



Reports to the Annual General Meeting

March 20, 2022

10.1 President's Report

It hardly seems possible that we would be here 10 years after we first heard that Walker Industries was planning to haul 17.4 million tonnes of trash into our community, into our water table and alongside the Thames River. Who would have thought that from a meeting hosted by two disk jockeys wondering how to stop a dump would have engendered an alliance of community groups and a coalition of municipalities all across Ontario demanding the right for us to say “NO” to the dump.

We have so many to thank: those who jumped in at the outset; those who learned about the threat through the work of the communications committee; those who brought others to us, within and beyond our community; those who showed solidarity in moral, physical and financial ways; those who provided legal advice and scientific argument; those other community groups who allied themselves with us; those who faced down Harry Dahme, Walker's pricey and skilled lawyer at an OMB hearing against our County's official plan; those who turned down Walker's offers of cash sensing a trap; those who walked miles and miles and miles delivering flyers; those who managed our Facebook and websites to keep all informed; those who gathered at -20 or more to wave signs every Friday for years and years (except during lockdown prohibitions); those who contributed money to our work and that of our hydrogeologist; who joined

the board and devoted hours of time and stood firm against Walker; those who were unrelenting in their determination to stop the dump ...

Not all of them are still with us. Alliance partner, Oxford Green Watch joined us when Reed Elliott led them into our growing group. We mourn his loss to his family, his community, and those province-wide groups he belonged to. Bob Collins joined the board, then a month later, was hospitalized, spoke to me by phone at noon about the fight and was gone by 4:00 pm; Tim Bannon, pilot and ardent supporter talked to me every second week, his off-treatment days, about the hazards that the dump posed to aircraft up until his death. Glenn Messenger was not going to let adversity stop him from educating people about the threat the dump presented to the waters of the Thames. While in hospital repeatedly in London, every nurse, doctor and PSW who visited Glenn Messenger got the message – the dump was to be stopped otherwise their communities were in peril too. Perched on the tailgate of his Suzuki Tracker, he was unmissable at weekly demonstrations. He is missed. “Shake the hand that shook the World” said Ernie Hunt, Ingersoll Councillor and community member on the Upper Thames Conservation Authority. He defended the water and our community. Deb Cameron, formerly a wonderful colleague, displayed her support of our cause in Noxon Street. Chippewa of the Thames’ elder and elected counsellor, George Henry told us “We are allies” and helped his Nation declare that Walker’s plan was unconstitutional and should be set aside. After acting as a protector to our community and others, telling us to be a protector not a protester, he has since gone to the Spirit World. We are saddened by the loss of these people and by many more who are no longer with us. I invite us to have a minute’s silence in honour of those and others who have passed on in this last decade and did not see the full results of the victory they contributed to.

[Silence]

Thank you.

We honour their determination during the long fight, the inspiration they provided to others, and the strength they showed in the face of adversity when many were unsure. Their actions helped build and strengthen our collective community.

OPAL's unpaid, volunteer board has spent massive energy, devoted time, and brought expertise to bear on the threat to our community, the ways to defeat Walker and to engage political and community leaders. They have been so very successful, and I invite you to applaud the current board, whose members will become the caretakers as we wind down, as well as all former board and committee members.

10.2 Research was immensely important to a community which did not know (or want to know really) all the ins and outs of the Ministry of the Environment's Environmental Assessment Act, of the Ministry of Natural Resources' regulations around pits and quarries, of the science of karst and water movement, or of the science related to fine particulate matter the most lethal of all dust. At the outset, OPAL had a brilliant trio of women exploring all that science and legislation and allowing us to point out the errors of Walker's plan and of the Ministries' management of the process. We polled all across Oxford and found, as three mayors did later, that people in every Oxford community were opposed to the dump in percentages above 90! That survey allowed us to eviscerate Walker's clumsy surveys of residents and businesses. They got an earful from people! We were lucky to have politicians from the North such as John Vanthof and Charlie Angus to tell us how they defeated a dump plan for Toronto before our fight, or people who had fought Walker in Niagara or Green Lane near London, or those who suffer from water pollution in Elmira to this day. What would we do to pay this forward? When South Bruce called for suggestions on how to stop a nuclear dump in the Niagara Escarpment, we supported them with strategy; when Ignace-area residents said that they opposed toxicants in the wilderness outside of town, we walked them through the levers they could use to win a decision in their

favour. We are hoping to see our experience recorded for future protectors of their communities.

10.3 Media and Communication have taken huge efforts. The OPAL newsletter found its way into households, stores, coffee shops and businesses in Oxford communities. Our story ended up on CBC as part of “Good People” with Mark Sakamoto, on CTV, local radio and in print. It became the #1 news story and held the attention of media, the public and politicians. In a time when so many in other countries mistrust the media, we are lucky to have print, radio, TV and online media in Oxford and Canada who listened very intently to our messages and amplified them for us.

10.4 Finance: In our quest for funds to do all the things we needed, we asked the community over and over for funds, and collectively, municipally and individually you dug deep. We had two categories of expenses: those to maintain all the activities we’ve spoken about, and the work by a famed hydrogeologist who our partners at the Canadian Environmental Law Association recommended, Wilf Ruland. He was caustic about Walker’s bad science, but extremely graceful when we told him that we would not need his services for the OMB and court battles we’d thought we would face. The remaining funds of the Wilf Ruland fund are being dispersed as we wind down our association.

10.5 Fundraising! What a mammoth undertaking faced with a deep-pocketed opponent, one that owns the most property in Ontario after the government. We did event after event in Ingersoll, Tillsonburg and Woodstock; were present week after week and month after month in farmers’ markets including Thamesford; saw donation boxes filled at Reuseapaloozahas in Embro repeatedly, Mount Elgin, Ingersoll’s arena and Masonic Hall, Sweaburg Lions’ pavilion, and elsewhere. Cheques would arrive by mail or be offered to us. How many T-shirts and tote bags did you buy from us and proudly wear? Thank you for that huge financial support.

A financial report is a separate part of this agenda.

10.6 Strategy; We stood on high ground. We presented facts against fiction. We represented the community to municipal leaders and provincial

politicians. Our three-pronged approach was to address the public respectfully, to work with paid staff at all levels of government to seek improvements in our position, and to engage local, provincial, and federal politicians. Given the chance we'd deny Walker's flimsy arguments to the faces of their employees and consultants, and asked a series of 6 Ministers of the Environment and their colleagues, whatever the occasion, to state their opposition to the dump. We buried them under 134, 416 printed letters or more – you sent them directly too – a flood of emails, a phone zap, and direct conversations. We left no stone unturned. Ultimately, our determination, our strategies, our alliances and our determination prevailed, thanks to you.

5.6 Constitution Committee Report

There are several items in our constitution which require our attention today. They are as follows:

Part 8.8 “The Board shall have power to appoint agents or attorneys for the Corporation in or out of Canada, with such powers of management or otherwise, including the power to sub-delegate as it sees fit” which will allow us to appoint Amy Malcolm of Advocacy Tax Service to prepare our financial statement as we wind down by Labour Day, i.e., and a caretaker board to conduct that process.

Part 8.9 “The Corporation may obtain Directors and Officers liability insurance in such amounts and upon such terms as the Board may determine which means we can maintain insurance until we dissolve .

Part 10.1 “All committees of this organization shall be appointed by the Board of Directors and their term of office shall be for a period of one year or less if sooner terminated by the action of the Board of Directors”, in this case for that same period up to Labour Day.

Part 12.1 “Upon dissolution of the corporation and after payment of all the debts and liabilities, its remaining property shall be distributed or disposed of to a non-profit group whose aims are congruent with OPAL Alliance” allowing us to put some funds toward the cash-strapped Legal Aid-dependent Canadian Environmental Law Association partly in gratitude for

them waiving what would have been tens of thousands of dollars in fees and partly to assist them in their continued work to defend the environment and communities.

There will be motions around these matters in the next few minutes.