



A project of the Eden Mills Millpond Conservation Association Inc.

Media Release

Eden Mills Going Carbon Neutral Highlighted at International C.I.P. Symposium CLIMATE CHANGE + COMMUNITIES: A CALL TO ACTION

October 20, 2010

Eden Mills Going Carbon Neutral was commended at the annual international symposium of the Canadian Institute of Planners which took place in Montreal in early October. In his closing keynote address, 'Putting Words into Action: Setting an Agenda for Planners + Climate Change' **Larry Beasley** said: "Surprisingly, this conference has also made me optimistic about the smaller communities in this country. **A thrilling moment for me was to hear the inspirational story of the little village of Eden Mills, Ontario, which has declared its intention to become the first carbon neutral village in North America.**"

Eden Mills' innovative community initiative was the subject of a workshop presentation at the conference by **Charles Simon**, architect, planner and one of the project founders. Mr. Beasley went on to say: "**It's the classic case of the "little village that could" as the story goes.** To me two of the big heroes of this week are Charles Simon and **Libby Little** (Eden Mills resident and member of the founding team), the two people who are making this real in the most practical of ways with volunteers and sensible thinking and, as they say, **'doing rather than talking'**. .. I would suggest that every small community connect up with this work."

The importance of action for change in small communities was reflected in statistics compiled by David Gordon showing that 13% of Canadians live in "the country" in rural communities (20% live in cities, and 67% in suburbs.) Mr. Beasley felt that the rural municipalities are a significant base for change – "**...if others do follow the lead of Eden Mills..., then this 13% of our population might not grow but it will certainly go green, and that will be all to the good.**"

He concluded: "Let me close by echoing something that was best said by Andrew Weaver but was also stated by many others throughout this conference. He said he had given up on senior governments anywhere in the world doing the right thing, and that, instead, he put his faith in local governments and in grass roots action to lead the way...Our job is to convene the discussions that get the issues on the table and dealt with, to offer totally new solutions and to build constituencies with vision that every citizen can understand and endorse. **We don't need leadership from the top, we can't wait; let's be part of leadership from the bottom.**"

Larry Beasley CM is the past chief planner for Vancouver, considered one of the more enlightened cities for planning in North America, and is recognized as an international expert. The conference was attended by a very large number of planners from across Canada and around the world.

Charles Simon was joined in his presentation by **Claire Paller**. Claire grew up in Eden Mills, was a student at Ross Collegiate in Guelph, and has, among other things, worked with the

cutting-edge tree growing and planting organization, **Wellington Green Legacy**. She is now a student at McGill University in Montreal. Last year she was Environmental Ambassador for the University and is now Environmental Commissioner with the Student Society at the University. She credits the community spirit of Eden Mills, its modeling of inclusive volunteerism and concern with the environment as the foundation for her current involvement in working for change.

For more information on Eden Mills Going Carbon Neutral, visit www.goingcarbonneutral.ca

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