis of the proposal and what position we should take in response. Based on this feedback and a lively discussion at the following general meeting, we agreed to make these additional demands: 1) that the impact of changing the criterion from 40 years to 60 years

be quantified in terms of how much potential loss of greenspace this might represent. 2) to clarify the status of peri-urban lands, which the staff report indicated would not be covered by the Policy; 3) to press for the commitment previously made to ensure that tree protection in the peri-urban area would be covered in the Tree Conservation By-law; 4) to dispute the appropriateness under the PPS of allowing compensation measure offsets in the interpretation of “no negative impact”. These comments were delivered in person by the GA Chair at the February 28 Planning Committee meeting.

Council approved the Significant Woodland Policy guidelines, including changes to the Policy as part of the settlement of the appeals of OPA 179, on March 6. We had contributed significantly to the development of the Guidelines and supported their adoption at Committee. We were less pleased regarding the settlement, especially the change to age criterion in the Policy from 40 to 60 years. As we have no data on the impact of this change in terms of the amount of urban woodlands that could be denied protection, we will continue to seek information on how effective the Policy is in application.

b. Tree Conservation By-laws

One of the early deliverables of the Urban Forest Management Plan was a review of the Tree Conservation By-laws. We partnered with CAFES and the FCA by endorsing a list of amendments to the Urban Tree Conservation By-law. The proposals included reducing the minimum diameter from 50cm to 20cm for all species, revising the definition of an injured tree, changing the reasons for approval of a distinctive tree permit to be more transparent, and to revise penalties for the injury or removal of a distinctive tree without a permit. In addition to this endorsement we also submitted our own comments to the City forester responsible for the review. These comments supported the inclusion of the protection of trees in the peri-urban area within the scope of the review, which the City had committed to do when the Significant Woodland Policy was approved. A report and recommendations were expected in the fall but an extended absence and the state of emergency brought on by the tornadoes in September delayed the process. To keep the pressure on and underline the importance of proceeding quickly with this review, a meeting was arranged with Stephen Willis, the General Manager for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development, the senior City manager responsible for the by-law review. This was arranged through the office of Councillor Leiper, of Kitchissippi ward, a part of the city where mature trees are under great pressure due to development. This was an opportunity to press home our priorities at the most senior staff level.

A preparatory meeting was held with Councillor Leiper, with representatives of CAFES, the FCA and the GA in attendance. The main themes to emerge were better enforcement of the current tree protection by-law, key issues to be addressed in the review of the tree protection bylaw and how to better position and integrate greenspace in the next revision of the Official Plan.

The meeting was held on January 9th. In addition to Stephen Willis, there was very good City management representation, with senior staff from Natural Systems, Public Engagement, Development Review, Infrastructure and Forestry operations in attendance. Specific means of protecting urban trees in both the short term and the long term were discussed and commitments made to move on some of them prior to the completion of the by-law review, now expected to be one year behind schedule. These commitments were documented in follow up correspondence, with further correspondence calling for a progress report in April. Some of the steps discussed had in fact been taken, or were to be taken imminently. Later in April, we were invited by the senior forester who is conducting the review to sit as a

member of a stakeholder group that will be called upon for advice and input prior to the public release of policy proposals. The first meeting of this group will be held in late May. Meanwhile, mature trees in the core of Ottawa are being lost at an alarming rate.

c. 2018 Municipal Election Strategy

It was agreed that the main objective of our strategy for the 2018 municipal election was to ensure that all candidates were aware of the greenspace issues, policies and plans on which they would be called upon to take a position if elected. This would be done by conducting a survey in which each of these issues was spelled out and asking a series of questions about each. The questionnaire was structured around specific policy items related to greenspace that we knew would be on the agenda for the new term of council. For each topic, the questions probed how familiar the respondents were with the item, how important it was to them and what their position would be when it came for consideration by Council.

The final list of candidates was complete by the July 27 deadline for candidate declaration. Of the 102 candidates in the election, valid email addresses were obtained for 90, of which 45 responded. Results were issued on October 8 via a press release, with extensive reports published on our website.

Eleven of the newly elected council members completed our survey and their responses indicated that the new council may be more favourably disposed to greenspace issues than the last one. A report on the stand these councillors took on specific greenspace issues in the survey was distributed, along with an introductory letter from the GA, to all members of the new council.

In addition to the survey, we co-hosted, with 6 other environmental organizations, the mayoral debate on environmental issues organized by Ecology Ottawa. A well-organized debate with 8 candidates, (the current mayor was a no-show), drew a good audience at the Shaw Centre venue.

In response to a request from CAFES, we also helped with the organization of a councillor candidates' debate in the Rideau-Vanier ward. This was a very good debate, well attended, which surely raised the level of knowledge level of candidates and voters on important environmental stakes in the election.

Collaboration with other environmental organizations continued after the election, with the GA contributing to the environmental priorities list prepared by CAFES for the next term of council. Similarly, the GA signed on and supported the 2019 budget analysis produced by Ecology Ottawa and budget input prepared by CAFES regarding environmental issues, both of which were useful and well done.

d. Appeal hearings and settlements

It was a very busy year on the legal front, with a multitude of appeal processes coming to a resolution or at least a final process determination. Some of these cases started as far back as 2003! They are briefly presented below in chronological order of the appeals.

i. Partial settlement of the NCC appeal of the 2003 Official Plan

The NCC appealed the 2003 Official Plan designation as Open Space of three NCC properties: Rochester Field, part of McCarthy Woods and Meadow and the Merivale-Woodroffe corridor. The GA was recognized as a party in these proceedings. After failed mediation over a decade ago, the case lay dormant, until the LRT Phase 2 brought Rochester Field into play.

We were involved in discussions last year regarding a possible settlement and this year the NCC finally settled. The NCC has dropped its appeal regarding Rochester Field and McCarthy Woods and Meadow, part of an agreement with the City that will see 80% of Rochester Field remain as greenspace, and all of McCarthy Woods and Meadow, including the parcel west of Riverside going down to the Rideau River, remain as Open Space. The appeal regarding the Merivale- Woodroffe corridor remains outstanding. We were quite pleased with this outcome although we remain concerned about the potential loss of the Merivale-Woodroffe corridor, which is part of the Poets' Pathway.

ii. Fulfillment of the terms of settlement of our appeal of OPA 173

We met with City officials in September to discuss how the terms of the settlement of the GA's appeal of OPA 173, which approved the Community Design Plan and urban designation of the Kanata North Urban Expansion Area (Area 1 in OPA 76 terms), might be fulfilled.

When City Council adopted OPA 173 in 2016, it was the first instance of the City attempting to comply with Bill 73, which requires Council to report on the public input it received and on what the effect had been of that public input on its decision. When the Greenspace Alliance appealed OPA 173, one of its grounds was that the City's compliance with Bill 73 was inadequate. That part of the appeal was settled with a promise that the City would consult with the Alliance and other interested stakeholders about its public engagement before the next Governance Report is brought forward.

That promise was fulfilled on September 27 at a 1 1/2-hour meeting attended by members of the GA and of the Governance Committee of the FCA. The City was represented by legal counsel, planning and public engagement staff and the Coordinators of Council, Planning Committee and of the Agricultural & Rural Affairs Committee. There was a very open and extensive exchange of views and we believe that the City has taken on board a number of ideas we offered on how it can improve its reporting of the public input it receives and the effect of this public input on its decisions.

iii. Official Plan amendment 150+ appeals

Official Plan Amendment 150 was the result of a comprehensive review by the City of its Official Plan. It concluded that no urban expansion was required to accommodate the projected population growth to 2031. It was approved by the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing in 2014. Numerous appeals to all or parts of the Amendment were received from developers and landowners. In considering the appeals of the whole of the Amendment, the Ontario Municipal Board determined that the City needed to complete additional reviews related to Employment Areas, the Agricultural Resource Area and extending the planning timeframe to 2036. This additional review resulted in Official Plan Amendment 180. It was approved by the Minister in August 2017. It also concluded that no additional urban land was required, and was appealed by many of the same parties that had appealed OPA 150. Meanwhile, the City had made a number of other Official Plan Amendments, such as OPA 179 regarding the Significant Woodland Policy, and others. All were similarly appealed.

To bring some order to this mess, the City proposed, and the Ontario Municipal Board agreed, to group all the appeals by subject area and to hold a hearing on each grouping, regardless of the Official Plan Amendment from which they arose. So, the issues were organized into eight groups, seven of which

would be subject of a hearing, the eighth remaining open to further negotiation towards settlement. The seven hearings were scheduled to be held all through 2019.

The Greenspace Alliance was involved in two of these groups. In the Natural Systems grouping, it was an appellant to OPA 150, regarding the lack of depiction or mapping, in a schedule or other official dissemination vehicle, of the natural corridors recognized in the Official Plan. In the same grouping, it was recognized as a party, in support of the City, regarding OPA 179, which introduced the Significant Woodland Policy. It was also recognized as a party in the Urban Expansion grouping, in support of the City's position that no further expansion of the urban boundary was required.

As regards our appeal of OPA 150, we met with City staff in September 2018 to discuss options for a potential settlement. They agreed in principle to show the greenspace linkages, established in OPA 76 as a result of an earlier settlement of a GA appeal, in a new non-binding Annex 16 to the Official Plan. This satisfied our requirement and we agreed to withdraw our appeal. The settlement agreement was approved by Planning Committee in February, with Council approval coming on April 11. With this settlement, and the approval and settlement described above for the Significant Woodland Policy, no Natural Systems issues remain under appeal and a hearing will not be required.

Through a series of pre-conference hearings which we attended over the year, almost all of the appeals were settled or withdrawn. Only the urban expansion issues remain under appeal, with the hearing to be held in August 2019.

e. 2019 Official Plan

In early 2018, the Greenspace Alliance had participated as a member of the Beyond 2036 Sounding Board, a City consultation/engagement process to frame the next comprehensive review of the Official Plan. The format of the Sounding Board meetings was a distinct departure from the City's earlier OP review practices because a broad cross-section of stakeholders were brought together; this is something for which the GA had long argued. A report was expected in the summer of 2018, but things got delayed, the municipal election intervened and nothing happened until the new year. In January 2019, the GA was party to a briefing received by the FCA governance committee regarding the broad approach and time frames for the new Official Plan review.

The 2019 Official Plan review was officially kicked off at the Planning Committee meeting of February 14, with the tabling of the report *Ottawa Next: Beyond 2036*. The GA provided written comments on the report, and also addressed the committee in person. Of note, the Urban Greenspace Master Plan will be rebooted, not having been updated since 2003. The report contained many important points regarding greenspace and the environment, which, in a business as usual plan, would be an excellent outcome. But this is not business as usual. The GA's position at Planning Committee is stated below, excerpted from its submission:

However, in the spirit of drivers and disrupters, there is one major omission in all of this material. Even though most of the work was performed just over one year ago, everything has changed since then. We are now without a doubt facing a climate emergency. Not sometime in

the future, way out in scenario timeframes, but right now. And decisive and effective action must be taken in the next ten years, the period covered by this plan.

This new Official Plan must be the City's Climate Emergency Plan.

f. Development charges by-law

The Development Charge By-law has been a long standing interest of the GA, especially as regards the incentives built in for "cheap development" outside the greenbelt, which makes expanding the urban boundary attractive to developers. It is for this reason that it is opposed to the current process of limiting consultations to the development industry, with no opportunity for public involvement other than the absolute minimum set by law. So the GA, and particularly former Chair Erwin Dreessen, as a leading member of an FCA subcommittee tasked with this exercise, had another go at opening up the process for the 2019 Development Charge By-law.

This group met with City staff in February and obtained some clarifications on the status of the Development Charges Background report. When the report became available, the group managed to obtain a copy from the City. Erwin prepared a synthesis of this very long and complex document, which enabled a broader circulation within the GA and FCA networks. As a result, both Ecology Ottawa and the Healthy Transportation Coalition expressed a new found interest in the topic of development charges and agreed to support the call for a more transparent process for the development of the by-law. A joint open letter was sent to all City Councillors and issued in a press release. Planning Committee consideration of the new by-law will occur in early May. It is expected that at least one councillor will bring up the issue of more openness in the development of the by-law. There is every hope that a small crack has been made to let some light into this process.

Provincial

At the provincial level, the GA has been dealing with the barrage of regressive policy proposals being issued by the new government since the Ontario provincial election. Other than the Ottawa River Watershed Study, referenced below, there was no interaction with the Quebec provincial government over the year.

It started with Bill 66, which included a proposal to suspend environmental protections and due process under "open for business" bylaws that municipalities would be empowered to adopt. The GA made its own submission in regard to the Bill, specifically in regards to Schedule 10. Many other environmental organizations reacted. To everyone's surprise, Schedule 10 was subsequently withdrawn by the provincial government.

Another Environmental Registry notice was issued regarding the 10 year review of the Ontario Endangered Species Act. The GA supported the submissions made the Ottawa Field Naturalists' Club and Nature Ontario, and also made its own submission on the specific subject of the Overall Benefit Permit, with which it had had some experience, and which it believes to be totally ineffective. Subsequent proposed amendments posted by the government turned out be worse than expected, and clearly not responsive to any input received.

Changes were also proposed to the Conservation Authorities Act but we did not submit comments, deferring instead, at their request, to the Conservation Authorities themselves. According to the CAs' analysis, the main issue is increased risk of flooding and flood damage as municipalities opt in/out of environmental planning, landscape-based stewardship is eliminated, and wetland development setbacks are weakened.

The cancellation of the 50 million tree planting program came out of nowhere at the end of April, without notice or consultation of any kind. The same thing happened with the Local Planning Appeal Support Centre, abolished by stealth without notice.

After the announcement by the provincial government that the newly established Local Planning Appeal Support Centre would stop accepting new cases immediately and be closed definitively by June 2019, the GA issued a news release decrying the abolition of the Support Centre and initiated an online letter writing campaign directed at the Attorney General of Ontario, Caroline Mulroney. The press release led to good local media coverage and the campaign resulted in 265 letters being sent via the LeadNow platform to the Solicitor General of Ontario. Unfortunately, there was no indication of any government response.

Federal

There was not much action regarding federal policy this year. The GA had contributed to the development of Bill C-69 (An Act to enact the Impact Assessment Act and the Canadian Energy Regulator Act, to amend the Navigation Protection Act and to make consequential amendments to other Acts), in previous years. When the Bill became stalled in the Senate this year, we supported a letter writing campaign organized by West Coast Environmental Law to demand that the Senate pass Bill C-68 and Bill C-69. The generic letter and mail out supplied was organized by province. Given that the scope of the GA's activities straddle both Quebec and Ontario, the GA crafted its own letter, based on WCELA's, and sent it to the Senators in both provinces.

The only other federal initiative of interest was the release by Environment Canada of the Ottawa River Watershed Study, to which the GA submitted comments. Overall, the report is a good stocktaking, which can become ever more complete over time through further engagement and development. It highlights the fragmentation and complexity of the jurisdictional, data collection and analytical frameworks involved. It also underlines the challenges of undertaking even traditional baseline watershed management for such a large and diverse watercourse as the Ottawa River. But at this early stage of development, it does not move the yardsticks toward integrated watershed management that takes into account climate change imperative. Perhaps the record flooding of spring 2019 will accelerate the development of proper watershed management for this major river at our doorstep.

3. GOVERNANCE

Members of the Board of Directors for the year were Paul Johanis, Nicole DesRoches, Juan Pedro Unger, Jason Kania, and Yasmine Belharakat, for the first part of the year, replaced by Adam Caldwell.

a. Treasurer's report

Revenues and expenses continued in line with previous years, with expenses mostly for business operations and revenues mostly from membership fees and donations. However, we have recorded new revenues from an MOU we signed with Ecology Ottawa to deliver part of the Youth Climate Change Ambassador Program, with concomitant expenses, mostly in time spent for preparation and delivery of the program. Details are included in the separate Financial Report.

b. Membership/Board report

Membership remained steady over the year. The introduction of e-transfer of funds as a payment option has expedited renewals and payment. However, it has been difficult to recruit board members. One potential candidate attended several general meetings during the year but withdrew from consideration. New member Adam Caldwell however agreed to sit as a Board member and was appointed to a vacant director position.

c. Webmaster's report

Our website continues to be a valuable and frequently visited community resource. This year, we reorganized the content under the Policy and Threats structure used for the agenda and minutes of our monthly general meetings and for this annual report. These changes were completed by volunteer Van Nguyen. Additional work was also done to add French language presentation in the banner, improve bread-crumbing and re-introduce the image of a Trillium which was previously used on our old website.

d. Volunteer report

We were again fortunate this year to obtain the assistance of excellent volunteers to accomplish tasks that moved our programs and activities forward. Amanda Allnut and Jake Harris were instrumental in rolling out our 2018 Municipal Election Survey. Van Nguyen did all the work for reorganizing the content on our website. Matthew LeBlanc, as admin for our Facebook page, posted excellent content on a regular basis. Gabriel Albarracin moved our GIS project ahead and Janice Seline once again organized our annual plant sale fundraiser. Many thanks to them on behalf of the Board and the entire membership. We have renewed our membership with Volunteer Ottawa and have re-engaged with the Michaëlle Jean Centre for Global and Community Engagement at the University of Ottawa, both of which have been good sources for volunteers.

e. Geodata report

The main activity this year was to undertake a review of the Urban Natural Areas identified in the City's 2006 Urban Natural Areas Environmental Evaluation Study against the greenspace mapping completed in Open Street Map Ottawa to identify any discrepancies. This project progressed somewhat but relying

on short term volunteers for this activity has proven to be prone to many stops and starts. Late in 2018, we learned that the Ottawa Neighbourhood Study group was considering including access to greenspace in its neighbourhood level analysis of health determinants. We met with them in early December to explore possible collaboration and mutual assistance with greenspace mapping. After a good exchange of information on our respective interests and capacity, we agreed to remain in communication about possible future cooperation. In March 2019, this contact bore fruit when we were invited to become a member of a working group for a neighbourhood level greenspace mapping project that is fully funded and staffed on a permanent basis. The City, with whom we partnered on our mapping project, is also a member of this working group, as well as NCC staff, Environment Canada personnel and a number of academics. We have every hope that this will lead to a region wide open geographic data source on greenspace area, type and quality that will serve the needs of a broad range of communities.

f. Association reports

The GA expanded its collaboration with other environmental organizations in the past year, interacting with more of them and more frequently than in previous years. We continued our extensive engagement with the Federation of Citizens' Association, attending most of their regular monthly and annual meetings, taking an active role in their Governance, Planning and Zoning committee and participating in their events, such as their education event of January 9 on the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal. The FCA also engaged with us by signing on to a number of advocacy campaigns.

We continued to sit on the Conservation Committee of the Ottawa Field Naturalists' Club, a very useful source of information on threats and opportunities for greenspace throughout the region. But perhaps for the first time, the OFNC has publicly engaged with us on a number of advocacy campaigns, from protecting the Parliamentary elm to collaborating on submissions in response to the onslaught of regressive environmental policy proposals brought forward by the Ontario government in the past year.

We also worked with CAFES on the Parliamentary elm issue, the 2018 municipal election and a shared tree protection action plan. Ecology Ottawa was also a partner on the Parliamentary elm campaign and signed on to a number of our advocacy directions. We co-hosted their 2018 mayoral debate and partnered with them in an application to Climate Action Fund for a Youth Climate Change Ambassador program, under which the GA will be the training and mentoring a cohort of youth participants.

We stayed in touch with the Ottawa Riverkeeper on the Ottawa River Watershed Study, rekindled a relationship with CPAWS by supporting a grant application for the protecting the Boucher Forest and other greenspaces in the Outaouais region and kept actively engaging with the Concerned Citizens of Renfrew County regarding the planned Chalk River nuclear waste facility.

We developed a totally new collaboration with the Ottawa Neighbourhood Study group regarding the greenspace mapping project it is launching, which dovetails with our own inventory and mapping project.

Finally, we led an in-depth study and made a submission on the 2019 Development Charges By-law, in collaboration with the Healthy Transportation Coalition, the FCA and Ecology Ottawa.