

Erwin Droessen

From: Information <info@gacc.ca>
To: <Undisclosed-Recipient:;>
Sent: Monday, January 20, 2003 9:13 PM
Subject: Corp. Services Cmte. - Jan. 7

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

From: "Don Bright" <BRIGHTD@agr.gc.ca>
To: <list@gacc.ca>
Sent: Friday, January 17, 2003 6:38 PM
Subject: Corp. Services Cmte. - Jan. 7

TO: Greenspace Alliance Members and Friends
FROM: Barbara Barr

Below is the presentation I gave on behalf of the Greenspace Alliance at Corporate Services Committee on January 7, 2003, when Committee voted to put three million dollars into a reserve fund for environmental land acquisition instead of into general reserves.

Corporate Services Committee
 January 7, 2003
 Agenda item - "Closing of Capital Works in Progress"
 Presentation by Barbara Barr on behalf of the Greenspace Alliance of Canada's Capital

Good afternoon. Happy New Year.

I spoke to you on behalf of the Greenspace Alliance of Canada's Capital on December 17th when you last considered this agenda item. Today, I am again representing the Greenspace Alliance and am here to remind you of our concern about the staff recommendation to reduce the funds specified for acquisition of Environmental Resources Areas by three million dollars. This item appears in the bottom section on page 29 of Appendix B., "Reductions in Authority and Funding on Active Projects."

In commenting on the 2003 Draft Capital Budget, the Greenspace Alliance pointed out that the projected spending in the 2003 budget for land acquisition in budget years 2004 through 2006 was \$70,000 per year less than had been projected in the 2002 Budget. We suggested that financial commitment to the acquisition program should be increased, not decreased, and that the program be expanded to include natural areas within the more developed parts of the City. In fact, staff state on Capital Budget page 218 that the demands on the program have increased significantly recently due to the increased development pressure in potential acquisition areas, which leads to both a demand/need for protection and increased land values, and due to the interest and pressure to use

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acquisition as an approach to protect important natural areas in the developing portion of the City.

Nonetheless, the \$70,000 per year budgeted reduction was passed by Committee and likely will be passed by Council. Now we have this additional three million dollars. In the view of the Greenspace Alliance, to place money not yet spent, but already specifically set aside for land acquisition, in general reserves would demonstrate a lack of commitment to the land acquisition policy established by the former Region, a policy so important it is in the Region's Official Plan. To us, it is alarming that once in general reserves, the money originally earmarked for land acquisition could be spent on something totally unrelated, such as being used to make up for a budget shortfall, and then not be available when there is an opportunity to purchase land.

Diminishing the environmental land acquisition fund by three million dollars is short-sighted and surely will lead to regrettable consequences in the future. I quote from page 82 of the Region's Official Plan with respect to Acquisition of Natural Environment Areas "B": "Consider the need to acquire lands within the Natural Environment Areas (B) as may be suggested from time to time, having regard to the nature and location of the property, the uses to which it could be put, the funds available [I repeat, the funds available] and the feasibility of the lands being managed and maintained." Let's not create a situation where having regard to the availability of funds will forever be the single determining factor in assessing the feasibility of acquiring Natural Environment Areas (B) lands.

I again remind you that if you downgrade the importance of purchasing lands that have already been designated as environmentally significant, valiant volunteers in the urban areas, like those who have just spoken [from Kanata], the Moffatt Farm Citizens' Coalition, the Quarry Forest Preservation Committee, and the community volunteers working to save Montfort Woods will be horrified at the direction this Council's commitment to land preservation seems to be going.

The Greenspace Alliance urges you to remain committed to the natural environment areas acquisition program and to demonstrate that commitment to the public. In commenting on the 2003 Budget, the Greenspace Alliance wrote, "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."

The funding situation for greenspace preservation is out of balance already. The Greenspace Alliance urges you not to take the first step toward making it three million dollars worse.