

CITY OF HAMILTON
NOTICE OF MOTION

General Issues Committee Date: August 10, 2015

MOVED BY COUNCILLOR A. JOHNSON.....

Formal Provincial Consultation Process on Possible Amendments to the *Conservation Authorities Act* and Relevant Policy

WHEREAS the conservation authorities of Ontario; particularly the Hamilton Conservation Authority, do an excellent job of protecting our provincial green spaces, plants, and animals, with limited resources; and,

WHEREAS the Province of Ontario is engaged in a formal consultation process on possible amendments to the *Conservation Authorities Act* and relevant policy, with a deadline of October 19, 2015, for formal expressions of ideas and concerns to Eleanor McMahon (MPP for Burlington and Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry); and,

WHEREAS Hamilton and its surrounding communities enjoy a great relationship with the Hamilton Conservation Authority, and have a key stake in effective conservation policy, both locally and province-wide; and,

WHEREAS Resolution 65/561 of the United Nations General Assembly declares 2011-2020 to be the United Nations Decade on Biodiversity, with the aim of maximizing government efforts to advance biological diversity; and,

WHEREAS governments in Canada are ethically and legally obliged to protect biodiversity, pursuant to the ethical and legal principles of international environmental law, as enshrined in the 1993 United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity; and,

WHEREAS the genetic diversity and general biodiversity of rare native Ontario plant species is threatened by Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNR) underfunding of relevant projects, and sometimes by regulatory and bureaucratic obstacles; and,

WHEREAS Hamilton is on the traditional land of the First Nations, particularly including the Mohawk and the Mississauga of the New Credit, and thus has a special obligation to steward the land responsibly;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Mayor of Hamilton, on behalf of Council, make a formal submission to the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry, as part of the consultation process respecting amendments to the *Conservation Authorities Act* and relevant policy, before October 19, 2015;

- (b) That staff be directed to communicate with the Hamilton Conservation Authority (HCA) regarding the possibility of making the submission to the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry, respecting amendments to the *Conservation Authorities Act* and relevant policy, a joint submission between the City of Hamilton and the HCA; and,
- (c) That the correspondence request the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry ensure that the consultation process includes conversation among all relevant stakeholders in relation to the following goals, with the aim of finding environmentally and economically responsible policy solutions:
 - (i) Maximization of efforts by conservation authorities to protect and increase the biodiversity of rare native Ontario plants;
 - (ii) Creation of science-based policy to address the problem of artificial in-breeding within plant populations on conservation authority lands, due to such barriers as de facto bans on the planting of rare native seed from that authority's Seed Zone, but not derived from plants found on the authority's watershed;
 - (iii) Clarification and implementation, province-wide, of best ecological practices related to the migration of rare native seeds within the conservation lands of the recognized Ontario seed zones, across the individual zones' internal watersheds;
 - (iv) Promotion of the planting of rare native Ontario species in any Ontario land relevant an individual species' seed zone (particularly including conservation authority land) where that species has a good chance of thriving, specifically by removing regulatory barriers and/or by investing MNRF funds in relevant planting projects;
 - (v) Regular conversation among conservation authority officials, Royal Botanical Gardens officials, MNRF officials, First Nations, scientists, citizens, and private sector stakeholders on biodiversity and sustainable development concerns related to the conservation authorities and to biodiversity generally;
 - (vi) Sharing of information related to best practices with regard to the above goals, among all relevant stakeholders; and,
 - (vii) Formalization of rules and/or expectations with regard to best practices with regard to the above goals, among all relevant stakeholders.