

MEMORANDUM

PDS-C 23-2021

Subject: Referred Niagara River Ramsar Designation Endorsement Motion for Consideration

Date: March 10, 2021

To: Planning and Economic Development Committee

From: Ann-Marie Norio, Regional Clerk

At its meeting held on February 25, 2021, Regional Council referred consideration of a motion to endorse the Ramsar designation to the Planning and Economic Development Committee (PEDC) meeting being held on March 10, 2021.

An overview of the Ramsar designation for the Niagara River was first brought before Planning and Development Committee (PDC) in September 2014 by way of Report PDS 39- 2014 (attached as Appendix I) which was received for information.

At its meeting held on September 2, 2015, Planning and Development Committee considered Report PDS 36-2015 (attached as Appendix II) which recommended that Regional Council endorse the designation of the Niagara River as a Ramsar site of international importance. PDC deferred the endorsement, requesting that staff return with a report after the Town of Fort Erie and the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake each provide endorsement for the Ramsar project. While the Town of Fort Erie and City of Niagara Falls both endorsed the Ramsar designation, the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake did not.

In June of 2020, the Niagara River Ramsar Designation Bi-national Steering Committee reached out to Regional staff to indicate they were interested in revisiting the request for Regional endorsement. The Ramsar Steering Committee presented to PEDC at its meeting held on September 9, 2020 and the Planning and Economic Development Committee recommended endorsement of the designation.

At the September 17, 2020 meeting of Regional Council, the endorsement of the Ramsar designation was referred to staff to engage outside legal counsel to research the implications of a Ramsar designation on the Niagara River in so much as such a designation could affect the agricultural properties throughout the Region. The Planning

and Economic Development Committee was provided with the external legal opinion at its meeting held on February 17, 2021 (attached as Appendix III).

The Niagara River Ramsar Designation Bi-national Steering Committee has submitted correspondence dated March 4, 2021, requesting support for the Ramsar designation. This correspondence has been included on the agenda for the March 10 PEDC meeting as PDS-C 24-2021, Agenda Item 7.11.

As the motion to endorse the designation was referred to the Planning and Economic Development Committee, the following motion is before Committee for consideration:

That the Regional Municipality of Niagara ENDORSE the nomination of the Niagara River as a Wetland of International Importance (Ramsar Site).

Respectfully submitted and signed by

Ann-Mario Norio
Regional Clerk

Appendices:

Appendix I PDS 39-2014

Appendix II PDS 36-2015

Appendix III CWCD 2021-60