

Meeting Minutes

Niagara-on-the-Lake Residents Association Environment and Climate Resilience Infrastructure Committee

Date: June 16, 2026

Time: 3:03 PM

Location: 921 Concession Rd 2 NOTL

1. Attendance & Administration

- **Chair:** Ron Simkus
 - **Committee Members Present:** Kip Voegel, Rod Tennyson, Kate Sullivan, Chris Earl
 - **Observers:** Steve Hardaker
 - **Absent:** Phil Bergen, Richard Connelly
 - **Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order by the Chair.
 - **Agenda Updates:** The Harmony Residents Association update was added to the agenda. The overall agenda was approved.
 - **Conflicts of Interest:** No declarations of conflict of interest were made.
 - **Previous Minutes:** Phil Bergen previously distributed the minutes. Minor updates were made by the Chair, and the approved minutes will be posted to the website.
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2. Transportation Master Plan & Airport Expansion

- **NOTL Transportation Master Plan Update:** The Niagara-on-the-Lake Transportation Master Plan update remains paused while awaiting the Niagara Regional Master Plan update to advance. The NOTL online resident feedback link on Join The Conversation is not available yet. A survey link for the Niagara Region Transportation Master Plan Update was shared online, and members are highly encouraged to submit responses before it closes at the end of June.
- **Airport Expansion Phase 1:** The committee reviewed and discussed Phase 1 of the Niagara Regional Airport master plan. Over the next four years, this phase will focus on standard safety and efficiency upgrades, including runway run outs, tarmac widening, and the consolidation of fire suppression, maintenance, and administrative facilities.
- **Airport Expansion Phase 2 (Concerns):** Serious reservations were raised regarding Phase 2, which aims to extend the runway from 5,000 to 7,500 feet
 - **Agricultural Impact:** Paving over rare, fertile agricultural land directly threatens local vineyards and tender fruit farms.
 - **Pollution:** Members cited concerns regarding fine particulate matter affecting ecosystems, crop roots, human respiratory health, and critical insect/bird pollination. Rod Tennyson explained the characteristics of particulate pollution and recommended that this information be disseminated to help educate the public

- **Tourism Overcapacity:** Expanding the runway was communicated to the public as a feature that would help attract up to 6 to 10 million additional visitors, which would severely swamp local road networks, worsen existing parking crises, and damage the town's livability.
 - **Action Items:**
 - Inform and mobilize local vintners regarding the long-term economic risks that airport pollution poses to grape and wine quality.
 - Rod Tennyson to publish his business and environmental assessment regarding wide-body commercial aircraft risks as an independent opinion piece in the local paper.
 - It was agreed that further study also be focused on the changing technology of aeronautical propulsion and attempt to project what kind of aircraft configuration may be more practical 10 to 20 years out rather than kerosene fueled engines (ie electric or hydrogen)
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3. Old Hospital Site & Parking Proposals

- **RFQ Pivot:** The Town initially proposed taking out a \$14 million debenture to convert the old hospital into a two-story, 150-car parking lot to generate revenue. The Association successfully challenged this business case, noting that a prior \$100,000 community consultation report never recommended a parking lot, and the town's financial models for utilization and operating costs were unrealistic.
 - **Next Steps:** Staff backed away from the parking lot project and are issuing a Request for Quote(RFQ) aligned with original survey report. Members of the Association offered to assist town staff by identifying agents who could be paid to assist with RFQ. The Burton Foundation was quoted in the paper pleased to participate once an RFQ is developed.
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4. Wastewater Management & Major Developments

- **Parliament Oak Construction:** The developer holds a regional batch discharge permit to pump massive stormwater volumes directly into the sanitary sewer system rather than One Mile Creek. In a meeting with staff, members were informed that the batch discharge permit will be in place until the hotel is completed in 2028. The committee expressed deep concerns regarding the operational sensitivity and risk to the local sewage treatment plant.
 - **Randwood Application:** Given that the proposed Randwood project is an 8-to-10-year program, the committee will strongly lobby councilors to mandate a strict stormwater management plan *during* the construction phase to prevent dangerous stopgap batch discharge permits. The Association's planning group reviewed the file and will monitor legal developments alongside co-appellants.
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5. Flooding, Shoreline Resilience, & Conservation Amalgamation

- **Lake Level Tracking:** The Chair presented historical charts noting that 2026 experienced an extreme El Niño climate cycle, bringing local water levels dangerously close to historical worst-case flooding thresholds. Maximum risk and damage occur when levels reach 248 to 249 feet.
 - **Submerged Offshore Shoals:** The committee expressed strong support for the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority (NPCA) Coastal Resilience Program's proposal to build submerged stone shoals away from the Chautauqua, Niagara Shore and DND lands shorelines. These shoals successfully break wave energy and encourage sand deposition without harming local cliff swallow communities.
 - **Conservation District Amalgamation:** The province is restructuring conservation authorities, shrinking them from 36 'watersheds' down to 9 provincial 'districts'. The NPCA will be absorbed into a massive "Western Lake Ontario District" alongside Hamilton, Halton, and Port Credit. Members voiced concern over this amalgamation and the resulting severe loss of local citizen representation on the future board.
 - **Action Item:** Kip Voegel to attend the upcoming NPCA public meeting regarding the Four Mile Creek watershed study at the Community Centre June 17 and report back next meeting.
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6. Mississauga Road Reconstruction & Tree Removal

- **Tree Canopy Impact:** The Association attended an open house regarding the Mississauga Street reconstruction. Initial plans marked 48 trees for removal. Following strong pushback from residents the town reduced the targeted count to approximately 20 diseased or non-indigenous trees.
 - **Traffic Safety Concerns:** The current draft introduces a bicycle lane directly into the middle of the Mississauga Street intersection at Mary Street. The committee flagged this design as a safety hazard for cyclists, particularly inexperienced rental cyclists.
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7. Harmony Residents Association Update

- **Transition Details:** Correspondence with the Harmony Residents Group has been delayed because of Group's chair experiencing health issues and also complexity in the governance structure of the group when trying to wind things up.
 - **Action Item:** The committee will look further into the transition of the Harmony Group so that records and resources could be properly retrieved and archived. Efforts will be made by Kate Sullivan and Chris Earl to link the Harmony Group with the Chautauqua Residents Association.
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8. Other business

Steve Hardaker asked that the committee place the proposed expansion of the Walker Landfill on the agenda for next meeting because are elements of potential impact on the Glendale district of Niagara-on-the-Lake

9. Adjournment & Next Meeting

- **Next Meeting Date:** Confirmed for 2:00 pm **Tuesday, July 21, 2026** at a location to be confirmed.
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