



Energy & Environment Advisory Committee

MINUTES

A meeting of the Energy & Environment Advisory Committee (E&E) was held on April 6, 2023 at 4:00 p.m., City Hall Annex – Falstaff Meeting Room, 82 Erie Street, Stratford.

Committee Members Present: Ian Morton – Chair Presiding, Craig Merkley, Ken Clarke, Councillor Larry McCabe, Vanni Azzano, Sharon Collingwood, Anita Jacobsen, Felicity Sutcliffe, Geoff Krauter, Councillor Jo-Dee Burbach

Staff Present: Emily Skelding - Waste Reduction Coordinator, Sadaf Ghalib – Climate Change Programs Manager, Casey Riehl – Recording Secretary

Also Present: Cathy Quinlan, Terrestrial Ecologist - UTRCA

1. Call to Order

Ian Morton, Chair, called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

2. Declaration of Pecuniary Interest

None declared.

3. Delegate: Cathy Quinlan, Terrestrial Ecologist, UTRCA – 2022 Upper Thames River Watershed Report Cards

Cathy Quinlan, Terrestrial Ecologist from the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority (UTRCA) presented the 2022 Upper Thames River Watershed Report Cards. Information was provided on:

- surface water quality results;
- environmental indicators;
- groundwater information;
- watershed features;
- spills reported;
- great lakes connections;
- local actions for improvement;

- highlights of progress since 2017;
- tree planting programs; and
- tips on how to turn information into action.

Ms. Quinlan noted that the Watershed Report Cards are all posted on the UTRCA website.

Anita Jacobson inquired if forest cover is affected by the emerald ash borer. Ms. Quinlan stated that when the emerald ash borer arrived 20 years ago, in some cases there was so much ash in a woodlot, it no longer qualified to be called a forest and was called a thicket with all the shrub growth. However, now, 20 years later, the plants have come back up and re-foliated and now are back to being called forests. These are temporary setbacks and the woodlots are not gone, they are just going through a change.

Geoff Krauter inquired if the UTRCA has any strategies or plans for municipalities that want to encourage more sustainable practices. Ms. Quinlan stated that municipalities have plans and processes, with Bill 23 they are still learning what the implications are surrounding it.

Ken Clarke inquired if the building of new houses affects the study of the land in terms of watersheds. It was questioned whether it remains a viable concept. Ms. Quinlan stated that, yes, it will remain an important concept, especially for flooding.

Sharon Collingwood inquired if the City of Stratford measures tree cover within the City boundary or if it includes a larger radius surrounding the City. Dr. Collingwood expressed concerns about heat domes and would like to know where she can find this information. Ms. Quinlan stated that the City will have a tree inventory for their urban canopy that would outline the specific area.

Ken Clarke inquired if the UTRCA has any studies on invasive species. Ms. Quinlan stated that they do studies on their own lands and around London. It is very time consuming and costly to eradicate invasive species, however they do their best to work away at them little by little. The UTRCA does not have funds to tackle projects such as giant hogweed removal, as it requires specialized equipment, etc.

Cathy Quinlan left the meeting at 4:40 p.m.

4. Adoption of Previous Minutes

Motion by Felicity Sutcliffe
Seconded by Geoff Krauter

THAT the minutes from the Energy & Environment Advisory Committee meeting dated March 2, 2023, be adopted as presented. Carried

5. Working Group Updates: Ecological, Carbon Reduction and I.C.I. Waste Reduction

Ecological

Craig Merkley provided the following updates on projects the ecological working group is focusing on:

- Members are researching outside sources that would assist in preparing an invasive species master plan for Stratford.
- The working group is preparing for the E&E booth at the upcoming Earth Day event on Saturday, April 22, 2023. They have some information the UTRCA has provided regarding invasive species.
- The working group would like to host a kids tour in the Old Grove. Having the kids walk around and learn about invasive species and if the timing is right, possibly assisting in removing some of the garlic mustard.
- They would also like to do an invasive species presentation to Council, possibly in June.
- There have been some requests to hold a walk-around with E&E members to tour around the river and lake. The working group will confirm arrangements.
- Some bioengineering and ongoing maintenance work has been completed by trimming the dogwood bushes around the lake.

I.C.I. Waste Reduction

- Sharon Collingwood has reached out online to local businesses with a survey. There has not been much response and she may look into printing a survey and delivering them to businesses. As the notice of collection is not posted on the survey, it will be taken down and Sharon Collingwood will work with the City Clerk to have the survey reviewed prior to distributing it to the public.
- The working group has been researching the “ugly food program” that runs in London as well as “flash food,” which is an app.
- The I.C.I. Waste Reduction working group had a table at the Home Show. Sharon Collingwood suggested a calendar to track upcoming events. Councillor Burbach suggested notifying staff of all upcoming events that can be added to a running list on the agenda each month.

Carbon Reduction

- Sharon Collingwood will share the Climate Caucus Councillors Handbook with E&E members as a resource.
- Geoff Krauter reported that the working group is looking for volunteers to review sections of the Official Plan to identify areas that could be updated for carbon reduction. Sharon Collingwood noted that on Engage Stratford there is a

process for the Official Plan and is interested to know how the E&E Committee fits into the process. Councillor McCabe stated that it is on an upcoming Council agenda and the process will be laid out, most likely including the E&E Committee and other stakeholders to provide input.

- There was discussion on how to more effectively communicate items that relate to carbon reduction.
- Sharon Collingwood received a letter from the United Way regarding the Quality of Life Report, which was forwarded to the Climate Change Programs Manager.
- Climate Momentum is requesting that City Council take a position on Bill 23. Ian Morton will keep the E&E Committee up to date.

6. Climate Change Programs Manager's Update – Sadaf Ghalib

Sadaf Ghalib, Climate Change Programs Manager, provided the following updates:

- Ms. Ghalib reported that there are events planned for Earth Day such as tree planting in the TJ Dolan Natural Area, with local businesses showing interest in participating this year. Staff has shared public communication about the event on different media channels. The City will be also participating in the Earth Day Street Party on Saturday, April 22nd. They will be seeking feedback on the upcoming Community Emissions Action Plan and identifying key priorities.
- The intent for the Community Emissions Action plan is to develop a strategy to proceed toward a collective goal. Staff will be kicking off online engagement in the upcoming weeks. Online participation would ideally take place over four weeks. Additional in-person engagements will also be planned to provide feedback. Ms. Ghalib encouraged all E&E members to provide their feedback either online or in-person.
- There have been a number of applications received for the Green Recognition Program in each category. The review committee has met to review the applications to prepare for a presentation at an upcoming Council meeting.

7. Update from Active Transportation Advisory Committee (ATAC) – Felicity Sutcliffe

Felicity Sutcliffe provided the following update:

- ATAC is organizing a bike event on Saturday, June 3rd as part of Bike Month. It will be held at Upper Queen's Park and will include a family bike ride. Stratford Police Services and Cycle Stratford will be participating. They are hoping to also hold a bike rodeo and are working on the Car-Free Fridays initiative again this year.
- ATAC is compiling a list of areas with issues related to sidewalks and would appreciate feedback from citizens with any areas they are concerned about. They would also like to invite Public Works to attend an upcoming meeting to discuss

the sidewalk snow clearing process and scheduling. You can access a form online under "Report an Issue" and submit any areas of concern to City staff.

- The bike valet will be at the Earth Day event in Market Square on April 22nd for anyone riding their bikes to use.
- ATAC is proposing a bike rack inventory. This way the Committee and staff will know where they are all located and can add bike racks in areas that could use one.

Ian Morton left the meeting at 5:19 p.m. The Vice-Chair, Sharon Collingwood, assumed the role of chair for the remainder of the meeting.

8. Business Arising from Previous Minutes

8.1 Green Recognition Program – Submissions and Recommendations from Review Sub-Committee – Sadaf Ghalib, Climate Change Programs Manager

The Climate Change Programs Manager reported that many applications were received and they were very pleased with the response to the program. Felicity Sutcliffe stated that they received 15 applications in total, with two of them being historical, and one was a double, therefore the sub-committee has 12 site visits. Members have visited 10 sites so far. The sub-committee was impressed with all the site visits, from small residential projects to large commercial locations.

All applicants will be recognized with certificates which will be handed out at the Earth Day Event in Market Square on April 22nd. A few of the applicants will be invited to the April 24th Council meeting to highlight the great efforts being taken. Ms. Sutcliffe briefly reviewed the submissions for members and the sub-committee will finalize the list of participants to be invited to the Council meeting, perhaps highlighting an applicant from each of the three categories. Ms. Sutcliffe will also draft summaries of each of the applicants to share in the media. The Climate Change Programs Manager will share the submissions with the E&E Committee for their information.

8.2 Community Emissions Action Plan – Action Items Identified for E&E Feedback – Sadaf Ghalib, Climate Change Programs Manager

The Climate Change Programs Manager reported that she has identified action items requiring feedback from E&E. The plan will focus on mitigation and adaptation strategies for the community. According to the 2017 baseline of emissions and the previous greenhouse reduction plan for the county, the largest emitters were identified as buildings (47%), transportation (39%) and waste (14%). These three areas will be the main focus of the action plan. Ms. Ghalib is seeking feedback from E&E members and if they have any ideas for consideration.

Anita Jacobsen suggested a possible incentive to convert from gas-powered or two-stroke engine garden equipment to electric equipment. Felicity Sutcliffe suggested that the Federal subsidy programs that are posted on the City's website could also be emphasized in the Action Plan.

8.3 City of London – Solar Panel Program (MyHEAT Solar) – Councillor Burbach

Councillor Burbach stated that this solar panel program would be an excellent addition to the Community Emissions Action Plan. Councillor Burbach has contacted the City of London for further information.

8.4 Large Green Bins for Community Events – Emily Skelding

Emily Skelding, Waste Reduction Coordinator, reported that the large green bins that the E&E Committee purchased last year to use for community events have arrived. They are currently being decalced with the City's logo.

9. New Business

9.1 City Wide Green Bin Program for the I.C.I. Sector – Emily Skelding, Waste Reduction Coordinator

Stratford has recently launched the green bin program for industrial, commercial, and institutional locations to participate in the organic's collections. She has received feedback from the contractor who picks up the bins that they can be very heavy and difficult to lift by hand to dump, as well she has heard from business owners that they require a large amount of the small green bins to accommodate the amount they are producing. She inquired if the E&E Committee would like to purchase a quantity of large green bins to offer to commercial businesses, such as restaurants, who have large quantities of organics. The larger bins would be able to be lifted and dumped mechanically into the truck. These bins would be approximately twice the size of the current green bins. Ms. Skelding will gather some cost estimates for discussion at the next E&E meeting.

10. Upcoming Events

- Earth Day Tree Planting Event at 10:00 a.m. (Lorne Avenue Park) - April 22, 2023
- Climate Momentum Earth Day Event (Market Square) – April 22, 2023
- Trashion Week Events (Factory 163) – April 23, 2023
- ATAC Bike Event (Upper Queen's Park) – June 3, 2023

11. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the E&E Committee will be held on Thursday, May 4, 2023, at 4:00 p.m., Rotary Complex – Mansbridge Room, 353 McCarthy Road W., Stratford.

12. Adjournment

Motion by Ken Clarke

Seconded by Vanni Azzano

THAT the April 6, 2023 Energy & Environment Advisory Committee meeting adjourn. Carried

Meeting Start Time: 4:00 P.M.

Meeting End Time: 6:04 P.M.