



LOWER TRENT
CONSERVATION

APPENDIX G

HEARING GUIDELINES

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G-1. PURPOSE OF HEARING GUIDELINES:

The purpose of the Hearing Guidelines is to reflect the changes to the 1998 Conservation Authorities Act. The Act requires that the applicant be party to a hearing by the local Conservation Authority Board, or Executive Committee (sitting as a Hearing Board) as the case may be, for an application to be refused or approved with contentious conditions. Further, a permit may be refused if, in the opinion of the Authority, the proposal adversely affects the control of flooding, erosion, dynamic beaches, pollution or the conservation of land. The Hearing Board is empowered by law to make a decision, governed by the Statutory Powers Procedures Act. It is the purpose of the Hearing Board to evaluate the information presented at the hearing by both the Conservation Authority staff and the applicant and to decide whether the application will be approved with or without conditions or refused.

G-2. PRE-HEARING PROCEDURES

G-2.1 Apprehension of Bias

In considering the application, the Hearing Board is acting as a decision-making tribunal. The tribunal is to act fairly. Under general principles of administrative law relating to the duty of fairness, the tribunal is obliged not only to avoid any bias but also to avoid the appearance or apprehension of bias. The following are three examples of steps to be taken to avoid apprehension of bias where it is likely to arise.

- a) No member of the Authority taking part in the hearing should be involved, either through participation in committee or intervention on behalf of the applicant or other interested parties with the matter, prior to the hearing. Otherwise, there is a danger of an apprehension of bias which could jeopardize the hearing.
- b) If material relating to the merits of an application that is the subject of a hearing is distributed to Board members before the hearing, the material should be distributed to the applicant. The applicant may be afforded an opportunity to distribute similar pre-hearing material.
- c) In instances where the Authority (or Executive Committee) requires a hearing to help it reach a determination as to whether to give permission with or without conditions or refuse an application for permission, care must be taken to avoid making a final decision until such time as a hearing is held.

G-2.2 Application

An applicant has the right to a hearing when:

- staff are recommending refusal of an application because it doesn't comply with the approved policies;
- Staff are unable to approve the permit application because the application does not

- comply with approved policies; or
- the applicant objects to the conditions of approval.

The applicant is entitled to reasonable notice of the hearing pursuant to the Statutory Powers Procedures Act.

G-2.3 Notice of Hearing

The Notice of Hearing shall be sent to the applicant within sufficient time to allow the applicant to prepare for the hearing. To ensure that reasonable notice is given, it is recommended that prior to sending the Notice of Hearing, the applicant be consulted to determine an agreeable date and time based on the local Conservation Authority's regular meeting schedule.

The Notice of Hearing must contain the following:

- a) Reference to the applicable legislation under which the hearing is to be held (i.e., the Conservation Authorities Act)
- b) The date, time, place and the purpose of the hearing.
- c) Particulars to identify the applicant, property and the nature of the application which are the subject of the hearing. Note: If the applicant is not the landowner but the prospective owner, the applicant must have written authorization from the registered landowner.
- d) The reasons for the proposed refusal or conditions of approval shall be specifically stated. This should contain sufficient detail to enable the applicant to understand the issues so they can be adequately prepared for the hearing. It is sufficient to reference in the Notice of Hearing that the recommendation for refusal or conditions of approval is based on the reasons outlined in previous correspondence or a hearing report that will follow.
- e) A statement notifying the applicant that the hearing may proceed in the applicant's absence and that the applicant will not be entitled to any further notice of the proceedings. Except in extreme circumstances, it is recommended that the hearing not proceed in the absence of the applicant.
- f) Reminder that the applicant is entitled to be represented at the hearing by counsel, if desired.

It is recommended that the Notice of Hearing be directed to the applicant and/or landowner by registered mail or other method where confirmation of delivery can be verified.

Refer to **Appendix G-1** for an example **Notice of Hearing**.

G-2.4 Pre-submission of Reports

It is the practice of the Lower Trent Region Conservation Authority to submit reports to the Board members in advance of the hearing (i.e., inclusion on an Authority Agenda) and the

applicant will be provided with the same opportunity. The applicant will be given reasonable time to prepare a report once the reasons for the staff recommendations have been received. Subsequently, this may affect the timing and scheduling of the staff hearing reports. The applicant will be required to provide sufficient copies of this report for inclusion in the Agenda.

G-2.5 Hearing Information

Prior to the hearing, the applicant should be advised of the local Conservation Authority's hearing procedures. (a copy of this document should be provided with the staff report)

G-3. HEARING

G-3.1 Public Hearing

Pursuant to the Statutory Powers Procedure Act, hearings are required to be held in public. The exception is in very rare cases where public interest in public hearings is outweighed by the fact that intimate financial, personal or other matters would be disclosed at hearings.

G-3.2 Hearing Participants

The Conservation Authorities Act does not provide for third party status at the local hearing. While others may be advised of the local hearing, any information that they provide should be incorporated within the presentation of information by, or on behalf of, the applicant or Authority staff.

G-3.3 Attendance of Hearing Board Members

In accordance with case law relating to the conduct of hearings, those members of the Authority who will decide whether to grant or refuse the application must be present during the full course of the hearing. If it is necessary for a member to leave, the hearing must be adjourned and resumed when either the member returns or if the hearing proceeds, even in the event of an adjournment, only those members who were present after the member left can sit to the conclusion of the hearing.

G-3.4 Adjournments

The Board may adjourn a hearing on its own motion or that of the applicant or Authority staff where it is satisfied that an adjournment is necessary for an adequate hearing to be held. Any adjournments form part of the hearing record.

G-3.5 Orders and Directions

The Authority is entitled to make orders or directions to maintain order and prevent the abuse of its hearing processes. A hearing procedures example has been included as **Appendix G-2.**

G-3.6 Information Presented at Hearings

- a) The Statutory Powers Procedure Act requires that a witness be informed of his right to object pursuant to the Canada Evidence Act. The Canada Evidence Act indicates that a witness shall not be excused from answering questions on the basis that the answer may be incriminating. Further, answers provided during the hearing are not admissible against the witness in any criminal trial or proceeding. This information should be provided to the applicant as part of the Notice of Hearing.
- b) It is the decision of the hearing members as to whether information is presented under oath or affirmation. It is not a legal requirement. The applicant must be informed of the above, prior to or at the start of the hearing.
- c) The Board may authorize receiving a copy rather than the original document. However, the Board can request certified copies of the document if required.
- d) Privileged information, such as solicitor/client correspondence, cannot be heard.
- e) Information that is not directly within the knowledge of the speaker (hearsay), if relevant to the issues of the hearing, can be heard.
- f) The Board may take into account matters of common knowledge such as geographic or historic facts, times measures, weights, etc or generally recognized scientific or technical facts, information or opinions within its specialized knowledge without hearing specific information to establish their truth.

G-3.7 Conduct of Hearing

G-3.7.1 Record of Attending Hearing Board Members

A record should be made of the members of the Hearing Board.

G-3.7.2 Opening Remarks

The Chairman should convene the hearing with opening remarks which; identify the applicant, the nature of the application, and the property location; outline the hearing procedures; and advise on requirements of the Canada Evidence Act. Please reference **Appendix G-3** for the Opening Remarks Template.

G-3.7.3 Presentation of Authority Staff Information

Staff of the Authority presents the reasons supporting the recommendation for the refusal or conditions of approval of the application. Any reports, documents or plans that form part of the presentation should be properly indexed and received.

Consideration should be given to the designation of one staff member or legal counsel who coordinates the presentation of information on behalf of Authority staff and who asks questions on behalf of Authority staff.

G-3.7.4 Presentation of Applicant Information

The applicant has the opportunity to present information at the conclusion of the Authority staff presentation. Any reports, documents or plans which form part of the submission should be properly indexed and received. The applicant shall present information as it applies to the permit application in question. For instance, does the requested activity affect the control of flooding, erosion, dynamic beaches, pollution or conservation of land? The hearing does not address the merits of the activity or appropriateness of such a use in terms of planning.

- The applicant may be represented by legal counsel or agent, if desired.
- The applicant may present information to the Board and/or have invited advisors to present information to the Board.
- The applicant's presentation may include technical witnesses, such as an engineer, ecologist, hydro-geologist etc.

G-3.7.5 Questions

Members of the Hearing Board may direct questions to each speaker as the information is being heard. The applicant and/or agent can make any comments or questions on the staff report. Staff will be given an opportunity to respond to questions posed by either the Board or the applicant. Staff may also rebut comments or pose questions to the applicant at this time.

Pursuant to the Statutory Powers Procedure Act, the Board can limit questioning where it is satisfied that there has been full and fair disclosure of the facts presented. Please note that the courts have been particularly sensitive to the issue of limiting questions and there is a tendency to allow limiting of questions only where it has clearly gone beyond reasonable or proper bounds.

G-3.7.6 Deliberation

After all the information is presented, the Board may adjourn the hearing and retire in private to confer. The Board may reconvene on the same date or at some later date to advise the applicant of the Board's decision. The Board members should not discuss the hearing with others prior to the decision of the Board being finalized.

G-4. DECISION

The applicant must receive written notice of the decision. The applicant should be informed of the right to appeal the decision within 30 days upon receipt of the written decision to the Mining and Lands Tribunal.

It is important that the hearing participants have a clear understanding of why the application

was refused or approved. The Board should itemize and record information of particular significance which led to their decision.

G-4.1 Notice of Decision

The decision notice should include the following information:

- a) The identification of the applicant, property and the nature of the application that was the subject of the hearing.
- b) The decision to refuse or approve the application. A copy of the Hearing Board resolution should be attached.

It is recommended that the written Notice of Decision be forwarded to the applicant by registered mail or other method where confirmation of delivery can be verified.

A sample Notice of Decision and cover letter has been included as **Appendix G-4**. Note that if the decision of the Board is to approve the application, the written notice of decision can be included as part of the Permit Cover Letter. An example of Permission Granted through Hearing has been included as **Appendix G-5**.

G-4.2 Adoption

A resolution advising of the Board's decision and particulars of the decision should be adopted.

G-5. RECORD

The Authority shall compile a record of the hearing. In the event of an appeal, a copy of the record should be forwarded to the Mining and Lands Tribunal. The record must include the following:

- a) The application for the permit.
- b) The Notice of Hearing.
- c) Any orders made by the Board (e.g. for adjournments).
- d) All information received by the Board.
- e) The transcript/minutes, if one exists, of the oral presentations made at the hearing.
- f) The decision and reasons for decision of the Board.
- g) The Notice of Decision sent to the applicant.

Appendix G-1

NOTICE OF HEARING

IN THE MATTER OF

The Conservation Authorities Act,

R.S.O. 1990, Chapter 27

AND IN THE MATTER OF an application by **XXXXXX**

FOR THE PERMISSION OF THE

CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

Pursuant to Regulations made under

Section 28, Subsection 12 of the said Act

TAKE NOTICE THAT a Hearing before the Full Board of the Lower Trent Region Conservation Authority will be held under Section 28, Subsection 12 of the Conservation Authorities Act at the offices of the said Authority located at 714 Murray Street, RR #1 Trenton, Ontario K8V 5P4 at the hour of , **on the day of , 20__**, with respect to the application by **(NAME)** to permit development within an area regulated by the Authority in order to ensure no adverse effect on **(the control of flooding, erosion, dynamic beaches or pollution or, conservation of land./alter or interfere with a watercourse or wetland)** on Lot , Plan/Lot , Concession, **(Street)** in the City of , Regional Municipality of , River Watershed.

TAKE NOTICE THAT you are invited to make a delegation and submit supporting written material to the Executive Committee for the meeting of **(meeting number)**. If you intend to appear, please contact **(name)**. Written material will be required by **(date)**, to enable the Committee members to review the material prior to the meeting.

TAKE NOTICE THAT this hearing is governed by the provisions of the Statutory Powers Procedure Act. Under the Act, a witness is automatically afforded a protection that is similar to the protection of the Ontario Evidence Act. This means that the evidence that a witness gives may not be used in subsequent civil proceedings or in prosecutions against the witness under a Provincial Statute. It does not relieve the witness of the obligation of this oath since matters of perjury are not affected by the automatic affording of the protection. The significance is that the legislation is Provincial and cannot affect Federal matters. If a witness requires the protection of the Canada Evidence Act that protection must be obtained in the usual manner. The Ontario Statute requires the tribunal to draw this matter to the attention of the witness, as this tribunal has no knowledge of the effect of any evidence that a witness may give.

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AND FURTHER TAKE NOTICE that if you do not attend at this Hearing, the Executive Committee of the Conservation Authority may proceed in your absence, and you will not be entitled to any further notice in the proceedings.

DATED the ___ day of , _____20__.

The Board of Directors of the Lower Trent Region Conservation Authority

Per:

Chief Administration Officer/ Secretary Treasurer: _____

Appendix G-2

HEARING PROCEDURES

1. Motion to sit as Hearing Board.
2. Roll Call followed by the Chair's opening remarks.
3. Staff will introduce to the Hearing Board the applicant/owner, his agent and others wishing to speak.
4. Staff will indicate the nature and location of the subject application and the conclusions.
5. Staff will present the staff report included in the Authority agenda.
6. The applicant and/or his agent will speak and also make any comments on the staff report, if he so desires.
7. The Hearing Board will allow others to speak, and, if necessary, the applicant in rebuttal.
8. The Hearing Board will question, if necessary, both the staff and the applicant/agent.
9. The Hearing Board will move into camera.
10. Members of the Hearing Board will move and second a motion.
11. A motion will be carried which will culminate in the decision.
12. The Hearing Board will move out of camera.
13. The Chairman or Acting Chairman will advise the owner/applicant of the Hearing Board decision.
14. If decision is "to refuse", the Chairman or Acting Chairman shall notify the owner/applicant of his/her right to appeal the decision to the Mining and Lands Tribunal within 30 days of receipt of the reasons for the decision.
15. Motion to move out of Hearing Board and sit as the Board of Directors.

Appendix G-3

CHAIR'S REMARKS WHEN DEALING WITH HEARINGS WITH RESPECT TO ONTARIO REGULATION 163/06.

We are now going to conduct a hearing under Section 28 of the Conservation Authorities Act in respect of an application by _____: , for permission to: _____

The Authority has adopted regulations under section 28 of the Conservation Authorities Act which requires the permission of the Authority for development within an area regulated by the Authority in order to ensure no adverse effect on the control of flooding, erosion, dynamic beaches, pollution or conservation of land, or to permit alteration to a shoreline or watercourse or interference with a wetland. The Staff has reviewed this proposed work and a copy of the staff report has been given to the applicant.

The Conservation Authorities Act (Section 28 [12]) provides that:

"Permission required under a regulation made under clause (1) (b) or (c) shall not be refused or granted subject to conditions unless the person requesting permission has been given the opportunity to require a hearing before the authority or, if the authority so directs, before the authority's executive committee."

In holding this hearing, the Authority Board is to determine whether or not a permit is to be issued. In doing so, we can only consider the application in the form that is before us, the staff report, such evidence as may be given and the submissions to be made on behalf of the applicant.

The proceedings will be conducted according to the Statutory Powers Procedure Act. Under Section 5 of the Canada Evidence Act, a witness may refuse to answer any question. The procedure in general shall be informal without the evidence before it being given under oath or affirmation.

If the applicant has any questions to ask of the Hearing Board or of the Authority representative, they must be directed to the Chair of the Board.

Appendix G-4

(Date) BY REGISTERED MAIL

(name), (address)

Dear:

RE: NOTICE OF DECISION

Hearing Pursuant to Section 28(12) of the Conservation Authorities Act

Proposed Residential Development

Lot , Plan ; ?? Drive, City of

(Application #)

In accordance with the requirements of the Conservation Authorities Act, the Lower Trent Region Conservation Authority provides the following Notice of Decision:

On **(meeting date and number)**, the Hearing Board of the Lower Trent Region Conservation Authority refused/approved your application/approved your application with conditions. A copy the Board's Resolution # _____ has been attached for your records. Please note that this decision is based on the following reasons: **(the proposed development/alteration to a watercourse adversely affects the control of flooding, erosion, dynamic beaches, pollution or conservation of land.)**

In accordance with Section 28 (15) of the Conservation Authorities Act, an applicant who has been refused permission or who objects to conditions imposed on a permission may, within 30 days of receiving the reasons under subsection (14), appeal to the Minister who may refuse the permission; or grant permission, with or without conditions. Through Order in Council 332/2018 the responsibility for hearing the appeal has been transferred to the Mining and Lands Tribunal. For your information, should you wish to exercise your right to appeal the decision, a letter by you or your agent/counsel setting out your appeal must be sent within 30 days of receiving this decision addressed to:

Office of the Mining and Lands Tribunal
700 Bay Street, 24th Floor, Box 2400
Toronto, Ontario M5G 1Z6

A carbon copy of this letter should also be sent to Lower Trent Region Conservation Authority. Should you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact **(staff contact)** or the undersigned.

Yours truly,

Chief Administration Officer/ Secretary Treasurer

Enclosure

Appendix G-5

Date

FILE #: RP-XX-XXX

PERMIT#: P-XX-XXX

Name of Applicant
Address of Applicant

ATTENTION: It is important that you read and understand the contents of this letter and ensure that all necessary parties (i.e., landowner(s) and anyone conducting site works) are aware of any special mitigation requirements contained herein.

RE: Location where Permission Applies

Application for permission to (development, interference and/or alteration) pursuant to Ontario Regulation 163/06 – *Lower Trent Region Conservation Authority: Regulation of Development, Interference with Wetlands and Alterations to Shorelines and Watercourses.*

As you are aware, your application to allow for (Proposed development/interference/alteration) on the property noted above was heard and approved by the Lower Trent Region Conservation Authority's (LTC) Hearing Board on Hearing Date. The following resolution was passed (draft resolution for final approval at the upcoming LTC's Board of Directors' meeting – Next Meeting Date):

RES: HC2/17 **Moved by: Board Member** **Seconded by: Board Member**
THAT the permit application RP-XX-XXX by Applicant for permission (development/interference/alteration) in the (Regulated Area) be approved.
Carried

Please accept this letter as formal notice of the decision of the Hearing Board.

The proposed (development/alteration/interference) is situated within regulated areas associated with (Regulated Area). Attached you will find a copy of Permit No. P-XX-XXX issued for the works noted above in accordance with Ontario Regulation 163/06. The permit has been issued based on the information, plans and specifications submitted with the application as well as your acceptance of the general conditions of approval detailed in the application. The plans and specifications are attached as part of the approved documentation.

The following mitigation measures are expected to be implemented as part of the approval from LTC:

- 1) *Listed Conditions of Permission;*

Should you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact (**staff contact**) or the undersigned.