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Minutes

Upper Thames River Conservation Authority (UTRCA)

Board of Directors Meeting

9:30 am Tuesday, May 26, 2026 at 1424 Clarke Rd, London
(Hybrid Meeting)

Brian Petrie, UTRCA Board Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:34 am.

Members Present:

Jean Coles – Online

Jim Craigmile

Peter Cuddy – Online

Skylar Franke

Tom Heeman

Anna Hopkins – Online

Sandy Levin

Hugh McDermid

Paul Mitchell

Brian Petrie – Chair

Mark Schadenberg

Dean Trentowsky

George Way

Scotty Zehr – Online

Regrets:

Harj Nijjar

Staff Present:

Jenna Allain

Erin Dolmage

Karlee Flear

Teresa Hollingsworth

Tatianna Lozier

Christine Saracino

Brent Verscheure

Amy Bumbacco – Recorder

Joe Gordon

Tracy Annett

Huda Ghadhban

Graeme Shaw

Brad Hertner

Chris Tasker

Solicitor: Grant Inglis

1. Territorial Acknowledgement

The Chair read the territorial acknowledgement.

2. Modifications to the Agenda

Mover: Hugh McDermid

Second: Mark Schadenberg

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THAT the Administrative By-Law be suspended for this meeting only to allow for a third delegation to present during item 4. Presentations/Delegations.

Carried by 2/3 majority.

Mover: Skyler Franke

Seconder: Jim Craigmile

THAT the Board of Directors amend the agenda to add 4.3 Paula Lombardi – Upper Thames River Regulated Area Map Update 1364 Gainsborough Road, City of London, Province of Ontario delegation.

Carried.

Mover: Skyler Franke

Seconder: Hugh McDermid

THAT the Board of Directors receive the modified agenda.

Carried.

3. Declarations of Pecuniary Interest

There were no declarations of pecuniary interest.

4. Delegations/Presentations

4.1. Mark and Mary McNeil – Legal Ramifications to Homeowners Regarding Proposed Changes to the Mapping of the Regulated Area

Mark McNeil spoke on behalf of himself and his neighbours on Benson Crescent in London, Ontario. He expressed concerns regarding property values on Benson Crescent being negatively impacted by the UTRCA's Regulated Area Map updates. He stated that if it becomes apparent through sales that property values are negatively impacted by the adoption of the mapping, residents will be seeking legal damages.

M.McNeil asked the Board to consider their micro point of view when making macro decisions.

4.2. Mike Wallace, London Development Institute – Thames River Mapping in London

Mike Wallace, on behalf of the London Development Institute, requested that the UTRCA Board of Directors receive, rather than approve, section 6.1. Thames River Regulated Area Map Update City of London. It is the London Development Institute's (LDI) preference for the entire river to be approved at one time, once the Western Lake Erie Regional Conservation Authority (WLERCA) is established.

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4.3. Paula Lombardi – Upper Thames River Regulated Area Map Update 1364 Gainsborough Road, City of London, Province of Ontario.

Paula Lombardi provided a presentation on behalf of Southside Construction Management Limited about how updates to the UTRCA's Regulated Area Maps could impact 1364 Gainsborough Road in London, Ontario. P.Lombardi requested that the mapping be revised based on site-specific information provided to Southside by StoneCairn Consulting or pause the update until the establishment of WLERCA.

Mover: Sandy Levin

Seconder: George Way

That the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority Board of Directors receive the delegations.

Carried.

5. Administrative Business

5.1. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting: April 14, 2026 and April 28, 2026

Mover: Paul Mitchell

Seconder: George Way

THAT the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority Board of Directors approve the Board of Directors' minutes dated April 14th, 2026, and April 28th, 2026, and their respective closed session minutes.

Carried.

5.2. Business Arising from the Minutes

There was no business arising from the minutes.

5.3. Correspondence

There were no items for correspondence.

6. Reports – For Consideration

6.1. Thames River Regulated Area Map Update City of London

Jenna Allain provided a presentation on the UTRCA's historic and current role in providing and updating regulated area maps.

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It was noted that updating the entire watershed all at once would be challenging, as there are many watercourses in the watershed and by the time the last one is updated, the first watercourse would have to be reviewed again.

Staff provided clarification regarding the technological advancements of hazard area mapping.

A member felt that due to the references to potential legal ramifications by the first delegation and the third delegation being a lawyer representing their client with an issue regarding the mapping, it would benefit the Board to go into closed session to receive clarification on the legal position of the Authority if the mapping is adopted.

Mover: Paul Mitchell

Secunder: Sandy Levin

THAT the Board of Directors enter closed session to receive legal advice subject to solicitor-client privilege regarding the regulated area map update for the City of London. Carried.

The Board adjourned to closed session at approximately 10:48 am.

The Board rose from closed session at approximately 11:09 am.

Tom Heeman left the meeting at 11:10 am.

A member commented that the UTRCA is within its legal right to approve the mapping update and, as noted by staff, it is impractical to pause approval until the entire watershed can be updated.

A member felt that it would not be prudent to pause the public release of mapping information that is needed to help residents stay safe from flooding.

Mover: Dean Trentowksy

Secunder: Paul Mitchell

THAT the Board of Directors receive this summary of engagement undertaken for the Thames River Regulated Area Map Update, City of London.

AND THAT the Board of Directors approve the Thames River Regulated Area Map, City of London.

A recorded vote was requested:

Jean Coles – Yes

Jim Craigmile – Yes

Peter Cuddy – Yes

Skylar Franke – Yes

Tom Heeman – Absent

Anna Hopkins – Yes

Sandy Levin – Yes

Hugh McDermid – Yes

Paul Mitchell – Yes

Brian Petrie – Yes

Mark Schadenberg – Yes

George Way – Yes

Dean Trentowsky – Yes

George Way – Yes

Scott Zehr – Yes

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Harj Nijjar – Absent
Motion carried unanimously.

Peter Cuddy left the meeting at 11:22 am.

6.2. Water and Erosion Control Infrastructure (WECI) Project Updates for 2025-2027

Staff confirmed that two Environmental Assessments (EA), Embro and Fullarton, have been completed. Future EAs include Mitchell and Centreville.

Mover: Anna Hopkins

Seconder: Sandy Levin

THAT the Board of Directors approves the 2026-2027 WECI funding application, AND receives the WECI 2024-2026 Year 2 Final Status Report for information.

Carried.

6.3. 2027 Budget Concepts and Communications Overview

The members discussed the timing of the budget vote and the potential for a special meeting. The General Manager noted that the Province is seeking budget approval in December, which is earlier than previous years.

Mover: Mark Schadenberg

Seconder: Skylar Franke

1. THAT the 2027 Budget Concepts report be received.
2. THAT the 2027 Draft Budget be developed in conformity to the Conservation Authorities Act (CAA) and Ontario Regulation 402/22: Budget and Apportionment.
3. THAT staff BE DIRECTED to include provision for wage grid increase of 3% as a preliminary estimate.

Carried.

6.4. Provincial Updates on Conservation Authority Consolidation

The General Manager provided an overview of the provincial updates to date, including recent appointments to the Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency; it is expected to be an interim board. Also, a Regional Conservation Authority Playbook is being developed and will be finalized in July. The full transition is still proposed for February 2027.

A member asked whether the UTRCA needs to request permission from the Province now to replace senior management roles as staff retire.

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Staff will send an overview of provincial updates to member municipalities as correspondence.

Mover: Sandy Levin

Seconder: Skyler Franke

THAT the Board of Directors receives the report for information and appoints the General Manager Tracy Annett, and Brian Petrie to the Transition Committee.

Carried.

7. Reports – In-Camera

Mover: Dean Trentowsky

Seconder: Skylar Franke

THAT the Board of Directors adjourn to Closed Session – In Camera, in accordance with Section C.12 of the UTRCA Administrative By-Law to discuss litigation affecting the Authority.

Carried.

The Board adjourned to closed session at approximately 11:51 am.

7.1. Litigation Affecting the UTRCA – Case Before the Ontario Land Tribunal – verbal

7.2. Litigation Affecting the UTRCA – Essex Street – Verbal Update

The Board rose from closed session at approximately 12:13 pm and reported that they received verbal updates regarding a case before the Ontario Land Tribunal and Essex Street.

Anna Hopkins left meeting at 12:13 pm

8. Reports – For Information

8.1. Fanshawe Conservation Area Day-Use Concept Plan

It was noted that several costs for the day-use plan will be included in the 2027 budget.

Mover: George Way

Seconder: Skylar Franke

THAT the Board of Directors receives the report for information.

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Carried.

8.2 Administration and Enforcement – Section 28 Status Report

Mover: Sandy Levin

Seconder: Mark Schadenberg

THAT the Board of Directors receives the report for information.

Carried.

8.3 Project Status Update

Mover: Jim Craigmile

Seconder: Dean Trentowsky

THAT the Board of Directors receives the report for information.

Carried.

8.4 Thames River Current – May Edition

Mover: George Way

Seconder: Jean Coles

THAT the Board of Directors receives the report for information.

Carried.

9. Reports – Committees

9.1. Finance and Audit Committee - Audit Financial Statements

Sandy Levin, Chair of the Finance and Audit Committee, requested to remove the word “draft” from the first line of the suggested motion. Further, he noted in the report that under Meeting Decisions, there is an error in the wording of the motion that was passed. It should read: THAT the Finance and Audit Committee receives the draft audited statements, recommends approval of the draft audited statements by the Board,”. The second half of the motion is correct.

S. Levin provided a short introduction and overview of the audited financial statements.

Mover: Hugh McDermid

Seconder: Paul Mitchell

THAT the Board of Directors accepts the audited financial statements for 2025, as attached, on the recommendation of the Finance & Audit Committee.

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AND FURTHER THAT the Board of Directors accepts the recommendation of the Finance and Audit Committee to appoint Seebach & Company as the UTRCA Auditor for fiscal 2026 and any stub year, subject to agreement on fees.

Carried.

9.2. Hearing Committee

There will be a short Hearing Committee meeting to approve minutes directly following this meeting.

10. Notices of Motion

There were no notices of motion for the next meeting.

11. Chair's Comments

The Chair thanked Sandy Levin for acting as Chair for the April Board of Directors meeting. He also acknowledged the warm welcomes he has been receiving from member municipalities.

12. Member's Comments

Paul Mitchell asked about the UTRCA's contribution to the federal government's 30 x 30 project. Staff noted that a broader report could be developed for the board.

Sandy Levin congratulated UTRCA staff for their teamwork at the Children's Water Festival.

13. General Manager's Comments

The General Manager commented on the parks being open and Board members receiving their annual passes. She also noted that over 1,400 people attended the London-Middlesex Children's Water Festival and highlighted the many other programs staff are currently involved in like Green Leaders and the Conference on Flood Management.

Updates about the Western Lake Erie Regional Conservation Authority will continue to be shared.

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14. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:34 pm on a motion by Skylar Franke, seconded by Sandy Levin.

Tracy Annett, General Manager
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