

# The Mississippi Mills Residents' Association

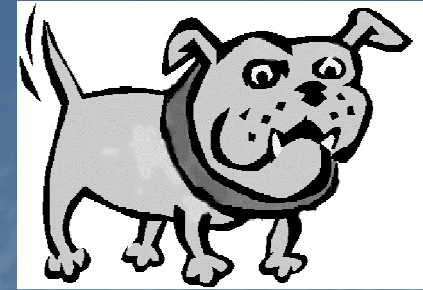
Annual General Meeting

May 30, 2007

# Agenda

- Welcome
  - MMRA in review
- Reports – Financials, Minutes, Membership
- President's Report
  - 2007 summary
  - "Dialogue" begins...
- Nominations Committee
  - MMRA Board Nominations and election
- Guest Speaker
  - Jeff Kohl, Ontario Healthy Communities Coalition
- Leaders' remarks
- Closing

# The MMRA's journey



- 2002: MMRA was “born” out of community concern
  - about – not against – development. Esp. planning processes – Whitetail Ridge development at the time.
- 2003: Municipal election
  - MMRA adopted a “watchdog” stance in response to view that planning processes were not reflecting community concerns.
- 2004-2005: “One by-law at a time”
  - Approach mostly reactive: pesticides, development, infrastructure, rural concerns, etc. Lacked strategic view
  - Community Official Plan (COP) progresses to conclusion
- 2006: Municipal election: education stance
  - bulletins on Sewage Treatment, Downtowns, Pesticides, etc
  - despite community’s tentativeness, unable to “lock and load”...

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# 2007: dialogue, collaboration

- 2007: MMRA sets sights on 2010 election
  - begin “dialogue towards an inheritable community”
  - develop contacts and communication among community and stakeholder groups e.g. Monthly President’s Communiqué, invitation of groups to AGM, open up discussion forum
  - focus on building collaboration and shared outcomes among stakeholder groups; (Ontario Healthy Communities group offers valuable input);

# Why “dialogue”?

- “Dialogue towards an inheritable community – 2010” is a proposition to set a baseline for community governance that can serve to direct and monitor the performance of future Councils of Mississippi Mills.
- It’s Daniel Shipman’s fault...

Shipman (maybe) said “Here’s a river... let’s build a mill ...!”

- We say... here’s a river, let’s build a healthy, inheritable community...
  - What our town can become = our vision
  - What we care about and choose to nurture = our values
  - How we treat each other in achieving our community goals = our principles

# What do we value?

## ■ Environment and nature:

- ADHS students - Council ban on plastic bags
- Mississippi Valley Field Naturalists - awareness;
- Follow-the-leader on urban pesticides by-law.

## ■ Agri-Food:

- Not just for senior government; e.g. Fulton - Excellence in Innovation Award.
- Municipality must find ways to encourage: e.g. OFA input to COP. But also farm-gate supply, viable farmers' market, slow-food promotion, etc.

## ■ Business:

- Trying to build on "core" strengths - e.g. urban heritage downtowns, MAAP, rural agri-food awareness

## ■ Cultural/social:

- Hotbed of arts, crafts, music, culture – yet complacent about priority

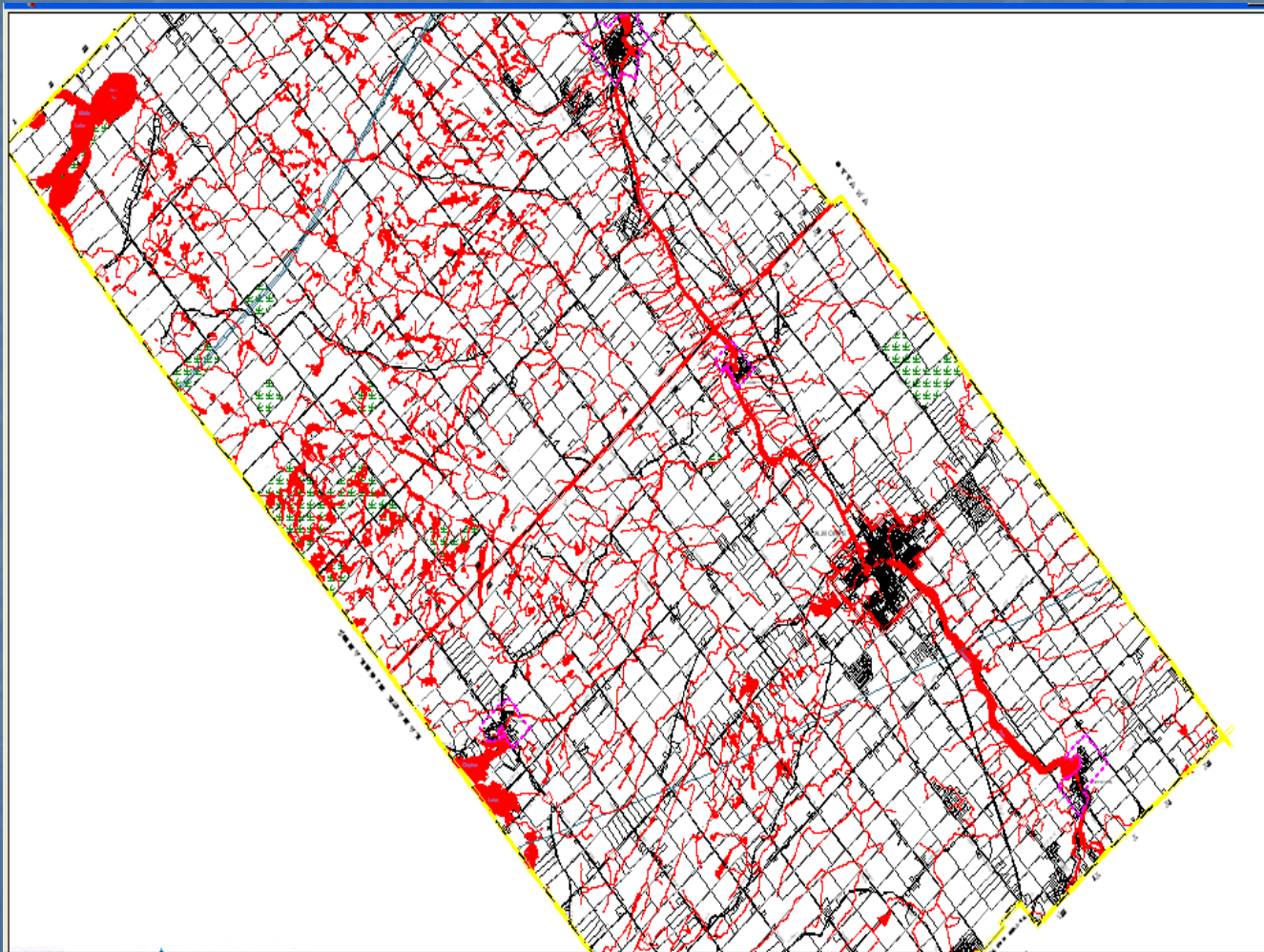
## ■ Urban Development:

- Poor history in collaborative outcomes, changing rules e.g. 150m ag buffer changed to 30m, troubled "gateway development", shared road costs for Ann St;
- Today's OPPI's Workshop: Okotoks Plan, PerthWorks;
- Also Spring St Extension group's work, Town's "Good Neighbour Lighting", "Porchlight Project", etc

## ■ Farmland and water:

- Farmland buffer debate;
- Mississippi watershed - "lifeblood" of our town... yet oil spills, no river advocate

# What do we value? cont'd



# What do we value? cont'd

## Community Official Plan (COP)-process not vision

- Undoubtedly the COP is an important tool for planners and Council
  - a legal document containing the policies which guide the development, growth and change of a community
  - assists elected officials, municipal staff, developers, and the public in their efforts to maintain and strengthen the environmental, economic, physical and social fabric of the community
- Simply a mechanism for due diligence in municipal decision-making and administration

BUT

THE C.O.P. DOES NOT CONTAIN  
A COMMUNITY-BASED STRATEGIC VISION

“Lead, follow or get the heck out of my way...!” My dad. Yours too?

- Wanted: Clear statement on what sort of community Mississippi Mills aspires to be
  - Give voice to community leaders not just political leaders and administrators (e.g. good example is MAAP’s cooperative business engagement)
  - Engage natural communities of interest, as shareholders, in determining priorities (e.g. Appleton an example of neighbourhood activism)
  - Encourage grass-roots input, wide swath of opinion

# Tapping residents' input



1. Build a transformational team of community leaders.
2. Actively cultivate dialogue, discussion and debate among residents/ "shareholders" - and document.
3. Validate by referendum, plebiscite, survey, poll, etc – before Nov 2010.

# The community benefits from...

- a “Community Strategic Team” – a transformational group of volunteer community leaders closely connected to their constituencies.
  - Don’t re-invent the wheel –MMRA Board is the perfect mechanism to get this train on the rails...then, who knows?
- a community statement of vision, values and principles for Mississippi Mills, as
  - A benchmark for candidates and voters – community’s platform
  - A standard of measure for Council decisions - probity
  - A “GPS” for the journey towards building an inheritable community - assessment

# Assimilate community groups?



- Is this an “assimilate or die” offer?
  - definitely not...
  - no “umbrella” organization
- Constituent groups are vital, independent entities and must remain so
  - The MMRA Board structure is simply the most natural place to form the nucleus of the discussion for now.

# Summary

- We are an amalgamated municipality – rural and urban, roads, rivers, farmland and hi-speed (maybe!) are some “things” that connect us.
- No party-political system: winners ride on personality, connections and networks, rather than platforms and ideas. The acclaimed... well... just get acclaimed.
- Councillors are hard-working, dedicated people, committed to their community. But operate without benefit of a long term vision: no pay-off for leadership and foresight - just ostracism and criticism
- A “community vision statement” provides a benchmark, encourages candidates /councillors to step up to community-based vision, values and principles; influences quality of debate, voting outcomes and strand of decision-making.
- ACTION: Help to form the MM Community Strategic Team:
  - Nominate a leader: yourself...
  - Get connected through membership
  - Join the free Discussion Group

# Some references

- Community Official Plan: See the Town's website at: [http://www.mississippimill.com/Documents/163/Sept 26 as Approved by MMAH.pdf](http://www.mississippimill.com/Documents/163/Sept%2026%20Approved%20by%20MMAH.pdf)
  - MMRA website, for this presentation and to join Yahoo Discussion Group: [www.mmra.ca](http://www.mmra.ca)
  - MAAP website: <http://maapdowntowns.vox.com/>
  - MVFN: <http://www.mvfn.ca/>
  - MM Arts Council: <http://mmac.typepad.com/>
  - Ontario Healthy Communities Coalition <http://www.healthycommunities.on.ca>
- Thank you for your support. The MMRA Board

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*Go Sens Go!*

