

AGM 2016

PRESIDENTS REPORT

A tree has been our 'logo' or symbol for many years now.

Have you ever heard the saying with new trees/plants that first they sleep, then they creep and finally they leap?

Well, I have been thinking that applies to Upton. I see Upton one day as this grand tree.

A tree that will last, a tree that will grow tall and strong....but this takes time. And this is because it's all about the root structure. From above, it looks like not much is happening but from below? Roots are growing and taking hold and once those roots are big enough, the tree will start to get taller, and wider and stronger. Leaves will unfurl and birds will nest in it's branches. Animals and people will use it's shade. The air we breath will be cleaner.

It may be corny, but if you think of Upton in those terms, the delays and roadblocks seem less frustrating and the big picture comes back into focus.

In case you haven't noticed, I don't do this professionally. I aim to chair a successful meeting, but please keep in mind that I always emphasize substance over procedure.

That said, here is a summary of what we have been up to this past year.

Starting with someone light and fun.....

OUR LOGO

We decided that as we move forward, our “branding” could use some help, so we hired the firm TECHNOMEDIA to come up with a new Logo for Upton. Our own Beth Hoar spearheaded this project. We used our original logo as inspiration....**SHOW SLIDE** and they created these new logos for us. We hope you like them as much as we do!

SLIDE

MACPHAILS WOODS/ACADIAN FOREST

We continue to partner with Gary Schneider and the MacPhail Woods team to plant an Acadian Forest on the South Side of the Upton Farmlands, near the Prince Edward Home. A planting event took place last summer, on June 26th which some of us participated in. **SLIDE**

Volunteers planted native trees, shrubs, wildflowers and ferns including red oak, white ash, witch hazel, yellow coneflower and blue flag iris.

SLIDE

This coming Saturday, June 11th there will be another planting event hosted by Gary and the MacPhail Woods team. 500 trees are coming from the Greening Spaces program as well as plant material accessed through the Environment Canada's Eco Action Community Fund. We cannot thank Gary and his team enough for their efforts. Please come out and grab a shovel this Saturday, (10-3) if you can.

PROPERTY TAXES

As I explained at last years AGM, we are accruing a very healthy property tax debt with the City. To update those who were not here last year, until we are officially under NAPA, we are liable for these taxes. The province has agreed to waive them while we wait for our designation, but after 2 applications to the City, they will not. I also had a meeting with Mayor Lee this past fall, explaining our situation. We continue to look for a solution to this problem and I will keep you posted on the outcome. Hopefully, we will resolve it in the coming year. Again, once our destination is awarded, there will be no further taxes levied.

BOARD SEATS

The provincial board position was filled by Todd Dupuis, who is with the **Department of Land and Communities ...as DIRECTOR.....**Todd brings extensive experience in areas of environmental planning and conservation and he has been a tremendous addition to our board. We are lucky to have him and we are sorry he wan't able to join us tonight.

As for other board seats, my term is the only one expiring, and as per our bylaws, I have been reappointed for another 2 year term. We have decided to change this in the future. If our proposed new bylaws are adopted by the members later in the meeting, it will mean that all elected board members will be renewed by election only vs reappointment.

We currently have one vacancy on the board. Kirsten's tenure on the board was ended last August. As per our bylaws, the board appoints someone to fill a vacated seat for the duration of the term. As Kirsten was reappointed to the board for a two year term, from 2015 to 2017, the board will be appointing someone to fill her seat. While this has taken far longer than we intended, we are currently vetting several excellent possibilities. We are setting the bar high and are looking for someone who will bring a great deal of experience and expertise to our board.

CANADA REVENUE AGENCY

So, once again I have to explain that more delays have occurred and we still have not achieved our Charitable Status. I'll keep this short, (because it's a very long saga) but between lost files (CRA), delays with our lawyer, and our CRA assigned officer taking a 3 month leave of absence, we are not there yet. At our lawyers suggestion, we have decided that we will vote on the rewrite of the bylaws tonight, as well as the Objects and Purposes that we voted on in December. If these pass, both documents will go to Corporations so we can get what is required by Canada Revenue, being a 'supplementary letters patent'. This will then get submitted to our case officer at CRA with a new application. He assures

me that this process should only take a matter of weeks once he receives this information.

LISCENCE AGREEMENT

SLIDE

As many of you know, we have been seeking an agreement with the Province to lease the adjacent property to Upton, on the North end of the North side. The lease of this property is integral to our implementation of the Master Plan. The property is approximately 24 acres and is bound by the Hurry Road on the North and the river by the West. It has been over two years and we finally received the proposed wording for the lease. However, the lease included a provision requiring the Trust to pay the property taxes on this land. As we are unable to pay these taxes, I have recently written to the Province asking for these taxes to be waived and we have yet to hear back. I am confident that we will reach a successful conclusion to this in the near future.

NAPA

SLIDE

Last October I gave a presentation on the benefits of a NAPA designation to the Upton Trust and to the Province. I met with

the Hon. Robert Mitchell, Minister of Communities, Land and Environment and the Hon. Paula Biggar Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy. Todd Dupuis and John MacQuarrie were also in attendance. This was done in order to bring them up to speed on Upton and in hopes that they would be able to champion our cause with Cabinet, whose approval is required.

I am happy to report that we are very close to receiving our NAPA designation. This has been approximately 6 years in the making, involving a great deal of time and effort among the stakeholders. It would be impossible to impart to you all what an endeavour this has been and I can only say that other than obtaining the ownership of the property, this will be the most important achievement of this Trust.

Getting our NAPA designation has been a cornerstone of the Upton Trust and the Upton Farm Preservation Network before us. NAPA provides Upton with protection that is unavailable in any other form. It will keep Upton safe for generations to come. Safe from development, safe from deterioration of the natural area, and yes, safe from property taxes! Upton is not a natural fit for NAPA, so it took a great deal of compromise from all stakeholders to find middle ground and make it work for us. Some may see this designation as a negative, but I assure you it is anything but. If you want to see Upton stay GREEN and be there for your great, great, great grandchildren to use and enjoy, then NAPA is wonderful thing. Having the property protected under NAPA simply means that we promise to tread lightly. We promise to not abuse the land and to be respectful, responsible custodians. It's that simple.

MASTER PLAN

SLIDE

After all is said and done, it's time to get our vision off of paper and begin the implementation of the MASTER PLAN. Some of our short term priorities can be seen on this slide.

SLIDE.

So there you have it. It's been a crazy year, to say the least. We are making progress and I ask for your continued support.

Thank you.