



Energy & Environment Advisory Committee

MINUTES

A meeting of the Energy & Environment Advisory Committee (E&E) was held on November 7, 2024 at 4:00 p.m., Rotary Complex – Mansbridge Room, 353 McCarthy Road W, Stratford ON

Committee Members Present: Felicity Sutcliffe, Councillor Jo-Dee Burbach, Craig Merkley, Anita Jacobsen, Zach Kritzer, Mike Sullivan, Ken Clarke, Geoff Krauter

Staff Present: Vicky Trotter – Council Committee Coordinator, Sadaf Ghalib – Manager of Climate Change Programs, Emily Skelding – Supervisor of Waste Operations, Casey Riehl – Recording Secretary

Regrets: Sharon Collingwood, Councillor Larry McCabe, Vanni Azzano

1. **Appointment of Interim Chair**

The Committee discussed the appointment of an interim Chair as both the Chair and Vice-Chair were not present.

Motion by Anita Jacobsen

Seconded by Felicity Sutcliffe

THAT the Energy & Environment Advisory Committee members appoint Councillor Jo-Dee Burbach as interim Chair for the November 7, 2024 meeting. Carried

2. **Call to Order**

Councillor Burbach, Chair called the meeting to order at 4:07 p.m.

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

Reading of the Respectful Workplace Policy.

3. Declaration of Pecuniary Interest

None declared.

4. Adoption of Previous Minutes

Motion by Felicity Sutcliffe

Seconded by Craig Merkley

THAT the minutes from the Energy & Environment Advisory Committee meeting dated October 3, 2024 be adopted as amended.

Councillor Burbach noted Item 10.1 should be amended to reflect in the first line that Council has not recently made a decision to remove the John Street Weir.

The Chair called the question on the motion. **Carried**

5. Working Group Updates:

Ecological:

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

- Anita Jacobsen reviewed the summary report provided to members regarding the ecological working group's field work in 2024;
- The working groups recommendation for next steps in implementing the City's invasive species plan will be to suggest hiring a summer student to assist the Community Services Department. The student's time could be dedicated to focusing working on the invasive species plan. Ken Clarke suggested that they would not necessarily need to hire an additional student, staff could possibly just have one of the student positions already in the budget dedicated to working on the invasive species plan;

Motion by Craig Merkley

Seconded by Ken Clarke

THAT the Energy & Environment Advisory Committee recommends a student position be added to Community Services staffing for the summer of 2025 to implement the Invasive Species Plan;

**AND THAT grand funding opportunities be reviewed to fund the position.
Carried**

Motion by Mike Sullivan

Seconded by Anita Jacobsen

THAT the Energy & Environment Advisory Committee recommends staff look into the Canada Summer Jobs grant for the recommended student position for the Community Services Department for the summer of 2025 to implement the Invasive Species Plan. Carried

- The invasive species flyer is complete and is ready to be shared with residents adjacent to the T.J. Dolan area. A short explanation sheet will be included with it to explain the flyer if people have any questions;
- SDSS students have completed two sections of the board walk and submitted the invoice. The students will work on more sections over the winter, a second invoice will be submitted prior to end of the year;
- Residents have inquired if two more turtle crossing signs should be installed on the Romeo Street Bridge, similar to the new ones installed on John Street;

Motion by Craig Merkley

Seconded by Felicity Sutcliffe

THAT the Energy & Environment Advisory Committee spends up to a maximum of \$150.00 to purchase two additional turtle crossing signs to be installed on the Romeo Street Bridge, if funds are available in the remaining 2024 budget. Carried

6. Manager of Climate Change Programs Update

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

- The EV charging station project is ongoing with the final leg of installations to be complete by the end of November. The stations in the York Street and Erie Street parking lots are estimated to be operational by the end of January 2025. Both Level 2 and Level 3 stations are being installed. Vicky Trotter noted that currently vehicles parked at a charging stations pay for parking, not for charging;
- CEEP implementation is underway and an update will be going to the ITS Subcommittee later this month to report on the corporations' emission for the year ending December 31, 2023. There will also be information on projects underway and completed with priorities focused on buildings and fleet. Information will be posted online once it has gone through Council for approval;

- Recognizing that the landscape of covid provincial regulation and policies is evolving regarding active transportation, staff is exploring options and opportunities to create and implement programs and initiatives as well as other municipal plans to initiate in 2025.

7. Supervisor of Waste Operations Update

Emily Skelding, Supervisor of Waste Operations presented information regarding the City of Stratford's upcoming changes to the blue box program:

- Stratford entered into a transition period on May 1, 2024;
- January 1, 2026 Stratford will go into a full transition where the municipality will no longer be responsible for the blue box program and it will fully be producer responsibility;
- There will be many upcoming diversion programs and updates that can be provided;
- A regulatory approach to waste management, where producers are responsible for the waste generated from their products and packaging. In Ontario, the blue box program is transitioning from a model of shared industry funding, to one of producer responsibility;
- Eligible sources include single-family homes, seasonal dwellings, multi-unit residential buildings, public & private schools, specified retirement & long-term care homes and specified public spaces;
- Designated materials will likely be added into the program, not removed;
- Bluewater Recycling Association is the awarded collection contractor, and blue wheely bins will be provided to all existing eligible sources for the post January 1, 2026 program;
- Items still to be determined include collection of non-eligible sources, convenience depot located at our landfill, changes to some of the materials included/not included in the program and public education and communication.

8. Active Transportation Advisory Committee (ATAC) Update

Vicky Trotter provided an update from the October 23, 2024 ATAC meeting:

- the Avon Trail blazing through the city has been approved by Council and will be completed in the spring;
- the sign for the Avon Trail has been installed in Confederation Park;

the new bike racks have been purchased for the downtown core – red metal hearts and black metal circles and Public Works is assisting with final locations;
- a working group is being created to work with Cycle Stratford on the cycle route through the city and how to proceed forward with getting that signed and cost-sharing options.

Mike Sullivan stated that the province is looking at a round-a-bout or lights at Road 111 and Ontario Street and has stated to him that they do not have a mandate for active transportation and they require the City to talk to them about it. To his knowledge, the City has not had a discussion with them about active transportation in the area of the new development. He questioned what the City is intending to do with the province to make sure that this intersection is built appropriately.

Ms. Trotter stated that after the discussion at the last meeting, questions and concerns from ATAC were taken back to staff to answer.

Mr. Sullivan has been in contact with the Province and they take the position that this is a highway project and if the City wants to install appropriate active transportation measures, they will have to speak to the Province.

Councillor Burbach stated she would also like to see active transportation taken into consideration and noted that the new subdivision will also be connected through Douro Street, not just on Road 111 to the highway.

9. Business Arising from Previous Minutes

9.1 Update on Remaining 2024 Projects and Budget

- as discussed, the second half of the boardwalks are outstanding and materials will be purchased prior to year-end;
- (2) Turtle signs will be purchases, depending on remaining budget;
- boot brush for T.J. Dolan will be purchased and the number purchased will also be based on how much of the budget is remaining;

- there is currently one outstanding invoice from UTRCA for the last round of native wildflower plugs that were planted.

Motion by Anita Jacobsen

Seconded by Felicity Sutcliffe

THAT the Energy & Environment Advisory Committee spends \$949.20 for the purchase of native wildflower plugs. Carried

9.2 Climate Conversation Updates

Felicity Sutcliffe updated members on the most recent Climate Conversation event on transportation in Stratford held on October 24, 2024.

It was a great event with over fifty people attending and the presentations were very detailed and informative. Mike Mousley – Transit Manager, Nathan Bottema – Project Engineer and Pete McDonald from Cycle Stratford all spoke at the event. It was helpful to have City staff attend and explain plans and projects that are being worked on to residents. It gave citizens the opportunity to voice their concerns about transit, bike lanes, road conditions, EV challenges, safety of walking and ideas to reduce pollution.

Ms. Sutcliffe shared a written summary of the event to E&E members.

Mike Sullivan inquired if there was much discussion regarding the province's recent stance on bike lanes. Ms. Sutcliffe stated that it was talked about and if people want to lobby against Bill 212 or make your feeling known you can visit Cycle Stratford's site for a link to do so.

The next Climate Conversation is being held on November 28, 2024 at 7:00 p.m. and will be held at the Army & Navy.

10. New Business

10.1 Motion Update

Vicky Trotter reported that in 2022 E&E passed a motion recommending that City Council undertake a formal review of the secondary plans for the Official Plan and make recommendations for a revision based on a climate lens.

There is a new Director of Building & Planning and they have been closely reviewing the Official Plan and keeping Ms. Trotter up to date stating that the

City's secondary plans need to be addressed, even as part of the discussion papers, and will be discussed at their next meeting.

Mike Sullivan inquired about an update on the motions made at the last E&E meeting regarding take out container tax, restricting new developments to not use fossil fuels. Ms. Trotter stated that staff is currently working on the recommendations and updates will be provided at a future meeting once they have information. Motion updates will be a standing item on the monthly agenda to provide any of these outstanding updates. Ms. Trotter stated that she has compiled a list of any outstanding motions from 2022 to present. Mr. Sullivan inquired about a 2021 recommendation regarding Transit fares being free in the City of Stratford and there has never been a response from the City. Councillor Burbach stated that the issue has been discussed at City Council many times during budget deliberations under the fees and charges by-law. This information may not have been relayed to E&E at the time. Ms. Trotter will do some investigating and see what the most recent discussion regarding this matter was and bring any information she finds back to the committee.

Felicity Sutcliffe stated that there was some discussion at the last meeting to invite the Director of Building & Planning to an upcoming E&E meeting to discuss fossil fuels being used in new developments. Ms. Trotter has contacted Director Adam Betteridge, and he is working on preparing information for the committee.

10.2 Green Municipal Funds

Mike Sullivan inquired if the City has applied for Green Municipal Funds – Climate Ready Plans and Processes and if so, will the City be receiving any funds.

Sadaf Ghalib stated that the City has received funding from other streams of the Green Municipal Funds, not this one specifically. For seven City facilities, they applied to GMF for a greenhouse gas emission feasibility study for previous emitters of corporate owned facilities. They did receive funding to do the feasibility study, which is underway now. They will ideally receive recommendations from the consultant in quarter one of 2025. Based on the feasibility study, they would be in a position to apply for capital project funding for doing the work. In the 2024 budget, the City did contribute \$60,000.00 and the rest was granted by the Green Municipal Fund in the amount of \$200,000.00.

Regarding the Climate Ready Plans & Processes funding stream, staff is currently exploring various funding opportunities, including this one. They are identifying if there will be budget funds that the City can contribute as part of the grant application requirements. The deadline for this grant is November 29, 2024.

10.3 Special Meeting

Mike Sullivan inquired if a special E&E meeting should be called to discuss the budget, as it will be too late if they wait until the December 5, 2025 meeting. It would be helpful to review the draft budget and provide Sadaf Ghalib with a list of important items for consideration. Ms. Ghalib has prepared a draft budget and will be presenting her budget proposal with Council, which she can share with E&E members once it has been presented to Council.

Ms. Trotter stated there is a budget open house being held on November 18, 2024 from 4-7 p.m. and there will also be multiple community pop-ups in the community.

If the committee chooses to make a recommendation regarding the budget, it will go directly to the finance committee as it is regarding the budget. As an example, Mike Sullivan noted that there is a plan to repave some trails with asphalt and questioned why porous pave is not being used. Ms. Trotter stated that it may be for accessibility reasons or may be cost prohibitive to do the trail. These are the types of questions that can be asked directly to staff and councillors at the budget open house. Alternatively, members can directly e-mail councillors with their concerns, suggestions or questions.

Felicity Sutcliffe clarified that if the members reviewed the budget and voted on December 7, 2024 to support staff on their budget items or if they had additional items, there would still be time for the recommendations to go to Finance on December 9, 2024. Ms. Trotter and Councillor Burbach both stated that this could be done.

Councillor Burbach inquired if members would like to hold an additional E&E meeting prior to the December 5, 2024 regular meeting date. At this time, the committee did not vote to hold an additional meeting.

11. Upcoming Events

- Climate Conversation Series:

- Buildings, Land Use and Adaptation – November 28, 2024
(This event will be held at the Army & Navy – 7:00 p.m.)

12. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Energy & Environment Advisory Committee will be held on Thursday, December 5, 2024, at 4:00 p.m., Rotary Complex – Mansbridge Room, 353 McCarthy Road, W., Stratford ON

13. Adjournment

Motion by Ken Clarke

Seconded by Felicity Sutcliffe

THAT the November 7, 2024, Energy & Environment Advisory Committee meeting adjourn. Carried

Meeting Start Time: 4:07 P.M.

Meeting End Time: 5:39 P.M.