

Erwin Dreessen

From: Greenspace Alliance mailing list <list@gacc.ca>
 To: <list@gacc.ca>
 Sent: Thursday, December 19, 2002 7:22 PM
 Subject: Funds for Acquisition of Env. Lands in City Budget at Risk

-----Original Message-----

From: Don Bright [mailto:BRIGHTD@agr.gc.ca]
 Sent: Thu December 19 2002 09:51
 To: list@gacc.ca
 Subject: Funds for Acquisition of Env. Lands in City Budget at Risk

-re CSADC mtp
 of Dec. 17

TO: Greenspace Alliance Members and Friends
 FROM: Barbara Barr, Treasurer, Greenspace Alliance

As a follow-up to the Greenspace Alliance's presentation about the City's 2003 Budget at Planning & Development Committee on Dec. 12, I made a presentation on behalf of the Alliance at Corporate Services Committee on December 17. The agenda item was "Closing of Capital Works in Progress." The staff recommendation was to transfer money originally earmarked for Environmental Resources Areas Acquisition (designated in the Official Plan as Natural Resource Areas A and B) by \$3,000,000 into the general reserve fund. (Thanks to Bill Royds for noticing this recommendation among hundreds of other recommendations in a list.) In addition to my presentation at Committee, Joanna Dean and Iola Price, Co-chairs of the Ottawa Forests Advisory Committee advised against it on behalf of the O.F. Adv. Comm. and with the concurrence of the Environmental Advisory Committee.

Because staff laid some additional information the Corporate Services Committee had requested (this item had been deferred from a prior Committee meeting) on Councillors at the Committee meeting, Councillors voted to again defer this agenda item - to their meeting of January 7, 2003.

Note that this now gives everyone who is concerned about diminishing the Environmental Resources Areas Acquisition fund by transferring \$3,000,000 out of it an opportunity to express his/her concern to Councillors.

Below is the presentation I gave on behalf of the Alliance.

Greenspace Alliance of Canada's Capital
 Submission to Corporate Services Committee, December 17, 2002
 Agenda Item - Closing of Capital Works in Progress
 Presentation made by Barbara Barr

Last week the Greenspace Alliance of Canada's Capital submitted its comments on the 2003 Budget to each Councillor. I'm appearing before this Committee on behalf of the Greenspace Alliance to emphasize the concern we expressed in that submission about funding for environmental Resources Areas Acquisition. We strongly recommended that the financial commitment to the acquisition program not be decreased, but be increased, and that we would like to see the program expanded to

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include natural areas within the more developed areas of the City.

It is alarming to us to find in Item 1 in your agenda, the "Closing of Capital Works-in-Progress" report, that environmental Resources Areas Acquisition is listed in Appendix "B" under "Reductions in Authority and Funding on Active Projects" in the section at the bottom of page 29. The former Region had the wisdom to put money aside each year into a fund for the purchase of lands designated in the Official Plan as Natural Resource Areas A and B. In the eyes of the public it constituted an important commitment to the purchase of natural areas for preservation. Natural Resources Areas A and B tend to be in the more rural areas of the City. Many wished that such a fund were available to purchase important lands threatened with development in the more urban area. People hoped that such a policy of urban land acquisition might become a part of the new Official Plan.

Now staff is proposing that you should immediately diminish the environmental land acquisition fund by three million dollars. It is short-sighted and surely will lead to regrettable consequences in the future. In the 2003 Capital Budget, it says, "The demands on the program have increased significantly recently due to the increased development pressure in potential acquisition areas (leading to both a demand/need for protection and increased land values), and the interest and pressure to use acquisition as an approach to protect important natural areas in the developing portion of the City." You all know deep down inside you that the average Councillor would be far more likely to vote to acquire expensive land for preservation if monies that had accumulated through time were already earmarked for that purpose than if that Councillor had to vote first to acquire the land and then to go into a general reserve fund to try to find the money to do so.

In our view, diminishing this reserve fund dedicated to the acquisition of environmental resource areas would demonstrate a lack of commitment to this program. If you downgrade the importance of purchasing lands that have already been designated as environmentally significant, valiant volunteers in the urban area, like the Moffatt Farm Citizens Coalition, the Quarry Forest Preservation Committee, and the people working to preserve Montfort Woods, will be horrified at the direction this Council's commitment to land preservation seems to be ~~going~~ taking.

The Greenspace Alliance urges you to remain committed to the environmental resource areas acquisition program and to demonstrate that commitment to the public. In conclusion, I quote from the Alliance's written submission, "The City, if it is to grow smartly and preserve its 'green' character cannot spend huge sums of money to support development while providing meagre amounts to acquire natural areas. There must be a better balance of priorities and activities."