

Presentation to Joint Committee on Wildlife Strategy June 17, 2024

Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, Good Morning

My name is Ian McConnachie. I am a former Chair and current member of the Crystal Beach Lakeview Community Association Transportation Infrastructure and Planning Committee. I am here today representing the association.

Our community is blessed to be immediately adjacent to significant greenspace, specifically including the National Capitol Greenbelt at Moodie Drive. Approximately 5-7 years ago, we were a part of a wonderful collaboration among three levels of government and organizations, in particular the Ottawa Carleton Wildlife Centre, along with MP Anita Vandenberg and several community associations working together on the restoration of the wetlands west of Moodie Drive into what is now a model urban wetland in all of Canada. And when we succeed in getting an Eco passage installed under Moodie Drive connecting the Core Natural Area and the Natural Link Area east of Moodie, it will be even better.

Update surveying of the flora and fauna in the wetland by the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority shows return of species missing for years due to the degradation of the local environment. Further, the flow device installed several years ago at Stormwater Pond 2 is working well including with a beaver family having over-wintered at the pond. The Keys to Success for this initiative included the ability of the multiple participating organizations to collaborate and communicate.

At the city level, you as Councillors have also seen similar efforts by citizens and the city to collaborate on the creation of a new Official Plan for the city. Again, success through collaboration and GOOD communication from the city throughout the process.

When we move to the Wildlife Strategy Review, we do not see anywhere a comparable effort by the city to collaborate on an essential strategy document. The consultation process, the As We Heard It document, and inclusion of central needs for the strategy as provided by specific community association and wildlife experts, were consistently handled by the city with an attitude of checking off a box rather than true communication or collaboration.

The resultant document being discussed is seriously flawed. I will not go down the rabbit hole into speculation of why that has taken place; however, I do want to emphasize two key elements of the proposed steps going forward; the lethal trapping of beavers and the proposed role of the Advisory Board.

In both of these proposals in the Report, we are in full agreement with the Ottawa Carleton Wildlife Centre. The planned continuation of killing of beavers as part of wetlands and stormwater management is totally unacceptable and inconsistent with best practices shown to be successful in other Canadian jurisdictions. We also support the Wildlife Centre's call for a

public meeting with city staff, drainage engineers and a flow device expert to review the city practices and hear expert advice for alternative methods.

With respect to the Advisory Board, the proposed role for it is perfunctory and much too restricted in scope. The actions of the city on these issues over the past decade and longer call for a much stronger advisory role as part of a committed transparent collaborative relationship as called for in the public consultation.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman