

Phragmites group asking for environmental facilitator

Lynda Hillman-Rapley
Lakeshore Advance

Using the Lambton Shores draft Official Plan mantra, the Lambton Shores Phragmites Community Group (LSPCG) came to council last week to explain how they are “Preserving, protecting and enhancing the amazing natural heritage areas in Lambton Shores” and are requesting an environmental facilitator position be created.

The committee, who recently received honourable mention in the 2013 Minister’s Award for Environmental Excellence explained what they have been doing in the fight to rid Phragmites and how they are becoming broke and burnt-out doing it. “What would happen if LSPCG, with its eight volunteer members, wasn’t doing this work?” spearhead volunteer Nancy Vidler asked council adding she did not mean to sound ungrateful of the

continued support from Lambton Shores “but that they have come to a crossroad.”

“Until we brought the invasive Phragmites issue to Council and to our Conservation Authorities, there was little knowledge of this menace and no management plan. Had there been no control action, our coastal areas, wetlands and beaches would have been inundated with tall, dense stands of Phragmites. Native plants and animals would have been crowded out, shoreline views would have been blocked, access for swimming, fishing, hunting and hiking would have been reduced and the build-up of dry plant material would have created additional fire hazards. The impact on tourism would have been devastating and the negative economic effect on the entire municipality would have been substantial,” Vidler said.

She explained that good

outcome though, has resulted in volunteer fatigue.

“How long before the enthusiasm wanes?” she asked adding there are also concerns that surround personal liability as they rely on personal insurance, the costs as the “time, expenses, office supplies, printing, telephone calls, mileage, attending conferences, etc. are all on volunteer’s own dime” mounts.

Last year this committee eradicated Phragmites and/ continue to do so in Port Franks, Grand Bend, Lake Valley Grove/Sunnidale, and municipal roadsides and property. Through an outreach education program they are working with the Conservation Authorities, media, NextEraEnergy, Ontario Ministries of Environment and Agriculture, all tiers of government, local agencies and working groups.

On-the-ground work with the Lambton Shores Phragmites Community Group includes volunteers certified by MOE in herbicide application, with knowledge of environmental protection practices, evaluating an application and monitoring the results. They have raised hundreds of thousands of dollars for their projects in local, provincial and federal agreements and support.

But, their sustainability concerns prompted this meeting with council as they believe, “It is now time to consider the rec-




LAMBTON SHORES PHRAGMITES COMMUNITY GROUP

In 2000, members of the Port Franks Beach Users Association and the Woodslee Park Association became concerned when temperatures around the invasive aquatic Phragmites (a.k.a. Common Reed) appeared on the Port Franks beach and in the watersheds flowing to Lake Huron (Oxible River and Mud Creek). The Lambton Shores Phragmites Community Group (LSPCG) was created as a result of this concern.

A group of dedicated volunteers (LSPCG) is committed to working together with other organizations and private landowners to restore wetland habitat and biodiversity and control invasive Phragmites. As of October 2014, control efforts have been initiated on over 200 acres in Lambton Shores.

Members of Council for the Municipality of Lambton Shores are still being supported in efforts, including our request for a wetland specialist to create a Management Plan for the Municipality and how provide capital funding for remediation projects and other initiatives.

The Management Plan can be viewed at: www.lambtonshores.on.ca

For further information, visit
<http://opwg.ontarioinvasiveplants.ca/>
 or contact
lspcg2014@gmail.com

The new brochure created by the Lambton Shores Phragmites Community Group.

municipal staff position be created to augment their efforts.”

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program and Alternative Land Use Services . She listed various ways to fund this position including government granting and local foundations.

Council received the presentation with thanks for all the work they have accomplished.

tal protection practices, evaluating an application and monitoring the results. They have raised hundreds of thousands of dollars for their projects in local, provincial and federal agreements and support.

But, their sustainability concerns prompted this meeting with council as they believe, " It is now time to consider the recommendation made in Dr. Janice Gilbert's Long Range Phragmites Management Plan, created for and adopted by the previous council, that a

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municipal staff position be created to augment their efforts."

"A Facilitator of Environmental Programs would provide support to environmental advocacy groups to ensure continuity of efforts and effective sharing of resources, seek out funding support and prepare reports, assist in developing and implementing educational programs, engage the local community," suggested

Vidler.

"The Facilitator of Environmental Programs could track activities, liaise with neighbouring municipalities, Lambton County, Province, Federal Government, Pinery Provincial Park, First Nations, explore ways to encourage taxpayer participation-incentives for large property owners to become involved, i.e. conservation land tax reduction

program and Alternative Land Use Services . She listed various ways to fund this position including government granting and local foundations.

Council received the presentation with thanks for all the work they have accomplished.

For more information visit: <http://greatlakes-phragmites.net/project-port-franks-community-phragmites-control-project-2/>