

June 9-2021

Dear Mayor Guthrie and Councillors.

As a representative of the board of the Yorklands Green Hub I bring the community focus from our members to the former Ontario Reformatory lands which need your Heritage Conservation Designation that will support continued generational use of this site.

9 years ago, like many other Guelphites I had never been to this property. I knew about its novel history as a provincial institution for incarceration and reform of young men and as a major employer in this city for most of the last century. But I was contacted by Jack Milne from the Guelph Men's Club who had a vision for re-purposing this place as an educational and demonstration ecology hub to meet the challenges of future climate stress that is becoming a great challenge to all cities.

Our organization has delegated before and received your support, in principle, in 2014 and in 2019. We have endorsements from many organizations, businesses and institutions in our city. I want to quote from only a few to show you the breadth of interest that might help you see why we need the strongest possible heritage designation to guide the re-purposing of this property in the near future.

"The YGH embodies the principles of the Guelph Innovation District Secondary Plan because it seeks to protect the natural heritage system and cultural heritage resources, create sustainable and energy-efficient infrastructure, and create an attractive and memorable place. It also aligns with our smart cities project, Our Food Future, through its proposal to pair urban agriculture with outdoor education, recreation and heritage preservation. Its proposed renewable energy demonstration projects support the city's goal to become a net-zero community by 2050." - Cam Guthrie, Mayor

Guelph Men's Club Environmental Committee - "the environment is an entailed inheritance which we borrow from our children. Lose what we have and we will have lost their future. The environment is the ultimate human right". - Jack Milne

Trout Unlimited Canada – “there is strong merit in working with Yorklands Green Hub to engage and inform the public on stronger watershed and environmental stewardship” - Silvia D’Amelio, CEO

The G360 Institute for Groundwater Research, College of Engineering and Physical Science at the University of Guelph-

“ strongly endorses your proposal to transform part of the former Guelph Correctional Centre within the City of Guelph into a public “Ontario Sustainable Environments Centre”.

“ The Yorklands Green Hub would complement G360’s groundwater research program by providing unique opportunities to conduct field-based research on groundwater and surface water processes relating to sustainable water resource utilization and management, at a scale relevant to communities around the globe. The hub would also provide a forum to inspire younger generations on the importance of groundwater protection and sustainable water management. Collaboration between G360 and Yorklands would enhance scientific research, teaching at various levels, and public outreach events supported by professors and students at the University of Guelph”. Beth Parker, Director

Transition Guelph – “In prior centuries, the founders of Canada had the vision to preserve our National and Provincial Parks. The Yorklands represents that same far sighted vision at the municipal level that only comes once in many lifetimes. Transition Guelph is whole heartedly behind the Yorklands Green Hub to create an indelible expression of generations to come.” - Steve Tedesco, Chair.

“The Wellington Catholic District School Board is interested in exploring a partnership with YGH to provide outdoor education and environmental education programming experiences. These potential programs would provide opportunities to teach the importance of knowing the biodiversity of our local area and making connections for students on important issues such as water preservation, climate change, species biodiversity and more.” - *Mike Glazier, Superintendent of Education, Wellington Catholic District School Board*

rare Charitable Research Reserve. “We are interested in supporting the efforts of YGH to bring the Guelph Correctional Center under non-profit management to benefit conservation and the community. rare remains interested in exploring options for securing and restoring green space on the property.”

- *Tom Woodcock, Planning Ecologist,*

Our Energy Guelph-

We are interested in exploring a partnership with YGH to use the site as a platform for demonstrating low-carbon energy efficiency and renewable energy technologies. We also plan to showcase techniques to enhance the resilience of our buildings (and, indeed, our entire way of life) to shocks like extreme weather events and stresses like invasive species and pathogens. This will help members of our community to see these technologies and techniques in action, to learn more about the benefits they offer, and to learn how to implement them in their own homes and businesses. - *Alex Chapman, Executive Director*

-“Preserving the former GCC site is a unique opportunity for Guelph and Ontario to be leaders in creating and maintaining access to naturalized spaces as well providing a platform for greater food security, green technology, and overall health and well-being. We are interested in exploring a partnership with YGH to expand our delivery of, and level of access to, essential Nature Immersion and Mentorship programs. - *Chris Green, Director, The Guelph Outdoor School*

Our programs over the past 6 years have included many walks and talks related to the environment and history of this site. The evaluation cards filled out following these connections tell us a story.

I want to take the remaining time to quote some of the responses written in evaluation feedback following our program delivery of regular walks on the site or our public events on the themes of Heritage, Urban Agriculture, Water Stewardship and Sustainable Energy.

The Yorklands matter because:

- Of its history and we need open space.
- Open space is so important to wildlife and me.
- We need a space for research on environment conservation and ways to live with climate change.
- It is a beautiful retreat any time of the year
- Incredible potential and so much of our history.
- to inspire nature connection
- A Guelph eco-centre park is timely and vitally important
- We need to promote nature everywhere

- Great area to hike, view birds and native spaces
- Preserve this natural area in Guelph for youth experience and education for all of us
- this land will serve as excellent pollinator habitat
- we need more natural green space.
- Need to preserve the history here and the natural space
- Education and research opportunities
- Beautiful area full of potential for diverse habitats
- It is very important to get it going ASAP
- Public spaces are important to community
- This property has such potential for Guelph
- Beautiful place; important to keep it; a blessing
- Wonderful opportunity to preserve this for future generations

Over 8 years we have partnered with classes from University of Waterloo, Wilfred Laurier University and University of Guelph and worked with both school boards. We have led tours for Immigrant Services, history, geography and landscape architecture courses for their student research. We have delivered our Enviro- series to an engaged public. We continue to deliver our Polli-Patches , Noticing NatTure and Tall Trees program in the schools and the community . We currently are delivering our Foodster program off site at Sacred Heart CS grade 8 through the next few months.

The OR site was designed as a whole and the space with its trails offers mental and physical solace for hundreds of people each month. Being in this pastoral setting has supported the mental and physical health of returning veterans from Afghanistan, caregivers, families and people of all ages. It continues to bring tourists from the 100 miles around us to its uniqueness. This space can do so much to support the region in meeting severe climate stresses with resilience, communal strength and shared solutions. The legacy of this decision will be felt in perpetuity through protection of this site .

Thank you sincerely for your attention and public service to us.

Norah Chaloner
Chair
Yorklands Green Hub

