



Spring Newsletter May 2014

Edited by John Campbell

Buried Creeks in Guelph

April 10, 2014

Jeremy Shute

A century ago a wet spring would present challenges to people wishing to travel throughout the area that is now Guelph. Where there were no bridges, the creeks and the saturated lands they drained made movement difficult. People had to go up or downstream to the next available dry crossing point, unless they were willing to risk getting stuck, wet or dirty. There is a story about a farmer, working the land in the spring, who would often get stuck with his team of horses in the creek that crosses Forest Street, just west of Maple Street.

Nowadays the natural system of rivers and creeks (and associated landscape topography) shapes the patterns of land use and travel. If you live in the Old University neighbourhood and are travelling downtown, you have three main choices – cross the bridges on Edinburgh Rd. or Gordon St. or the one-way bridge (the Gow bridge) at McCrae Blvd. Other less convenient options are either to travel upstream to the crossing of the Eramosa River at Victoria Road, or downstream to the next crossing of the Speed River at the Hanlon Expressway. You are basically funnelled into a small set of water crossings to avoid getting stuck, wet or dirty.

Depending on where you live, to go downtown from the Old University neighbourhood you also need to travel downhill along, for example, Gordon, Martin, Mary, Forest Hill, Maple or Edinburgh into the flood plain of the Speed River, cross the river and then climb uphill on the other side. The bottom of those hills marks an area where every decade or two the river flooded before its flow was controlled by the building of dams like the Wellington St. Dam beside John McCrae School and channelization (1956-60) of the Speed from Gordon to the Hanlon Expressway. Often the houses in the flood plain are newer than those up the hill since historically people built in the best places first, and then gradually were forced to use less desirable parts of the landscape. In Guelph, less desirable usually meant wet organic soil, highly prone to flooding. Such areas were often used for farming or left undeveloped until the value of the land exceeded the costs of draining it.

In many of Guelph's neighbourhoods you need to travel downhill to get to school. Numerous schools in Guelph

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING NOTICE

Wednesday, 2014 May 7

7 pm

Guelph Community Christian School Gym
195 College Ave W

President's Report - John Gruzleski
Treasurer's Report - Roy Allingham
Election of Officers and Members-at-large for 2014-15

Guest Speaker - Jeremy Shute
"Buried Creeks in Guelph"

Councillors' Corner

were built in locations that were unsuitable for other purposes. In the 1960 and 1970s, a number of schools were built in parts of town where less desirable land was available because it was adjacent to creeks and was wet, at least seasonally. This pattern is not as easily distinguishable in the Old University neighbourhood as it is in others – only John McCrae Public School and the former Christian school on Water Street are built in the former flood plain.

Parks in the City of Guelph follow the same pattern - they were plopped into places not already being used for other purposes. The reason that many of Guelph's parks are along the rivers and the creeks is only partially because such areas are esthetically pleasing.

The creeks and rivers in Guelph affect us every day. They have influenced the locations of our homes, our places of work, the locations of our schools and the places we take our dogs for a walk. They also directly influence our choices and options for travel routes throughout the City.

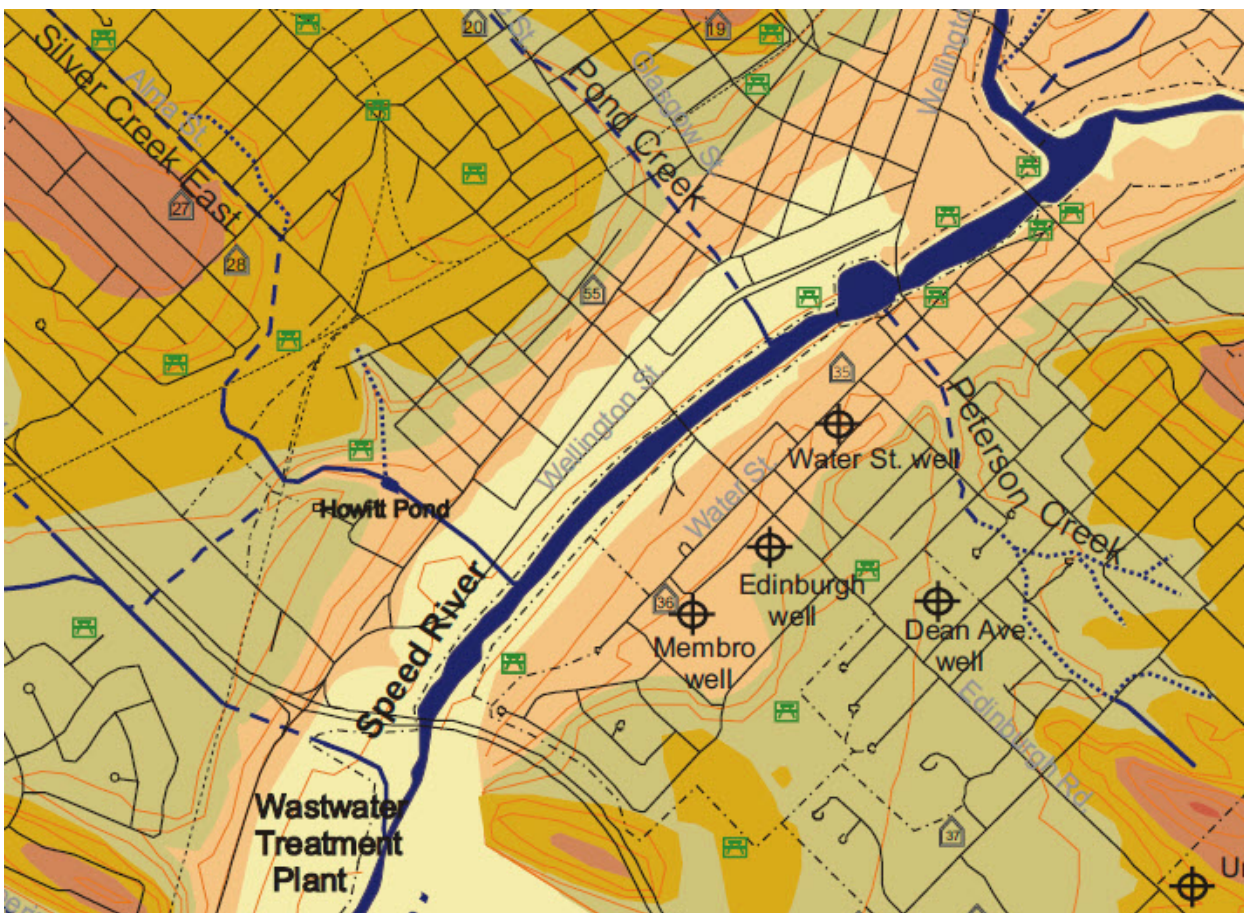
The influence of the Speed and Eramosa rivers is obvious. However, quietly flowing below us and around us throughout Guelph are numerous creeks. Have you ever wondered why there is a little dip in the road on Forest Street, just down the hill from Guthrie Park? Or the dip on Maple Street, just south of Forest? Or the series of low back yards in the Rodney/Woodside area? Why has there been a small forest in front of the Gazer property at 94 Maple Street now severed for development? Why there were opportunities for such recent

infill housing at the corner of James Street and Forest Hill Drive, or at the south end of Woodside Rd? The cause is Peterson Creek, which you probably never heard of and is now underground from which it emerges as a trickle from a pipe on the south side of the Speed a few yards west of the Gow Bridge.

Throughout Guelph, numerous relatively unknown creeks are still flowing and subtly influencing the people who live near them. The bottoms of most significant valleys in the City have a flowing creek or river. Have you ever heard of Stevenson Creek, or Pond Creek or Imperial Creek? Silver Creek is familiar because of the road and beer, but

where is it? Over the past 17 years a map of these creeks has been developed. I grew up in the Old University Neighbourhood and from time to time have investigated and explored Guelph's hidden network of creeks. The following map fragment shows those in the Old University Neighbourhood. It is taken from the Guelph Natural Heritage map of which a copy is posted on the OUNRA website (www.ounra.wordpress.com).

On the map fragment:
 ----- indicates creeks that are buried in culverts,
 indicates creeks that existed before area development.



Old University Neighbourhood Residents' Association Membership Registration Form

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____ Postal Code: _____

E-mail: _____ I am willing to deliver some Newsletters

Annual membership is \$20.00 per family. Please make cheques payable to OUNRA. Bring form to the meeting or deliver to Roy Allingham, 18 Mary St., N1G2A7. Thank you for your support.

President's Letter

John Gruzleski, May 2014

Greetings to all residents of the Old University Neighbourhood.

The long, hard winter was not made any easier by virtually impassable sidewalks that the City could not keep clear. We can only hope for a milder winter next year.

As many of you know, OUNRA has been lobbying the City for some years to improve control of shared rental housing. A major concern is the health and safety of tenants especially since many students are unaware of building regulations. In November 2013 the City held two open meetings where attendees answered questions on various approaches to licencing. City Council had asked the Planning Department to establish a community advisory group to advise them, the group to comprise equal numbers of community representatives, landlords and tenants as well as somebody from the University and somebody from Affordable Housing.

As a community representative I attended two meetings in late January. Landlord groups were well represented, but there was only one other community representative. All attendees had been at one or more of the open meetings in late November, and had indicated on the registration form that they would be willing to serve on the advisory group, if asked. I find it disappointing that there is apparently so little interest in the issue that only two people from the community at large were willing to devote some time to provide ideas to the City.

The discussions were positive and fruitful despite opposing points of view. The Planning Department's recommendations will go to the Planning, Building, Engineering and Environment Committee meeting on May 5. These will be publicly available two weeks before then so that delegations can make presentations first to the Committee and subsequently to the full City Council. The Committee will then deliver its recommendations to the Council which is scheduled to vote on it at its May 26 meeting. I will be able to report on the May 5 meeting at the OUNRA AGM on May 7.

Last year, the City made changes to its official plan (OPA 48) after public consultation. The changes to the official plan were approved by the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing late last year. Subsequently appeals were launched to the Ontario Municipal Board regarding several aspects of the modified official plan. The most serious from the point of view of Old University is an appeal by Abode Varsity Living Inc. to allow purpose built student housing in an area within 1km of the University of Guelph. The appeal states no specific site within this area and asks for relief from the City by-laws regarding building height and parking space. No date has yet been set for the OMB hearing. The issue is especially serious because it is not site specific and my understanding is that the City is strongly opposed. I may have more details by the AGM, and our councillors can be questioned at that time.

Approval of the Heritage Conservation District that forms a significant part of our neighbourhood is progressing, albeit slowly. The consultants and the City's Planning Department have been working together to create the implementation plan. There will be a public meeting to discuss the plan and guidelines on Monday, May 12. It is anticipated that the City Council will decide whether or not to proceed with the plan sometime in August.

I am happy to announce that the OUNRA now has a working web site. You can visit it at www.ounra.wordpress.com. The site is under construction but will contain a list of the members of the executive committee, contact information, and other information on our mandate. We will post copies of our newsletters for the past two or three years and important information regarding developments in the neighbourhood.

Our executive committee is always in search of new recruits, especially younger members of the neighbourhood. The only qualification is that you be resident in the boundaries of our mandated area. If you are interested in serving please contact me. We meet normally once a month. As a new member you can expect to spend the first several months to a year in a learning process, after which you will be asked to take on various responsibilities in line with your expertise and time availability.

We were unsuccessful in recruiting a student for our committee this year which is unfortunate because we have had good experience with them in the past and a student viewpoint is different from that of the permanent residents. If you are a student planning to live in the Old University Neighbourhood during the next academic year, and are interested in learning about neighbourhood issues and local government, please do contact me.

I hope to see many of you at our AGM on May 7. [See notice on page 1.]

John

Federation of Urban Neighbourhoods AGM

The Federation of Urban Neighbourhoods of Ontario is an umbrella group of community associations throughout Ontario. OUNRA is a member. FUNO shares information on matters of interest to communities such as dealing with the OMB, Waste Management, Shared Rental Housing. Its annual meeting is being held in Guelph on Saturday May 10, 2014, 10:30 am - noon, at the University of Guelph in room 234 of the MacKinnon Building.
www.uoguelph.ca/campus/map/mackinnon/.

All interested members of community associations are invited to attend at no charge. For more information contact the FUNO secretary David Josephy, djosephy@uoguelph.ca. The agenda consists of a short business meeting followed by two presentations on urban issues. One of the speakers will be Leanne Piper, Councillor, Guelph Ward 5. Lunch will be supplied at the end of the meeting.

Who's on the Executive?

We are your neighbours working together to protect and enhance the quality of life in our community. If you want more information or would like to participate in neighbourhood organizing call or write one of the people on the list below.

President	John Gruzleski	519-829-3225	j.gruzleski@sympatico.ca
Vice-Pres.	Dick Chaloner	519-823-9601	nrchaloner@hotmail.com
Past Pres.	Daphne Wainman-Wood	519-780-2622	daphne@taloarchitect.ca
Secretary	Sylvia Watson	519-780-5328	sylvia.watson@gmail.com
Treasurer	Roy Allingham	519-829-2406	roy.allingham@sympatico.ca

Members-at large:

John Campbell	519-763-9771	johnandaileen@rogers.com
John Caron	519-821-8894	caronjd@albedo.net
David Josephy	519-821-8293	djosephy@uoguelph.ca
Lisa Mactaggart	519-821-7371	lmactaggart@sympatico.ca
Judy Martin	519-829-3596	judymartin@rogers.com
Scott Poland	519-837-5975	spoland79@gmail.com
Bruce Ryan	519-766-9684	bryan102@gmail.com
Tony Smith	519-836-3898	tony.smith37@sympatico.ca
Peter Stonehouse	519-836-9841	aastonehouse@bell.net

OUNRA website:- www.OUNRA.wordpress.com

The Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) (editor)

The OMB hears applications and appeals on land use planning (zoning bylaws, official plans, etc.) under the Planning Act and other legislation. The OMB was established in 1897 as the Ontario Railway and Municipal Board to "oversee municipalities' accounts and to supervise the then rapidly growing rail transportation system between and within municipalities". It assumed its current name in 1932.

It is governed by the Ontario Municipal Board Act and can modify and reverse planning decisions by the municipalities on appeal by developers or private citizens. Its members are appointed by the Ontario government. It is independent and to change its powers requires a legislative change to the above Act.

Homeowners feel it favours developers, which may not be fair. The OMB is the instrument of provincial authority over cities' urban planning decisions, so if you do not like its outcomes maybe it is not to blame. Of course, developers have the funds and know-how to hire planners and lawyers to argue their case effectively. Homeowners appear before the Board at a disadvantage if they don't do the same.

The Ontario government has talked for years about modifying the way that the OMB works but cannot seem to come up with a proposal.

The OUNRA executive involves itself in all OMB hearings involving homeowners in the university neighbourhood. While the homeowners don't usually get what they want at these hearings, the developers don't get everything they want either.

For more information and opinion on the OMB see:

<https://www.omb.gov.on.ca/english/home.html>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ontario_Municipal_Board

http://www.thestar.com/news/queenspark/2013/08/27/how_the_omb_stifles_democracy_in_ontario_cohn.html

<http://blogs.ottawacitizen.com/2014/04/07/the-ombs-not-going-anywhere-the-new-minister-in-charge-of-it-says/>

The Guelph City Website (guelph.ca)

The current version of the website is easy to use and very helpful to residents, especially with the blue toolbar at the top of the home page (guelph.ca) containing a "How can we help you?" link. It leads to a directory of categories of useful information from "Building Services Online" to "Waste collection". The first you can use, for example, to find out whether your neighbour has a building permit for the extension he is building and the second, for example, to remind you about what garbage goes out on what day..

Try it.

Community Tree Planting in the Neighbourhood

Moritz Sanio (msanio@grandriver.ca) is organizing another tree planting in Hugh Guthrie Park on Saturday, May 17 about 10:00 am. The area he has chosen is on the north-east side of the park near Bellevue. Neighbourhood volunteers to do the digging are needed (just turn up in old clothes).

Delivering the Newsletter

We are always looking for people to deliver the OUNRA semi-annual Newsletter. A typical route has 60-80 homes on it taking one or two hours. Please call or email Bruce Ryan at 519-766-9684 or email bryan102@gmail.com.