

REPORT: OUR 2022 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Thanks to all of you who joined us on June 22 for our first – and, we hope, only – virtual AGM. Our Chair presented not one but three years-in-review, summarizing a long and impressive list of accomplishments during that time. Among them: an Ontario Nature award; presentations at the invitation of other NGOs; the creation of “The Accidental Oasis,” a video telling our story – 50 years in 10 minutes; several major reports and submissions to various levels of government; being featured in a CBC documentary.... And of course there was the apparently never-ending need to challenge and correct the false information about a nonexistent Pickering airport that continued to be spread by our local governments.

Our Chair concluded her speech by reminding everyone that the local municipal election this fall will require a concerted effort to ensure that Pickering’s next council is composed of women and men who will champion the environment and will commit to confirming Pickering’s long-standing opposition to an airport on prime farmland.

Members voted to support an important change to our mission statement, one that reflects our growing commitment to work with others, beyond the borders of the Federal Lands, to protect the environment, save farmland, and stop sprawl:

Article 2 – Our Mission in the face of climate crisis and growing threats to food security

1. To convince the federal government to cancel plans for an airport on the federal Pickering Lands and instead preserve the Lands as a secure food and water resource for Canada’s largest urban area.
2. To support organizations dedicated to protecting rural areas from urban expansion and environmental degradation – especially those that involve prime farmland and water resources

We said thank you and *au revoir* to departing board members Sari Sarieddine, Brigitte Sopher, and Ellen Tihane, who helped the cause in so many ways through difficult times – and they did this without having the joy and camaraderie of actually being able to be together for these last two years. We know they will continue to do good work, important work, because they are all, quite simply, those kinds of people. We’ll miss them.

And we welcomed three impressive new board members, all with proven dedication to the causes we espouse. You’ll soon be able to learn more about Helen Brenner, David LeRoy, and Carmen Lishman on the About Us page of our website.

And with that, and barring unforeseen circumstances, we say so long until September. Stay safe, help each other, let your gardens and nature recharge your batteries and heal your souls. There is work to be done. Let’s do it together. But for now, we rest – although always with an ear to the ground.

SHOUT-OUT!

Wishing success to our partners at The Second Wedge Brewing Co., rebuilding after the May 21 Uxbridge tornado; and to Joyfully Organic, hit by the same “derecho.” Virtual hugs to Youth Wing member Marc Gibbons, fighting non-Hodgkins Lymphoma with astonishing grace and humour. Happy nuptials to three more Youth Wing members – Sara Barclay, Reid Williamson, and Sari Sarieddine. And applause and admiration for Northwestern Ontario Youth Wing member Alison Bezubiak, rescuer of injured turtles, sending them via Turtle Taxi all the way to the Ontario Turtle Trauma Centre in Peterborough.