



Niagara Escarpment Commission
An agency of the Government of Ontario

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**FINAL MINUTES OF M854/04-2026
NIAGARA ESCARPMENT COMMISSION
VIRTUAL
(Microsoft Teams)
April 16, 2026**

MEMBERS PRESENT

R. Vacca (Chair), J. Chevalier (in at 10 am), M. Francis, L. Golden, L. Kiernan, G. Krantz, G. Little, D. McKinlay, D. Measures, D. Nielsen, R. Palmer, L. Price, J. Vida, A. Witteveen.

REGRETS

None.

STAFF PRESENT

S. Carey, J. Isaac, D. Thompson, J. Sperling, S. Robinson, O. MacDonald, M. Morris, K. Adair, R. Burns, L. Wang, Z. Khan, A. Bochenek, J. Olah.

OTHER ATTENDEES

Demetrius Kappos, Counsel, Ministry of Natural Resources; William Wood, Natural Heritage Land Use Planning Advisor, Ministry of Natural Resources.

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER 9:30 a.m.

Chair Rocco (Rocky) Vacca presided.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Chair read the Land Acknowledgment.

INTRODUCTIONS / ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair welcomed the participants to the meeting. He advised that two commissioners have been appointed and will hopefully be at the May meeting.

DIRECTOR'S REMARKS

The Director advised that there is still no indication when the coordinated plan review will be initiated. He noted that he has met with ministry staff regarding the municipal commissioner appointments that all end on Dec. 31. Letters will be sent to the impacted municipalities in late summer to advise of this. He also advised that recruitment is in process for several senior planner positions, acknowledging the impact to current staff workload capacity. He informed the Commission that the delegation for Ontario Craft Wineries will be on the May meeting agenda instead of April.

The Director reminded participants of the Code of Conduct and Accessibility meeting mandates, and advised staff are available to assist with any technical issues.

BUSINESS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

No business arising.

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

M854R1/04-2026

Moved By: Witteveen

Seconded By: Price

"That the Commission approve the March 26, 2026, Commission Minutes M853-03-2026, as written."

Motion Carried

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST – Declaration of Conflicts of Interest

None declared.

M854R2/04-2026

Moved By: Krantz

Seconded By: Golden

"That the persons representing the matters listed on the agenda be invited to address the Commission."

Motion Carried

M854R3/04-2026

Moved By: Kiernan

Seconded By: Measures

"That the Commission enter into closed session."

Motion Carried

M854R4/04-2026

Moved By: Krantz

Seconded By: Palmer

"That the Commission reopen the meeting to the public."

Motion Carried

C4

STAFF PRESENTATION

Overview of the Development Permit Application Clean Up Project

BACKGROUND

A project has been initiated to address the backlog of open applications that was formed through steadily rising application submissions since 2014, and a surge during the covid 19 pandemic. A competition is in progress to hire a temporary senior planner dedicated to reducing the backlog. The project's senior planner will be in place until the end of December, and there will be a report back to the commission at the December 2026 or January 2027 meeting. At the time of the April commission meeting, 172 applications were identified as meeting the criteria for the project. To date, 10 inactive files have been closed, and 6 staff reports have been submitted to management since the project commenced in March 2026.

SPEAKERS

- Kendra Adair, Senior Planner, reviewed the staff presentation and answered questions.
- Suzanne Robinson, Senior Strategic Advisor, was present to answer questions.

M854R5/04-2026

Moved By: Vida

Seconded By: Price

"That the Commission receive the presentation for information."

Motion Carried

The Commission noted strong support for the project and is looking forward the report back later this year.

CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

Information only Items

- G1** Director Approvals and Dashboards for month of MARCH 2026
- G2** Appeals and Hearings update as of MARCH 31, 2026
- G3** Plan Amendments Status update as of MARCH 31, 2026

M854R6/04-2026

Moved By: Little
Seconded By: Nielsen

"That the Commission accept Consent Agenda items G1, G2, and G3."

Motion Carried

DISCUSSION

The Director provided an update on file 2023-674, 457 Main Street West, Grimsby, which the commission refused at the May 2025 meeting. The decision was appealed and upheld by the Ontario Land Tribunal's final decision issued on April 14, 2026.

NEW BUSINESS

No new business.

ADJOURNMENT

M854R7/04-2026

Moved By: McKinlay

Seconded By: Vida

"That this meeting be adjourned."

Motion Carried

Time of Adjournment: 11:25 a.m.



Rocco (Rocky) Vacca
Chair