



Energy & Environment Advisory Committee

MINUTES

A meeting of the Energy & Environment Advisory Committee (E&E) was held on March 5, 2026 at 4:00 p.m., Rotary Complex – Mansbridge Room, 353 McCarthy Road W., Stratford ON

Committee Members Present: Councillor Jo-Dee Burbach – Chair Presiding, Mike Sullivan, Felicity Sutcliffe, Craig Merkley, Ken Clarke, Vanni Azzano, Julia Schneider, Anna Stratton, Quinn Kearsey, Roger Cotton, Anita Jacobsen, Councillor Larry McCabe

Staff Present: Vicky Trotter – Council Committee Coordinator, Emily Skelding – Supervisor of Waste Operations, Autumn Loosemore – Manager of Climate Change Programs, Stuart Filson – Supervisor of Planning Policy & Placemaking, Casey Riehl – Recording Secretary

Regrets: Scott Rutherford

1. Call to Order

Councillor Burbach, Chair, called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

Reading of the Land Acknowledgment and a moment of silent reflection.

Reading of the Respectful Workplace Conduct Statement

2. Declaration of Pecuniary Interest

None declared.

3. Adoption of the Previous Minutes

Motion by Anita Jacobsen

Seconded by Ken Clarke

THAT the minutes from the Energy & Environment Advisory Committee meeting dated February 5, 2026 be adopted as printed. Carried

4. Adoption of Addendum to the Energy & Environment Advisory Committee Agenda

Motion by Julia Schneider

Seconded by Anna Stratton

THAT the Addendum to the Energy & Environment Advisory Committee Agenda dated March 5, 2026, be added to the agenda as printed. Carried

5. Delegate: Stuart Filson, Supervisor of Planning Policy & Placemaking – Green Development Standards

Stuart Filson addressed the committee regarding the draft policy discussion Paper #5, A Sustainable City, and how it relates to the City's consideration of adopting green development standards. The Sustainable City paper is not finalized and not yet a public document, however Mr. Filson spoke to the direction and intent of the paper and implications for green development standards. Highlights included:

- The Official Plan is the City's primary policy document governing land use;
- This review will improve how the Official Plan implements Council adopted strategies, so they are reflected in day to day planning decisions and conditions of approval;
- The Official Plan notably provides direction for other governing documents such as the zoning bylaw, which is reviewed following the approval of the Official Plan;
- The Official Plan review is done periodically to ensure the Official Plan reflects provincial changes, including amendments to the Planning Act and the new provincial planning statement. It reflects the City's own plans and directions, such as the Strategic Plan, the Corporate Energy and Emissions Plan, Community Climate Action Plan and the Transportation Master Plan, among others. The review is an opportunity to ensure that the Official Plan is clear, internally consistent and defensible at the Ontario Land Tribunal, if appealed;
- The consultant is preparing five policy discussion papers to inform this review, with recommendations for staff and Council. These papers cover the subjects of culture, natural heritage, mobility, growth and sustainability. They are intended to identify gaps, conflicts and opportunities in the existing Official Plan before the draft Official Plan and text is prepared. The Sustainable City paper focuses on climate change and sustainability, without predetermining a specific implementation tool. This includes ways to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and planning approaches for climate impacts;

- Green development standards address sustainability goals with clear development expectations, and can address site design, stormwater approaches, energy readiness, vegetation and other sustainability related performance elements. If Council wishes to pursue green development standards in the future, the Official Plan needs to clearly authorize and support the types of sustainability expectations that the City may apply through planning approvals. The Sustainable City paper informs us of the Official Plans policy basis for integrating these approaches. It aims to help coordinate land use planning with municipal infrastructure planning so growth is both efficient and climate resilient;
- As part of the future recommendations, the paper will support more compact, complete, mixed-use communities, consistent with the transportation master plan, the paper also encourages more transportation options. For stormwater approaches, the paper promotes best practices such as green infrastructure and low impact development standards. It emphasizes natural heritage, such as trees which with cooling, storm water management and overall resilience. Furthermore, the paper will support better aligning the Official Plan with the City's adopted climate documents;
- The Official Plan is higher level than the regulatory frameworks, the Official Plan would generally avoid specifying numerical details, such as the zoning bylaw often does;
- Once the discussion papers are finalized and public, staff will be bringing forward opportunities for Council and the public to comment through the normal Official Plan review process. Mr. Filson will inquire if the draft form of the discussion paper can be shared confidentially with the E&E Committee prior to being released to the public.

Mike Sullivan stated that in 2021 the E&E Committee recommended that the City consider using tax increment equivalency grants (TIEG's) to incent development that meet green development standards. TIEG's have since been developed for another purpose, however, there has never been any movement on the motion that was put forward in 2021. He questioned if it a possibility to use TIEG's. Stuart Filson stated that staff is reviewing TIEG's, as well as other grants and incentives. They have not finalized anything and it will ultimately be determined by Council. This is still an area of focus, and staff is looking to make the language in the Official Plan more supportive, to provide this option in the future.

Anita Jacobsen stated that Stratford was recently declared a Bird Friendly City and questioned if any development-related issues mitigating bird mortality be considered in the planning of communities, buildings, etc. including items such as bird-friendly glass, lights that are only on when needed and shut off during migration times, etc. Mr. Filson stated that this issue will be addressed very generally, as the urban design and landscaping guidelines have not been updated recently. Eventually staff can add provisions such as building heights requiring preventative measures, adding items to the site plan control bylaw, etc.

Mike Sullivan inquired if a review of the secondary plans, that were put in place over thirty years ago and create urban sprawl, will be reviewed as part of this process. Mr. Filson confirmed that the Official Plan has been reviewed in its entirety. There has been direction from the province, seemingly to move in the direction where they do not want to see secondary plans. Therefore the approach the City is using now is to consolidate many of the secondary plans into the main Official Plan body. Staff realizes some of these policies may be out of date or inconsistent with other parts of the Official Plan and are being reviewed for consistency.

Felicity Sutcliffe inquired if the Invest Stratford roadmap will be included as part of the review. Mr. Filson stated that he has reviewed the roadmap and it is in the queue to be addressed as part of the review.

6. Working Group Updates

Ecological Working Group:

Craig Merkley shared the following updates from the Ecological Working Group:

- A base map of the TJ Dolan area has been completed. It shows only the trails and the blank areas for people to document items that can be added to the database;
- The working group will also be meeting with the Parks & Forestry Manager to discuss some upcoming projects.

Community Education & Engagement Working Group (CEEWG):

Anna Stratton shared the following updates from the CEEWG:

- The "Stratford Ecological Gardener" handbook that the working group is working on is almost complete. A copy will be delivered to Vicky Trotter next week for a review. When the final draft is completed, it will be sent to all members of E&E for a final review prior to printing. Some local artists have offered to let E&E use their

art as part of the booklet. There will be a printed version as well as an online option.

- The Local Community Food Centre has offered to host a launch of the booklet on April 23, 2026 where the new booklets can be handed out, as well as seed packets;
- The working group has met with Autumn Loosemore to discuss working together on various upcoming projects and engagement activities;
- Roger Cotton discussed the idea of holding an EV workshop in May to discuss various electric vehicles topics such as rebate program details, EV availability, charger information, etc. Mr. Cotton will circulate a volunteer sheet for anyone to sign up to assist with organizing. Felicity Sutcliff suggested e-bikes could be included as well in this workshop.

Stuart Filson is no longer present at the meeting at 4:25 p.m.

7. Update from the Supervisor of Waste Operations

Emily Skelding provided the following updates:

- The smaller recycle bins have been delivered to residents who requested them. The online portal is now closed to request switching to a smaller bin. Residents could phone Emterra directly if they missed the application deadline and ask if they can exchange for a smaller bin;
- At the end of October, the current contracts with Bluewater and the collection contractor will expire for picking up business recycling. Staff will be going to Council in the next few months to decide what plans will be regarding the continuation of a business recycling program beyond October;
- The contract for green bin material processing will be coming to an end in April and staff has closed the tender process for that contract and Council will now make a decision to award the next contract;
- The next household hazardous waste day is being held on Saturday, April 25, 2026 at the landfill from 10-2 p.m.;
- The landfill will be putting in the new methane lines to capture the methane emissions that are at the bottom of the cell.

8. Update from the Manager of Climate Change Programs

Autumn Loosemore provided the following updates:

- There have been some delays in the hiring process, but they are still hiring for the Community Energy Liaison position;
- The Green Recognition program is still open for applications until March 15, 2026. To date they have received five applications. They have not received any applications yet in the energy management and electrification category. The review sub-committee will review the applications and bring them back to the E&E Committee for discussion;
- Ms. Loosemore will have the adaptation and resilience strategy engagement material possibly finished for the next E&E meeting to allow for some feedback prior to being released to the public. There will be an in-person and online version offered.

Mike Sullivan suggested that a category for wastewater could be added to the Green Recognition Program in the future.

Mr. Sullivan stated that other cities have started taxing for wastewater based on the size of the property and questioned if this is something that the City of Stratford would consider. Ms. Loosemore will look into this and provide the committee with an update.

9. Update from the SDSS Eco Club

Quinn Kearsey reported on the following items from the Eco Club:

- The Club held a fundraiser for the UTRCA for turtles on the endangered species list and raised \$300.00;
- They are preparing for the upcoming Sustainable Bites event on April 8, 2026. They have arranged for speakers to attend who will have tables set up to actively engage with participants. You must register online on Event Brite and a suggested \$10.00 donation will be collected at the door the day of the event;
- Students are working on booking various speakers for Earth Week.

10. Update on E&E Motions

10.1 E&E Banner

Vicky Trotter displayed a pop-up banner for committee members to view and decide if they would like to order one for the committee.

Ms. Trotter suggested that white lines could be added in between the photos to distinguish between them. Anna Stratton suggested an energy photo could be added, such as an EV parking space or charging station. Members also suggested to make the City of Stratford logo at the bottom of the banner as large as possible.

Motion by Craig Merkley

Seconded by Felicity Sutcliffe

THAT the Energy & Environment Advisory Committee spend up to a maximum of \$200.00 to purchase an E&E pop-up banner. Carried

Ms. Trotter will have an energy picture added and recirculate the proof prior to ordering the banner.

11. Business Arising from Previous Minutes

11.1 Climate Conversations Update

Felicity Sutcliffe updated members on some of the Climate Conversation events coming up – all events are listed below.

There is also a community solar forum coming up on March 25, 2026 at the Wilmot Recreation Complex (Baden) from 6:30-9:00 p.m.

11.2 Free Transit in Stratford

Mike Sullivan has put forth a motion relating to the Manager of Transit's suggestion at a previous meeting regarding a request for a free transit pilot project.

Motion by Mike Sullivan

Seconded by Anna Stratton

WHEREAS the City of Stratford adopted a Community Climate Action Plan (CCAP) in 2024 which provides plans to reduce the City's emissions by 30% by 2030;

AND WHEREAS the CCAP outlines plans for the reduction of the use of personal vehicles, which create nearly 50% of the city's GHS emissions;

AND WHEREAS the increased use of public transit will contribute to a reduction in GHG emissions;

THEREFORE, the Energy and Environment Committee requests that City Council, in order to promote the wider use of public transit, begin the budgetary and administrative process to implement a one-year trial of free transit commencing in 2027 and lost fare revenue be replaced with savings from fare collection procedures and rebates from provincial gas tax revenue. Carried

11.3 Seed Packets

Vanni Azzano reported that the seed packets are completed and they ended up with 276 packets.

11.4 Process for E&E Motions

Mike Sullivan inquired if there was an update on a clearer process of how motions are sent to Council.

Vicky Trotter reviewed the current process for motions:

- E&E would make a motion at their meeting;
- The Council Committee Coordinator gathers the required information from other departments to create a management report. This part of the process can sometimes be lengthy, depending on how quickly departments respond with their information;
- The management report/motion go to Sub-committee, Committee and Council (this process is also currently under review);

Some items can be addressed quickly by staff and not go through the Council process depending on the request. Other items can get slowed down significantly if they are relating to another item, such as the Official Plan review, which has been ongoing for a number of years.

Ms. Trotter stated that after last meeting, the Council representatives on E&E spoke with André Morin, CAO regarding the process. Ms. Trotter is working with

the CAO to provide information on the current process and going back to motions from 2022 with a detailed outline of each motion.

An update will be provided to the E&E Committee once available.

11.5 Stratford Home & Leisure Show

Members discussed participating in this year's Home Show being held April 11 & 12, 2026. The CEEWG will lead organizing the booth/display for the show. Anna Stratton will circulate a volunteer sign up sheet. Vicky Trotter will book the same size booth as last year (10 x 10).

Motion by Ken Clarke

Seconded by Mike Sullivan

THAT the Energy & Environment Advisory Committee participates in the 2026 Stratford Home & Leisure Show on April 11 & 12, 2026.

Carried

12. New Business

12.1 Request from Perth County Sustainability

There has been a request from Perth County Sustainability to partner with the E&E Committee to hold a free raffle for a water barrel at the upcoming Home & Leisure Show. A water barrel will be on display at the E&E booth at the Home Show and the draw for the winner of the raffle will be held as part of the Earth Day celebrations later in April.

Motion by Mike Sullivan

Seconded by Anna Stratton

THAT the Energy & Environment Advisory Committee partner with Perth County Sustainability to place a rain barrel at the E&E booth at the upcoming Stratford Home & Leisure Show for visitors to enter draw tickets for a draw that will take place at the Earth Day celebrations later in April.

It is unclear if Perth County Sustainability is also sending representatives to be at the booth or just the rain barrel and information. It was understood that they are just asking to place the rain barrel and raffle information for their group. Members have asked for clarification prior to committing, as it would be a joint booth with them and not primarily an E&E Committee booth if both committees

have people there. Vicky Trotter will contact Perth County Sustainability to confirm the request details.

Motion by Vanni Azzano

Seconded by Julia Schneider

THAT the Energy & Environment Advisory Committee defer the decision on the above motion to partner with Perth County Sustainability until the April 2, 2026 E&E meeting. Carried

13. Upcoming Events

- Energy Conservation, Renewable Energy Support Programs & District Energy (Peter Love) – March 11, 2026 (4:30–6:00 p.m.) – Tickets available on Event Brite
- Sustainable Bites - SDSS Eco Club (The Local 7-9 p.m.) – April 8, 2026
- Stratford Home & Leisure Show (Rotary) – April 11-12, 2026
- Festival Hydro Tree Power Event – Pick Up Date – April 18, 2026
- Green Booklet Launch Event – April 23, 2026
- Earth Day Street Party (Factory 163) – April 25, 2026 (11:30–2 p.m.)
- Catherine McKenna – Former Federal Minister of the Environment and Climate Change – (City Hall Auditorium) - May 2, 2026
- Perth Children’s Water Festival (Upper Queen’s Park) – May 24, 2026

14. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Energy & Environment Advisory Committee will be held on Thursday, April 2, 2025, at 4:00 p.m., City Hall - Auditorium, 1 Wellington Street, Stratford ON

15. Adjournment

Motion by Ken Clarke

Seconded by Anna Stratton

THAT the March 5, 2026 Energy & Environment Advisory Committee meeting adjourn. Carried

Meeting Start Time: 4:00 P.M.

Meeting End Time: 5:32 P.M.