



Energy & Environment Advisory Committee

MINUTES

A meeting of the Energy & Environment Advisory Committee (E&E) was held on February 6, 2025 at 4:00 p.m., Rotary Complex – Mansbridge Room, 353 McCarthy Road W, Stratford ON

Committee Members Present: Mike Sullivan – Chair Presiding, Felicity Sutcliffe, Councillor Jo-Dee Burbach, Anita Jacobsen, Zach Kritzer, Anna Stratton, Linda Wakenhut, Vanni Azzano, Craig Merkley, Councillor Larry McCabe, Ken Clarke

Staff Present: Emily Skelding – Supervisor of Waste Operations, Vicky Trotter – Council Committee Coordinator, Casey Riehl – Recording Secretary

Regrets: Julia Schneider, Geoff Krauter, Sadaf Ghalib – Manager of Climate Change Programs

1. Call to Order

Mike Sullivan, Chair called the meeting to order at 4:02 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 Anna Stratton

Seconded by Craig Merkley

THAT the minutes from the Energy & Environment Advisory Committee meeting dated January 2, 2025 be adopted as printed. Carried

4. Working Group Updates:

Ecological:

Craig Merkley provided the following update from the Ecological working group:

- Community Services staff has applied for grant funding from the Invasive Species Centre and will be applying for a second invasive species grant;
- Vicky Trotter reported that there is no funding provided in the 2025 Community Services budget for an additional summer student to focus on invasive species;
- The main focus of the Ecological working group this year will be working on the Invasive Species Management Plan with staff;
- An idea was raised for the Tree Power event for trees to be sponsored and then planted in a native tree arboretum. There are people who would like to continue to purchase trees, but do not have the room on their property. The UTRCA is moving forward with this initiative and will have information posted on their website letting people know how they can sponsor a tree to be planted in the city;
- Members would like to move ahead with signage for the T.J. Dolan trail to discourage side trails. The working group has created a draft sign and Ms. Trotter will move ahead with some quotes after the final budget has been approved. The design and the request will need to go to the Parks Board for approval and the goal is to purchase 6-12 signs;
- Felicity Sutcliffe is continuing to work on the design of the main entrance sign for T.J. Dolan;
- Five trays of native grasses have been pre-ordered for planting this year in T.J. Dolan and in the cribs along the river;

Motion by Craig Merkley

Seconded by Ken Clarke

THAT the Energy & Environment Advisory Committee spends up to a maximum of \$750.00 to purchase native grass plugs to plant in T.J. Dolan and along the Avon River. Carried

- Seeds have been provided to SDSS to plant in their greenhouse this year;

- A shoreline rehabilitation project is underway at the Pittock Conservation Area using mats to help keep plants and soil in the cribs better. If it is successful, perhaps it is something that Stratford might want to consider;

5. Supervisor of Waste Operations Update

Emily Skelding reviewed some of the updates for the upcoming blue box program change that begins in 2026. A recommendation has gone to Sub-committee and will now be going to Council on February 10, 2025 regarding the non-eligible sources, such as businesses, churches, municipal buildings, etc. that are not included in the new provincial program. Staff has researched and presented two options. One is to support the recycling collection services (approximately a \$355,000.00 cost) or stop supporting the non-eligibles (still approximately a \$180,000.00 cost). The staff recommendation is that Council continue to service the non-eligible sources for the period of January 1, 2025 to October 31, 2026.

6. Active Transportation Advisory Committee (ATAC) Update

Vicky Trotter reported on the following from the January 22, 2025 ATAC Meeting:

- ATAC and the BIA are meeting to discuss partnering on future Car Free Friday events or other possible initiatives;
- ATAC is moving forward with proposed signing for the Festival City Bicycle Route and has formed a working group to draft a proposal;
- ATAC has recently made a recommendation to Council requesting the parking lane be removed and bicycle lanes be installed on John Street between Queensland Road and West Gore Street;
- Members are working to provide staff with a list of priority locations with missing sidewalk links;
- Inspector Clarke from the SPS reported that they have formed a new Community Response Unit with five members who workdays and afternoons throughout the week and they respond to lower priority calls that may not require police response initially;
- Staff reported that Phase 2 of the Albert Street project is planned to be completed in 2025.

Mike Sullivan inquired if ATAC has discussed reducing speed limits. Ms. Trotter reported that at the previous ATAC meeting, if it was confirmed that this item had been brought to Council during this term and the motion was tabled, however it does remain in the Transportation Master Plan and can be brought forward to the new Council after 2026. Councillor Burbach stated that it is possible to re-table the item where a percentage of Council who originally voted against it bring it forward. It was tabled at the Sub-committee level and did not proceed to Council.

Anna Stratton inquired if the City has ever considered speed bumps. Councillor Burbach stated that the City is following the Transportation Master Plan and there are calming measures included, such as bump-outs and round-a-bouts, not necessarily speed bumps. Councillor Burbach stated that a group of concerned citizens can always address Council about a speed reduction in an area. Council is currently considering installing automated speed ticketing in Stratford.

Councillor McCabe no longer present at the meeting at 4:47 p.m.

7. E&E Committee Motions Update

Vicky Trotter reported that there are no new updates to provide since the last meeting. Moving forward, Ms. Trotter will provide the list of any outstanding motions when the agenda is sent to the committee.

8. Business Arising from Previous Minutes

8.1 Climate Conversations Update

Felicity Sutcliffe reported that the last Climate Conversation event was on alternative energy. Ms. Sutcliffe provided the video from the event to E&E members. It was well very attended with 90+ attendees in person and online. There was great dialogue with a good cross-section of people that kept the conversations going. It was energizing and a huge success.

Due to the provincial election, the next Climate Conversation – Waste Not, Want Not (original date February 27, 2025) has been rescheduled to March 6, 2025 at 7:00 p.m. and Emily Skelding will be speaking at this event.

Mike Sullivan stated that London Hydro allowed a developer to generate electricity on one development for another development, which is presently not allowed and questioned if Festival Hydro could do the same in Stratford. Councillor Burbach stated that the development in London received provincial

approval as a trial. Perhaps inviting a Festival Hydro representative to a future E&E meeting would be informative.

Mike Sullivan noted that one major bank is offering a green mortgage and that is how they were funding the purchase of the circular dwellings. It is a significantly reduced rate for properties that are energy efficient.

8.2 Transit Information Update

As per the discussion at the January meeting, Vicky Trotter followed up with the Transit Manager regarding the free transit days. Mr. Mousley reported that there were 2,546 riders on the free day, which is an approximate 15% increase based on previous average operational data. Staff is considering future free transit days, including International Transit Day. Staff is planning on a recommendation to be brought before Council.

Ms. Trotter also clarified that the time limit on bus transfers is one hour.

8.3 Home & Leisure Show Update

Vicky Trotter has contacted the organizers of this year's Home & Leisure Show to inquire what registration fees are. For a 5x10 booth it is \$495.00 and for a 10x10 booth it is \$715.00. In the past, E&E has registered for a 10x10 booth. The deadline to register for the show is March 1, 2025.

Motion by Vanni Azzano

Seconded by Anita Jacobsen

THAT the Energy & Environment Advisory Committee spends \$715.00 to register for a 10x10 booth at the 2025 Stratford Home & Leisure Show and up to \$500.00 for any additional costs related to promotional and educational items for the show. Carried

Ms. Trotter will contact organizers to register the E&E Committee for a 10x10 booth. The Ecological working group will organize their information, other members will also work towards gathering information and displays on additional topics to include, such as garbage/recycling, Tree Power.

Linda Wakenhut inquired about Garden Stratford attending the event with E&E to distribute information. Councillor Burbach suggested a working group could be formed to organize for the show. A schedule will be created for E&E members to sign up to volunteer for timeslots at the show.

8.4 Discussion: How E&E can best support the implementation of the Community Climate Action Plan

Vicky Trotter updated the committee that generally when plans such as the Community Climate Action Plan (CCAP) are adopted by the City, staff will reach out to stakeholders, such as Advisory Committees, to ask for assistance at certain times or stages in the plan. Ms. Trotter suggested that members could form a working group to compile a list of ideas that may assist with the CCAP, and could be forwarded to staff. Vanni Azzano suggested that upon the return of the Manager of Climate Change Programs, members could inquire if there is something specific or helpful that E&E can do to support. Anna Stratton suggested that community engagement will be important. Ms. Stratton also noted that university master's students are quite often seeking placements or internships in this field and Stratford could consider this as an option.

Councillor Burbach will bring forward the motion again at Council regarding the requested position in the budget for assistance for the Manager of Climate Change Programs.

8.5 E&E Committee Column/Articles

Linda Wakenhut has volunteered to write an article regarding invasive species to be published in the local paper in the spring. She has suggested highlighting one invasive species and how to eradicate and dispose of them. Ms. Wakenhut will work on the article and once a draft is complete, Ms. Wakenhut will circulate it to E&E members for comments/feedback and then forward it to Vicky Trotter to have it reviewed by staff prior to publication. Ms. Trotter will confirm with staff the proper steps involved for a member to publish an article on behalf of E&E and inform Ms. Wakenhut.

9. New Business

9.1 Green Leaders Education Program

Vanni Azzano reported on the recent Green Leaders Education Program that the UTRCA is doing with local grade 6 and 7 students at Jean Sauve School. It is an environmental education and civic engagement program for students. In September, they did a community walk looking at environmental issues in the city and then worked through the process of some root causes of issues. Students have now decided that garbage and littering will be their focus. The

UTRCA has arranged for experts to speak with the students regarding this and tomorrow, Emily Skelding will be speaking with the students and answering their questions. Part of the learning process for the students will be completing a project outlining their own plan. This project runs for the school year, ending with a symposium on June 3, 2025 at Huron College (Western University) where the classes participating from the Huron-Perth Catholic School Board, London Catholic Board and Thames Valley School Board will discuss the issues and present their solutions.

Vanni Azzano no longer present at the meeting (5:38 p.m.)

9.2 Annual Green Recognition Program

Vicky Trotter reported that she contacted Taylor Crinklaw, Director of Infrastructure Services, and he stated that the Infrastructure Services Department does not have the capacity to take on this project this year. It is necessary for staff to be the lead on this city initiative, an unfortunately, this year there is not a staff person available at this time. The hope is that it is just a pause for 2025 and the program will continue in 2026.

9.3 Green Development Standards

Councillor Burbach reported that she recalls the E&E Committee discussing green development standards, however not making a formal recommendation at the time. Councillor Burbach made a motion at Council in 2021 to create green development standards at the same time as Council had declared a climate emergency and were figuring out what the city's targets would be. The motion was referred to the 2022 budget discussion and was subsequently going to be added as part of the Official Plan update. The Official Plan update is currently underway and there was no official motion that Green Development standards be a part of it, however it does not mean that the E&E Committee cannot make a recommendation now to have them included in the current update. It is Councillor Burbach's understanding that the Official Plan will have a green lens on it.

Motion by Craig Merkley

Seconded by Anna Stratton

THAT the Energy & Environment Advisory Committee recommends Council consider adding Green Development Standards. Carried

9.4 Proposed recommendation from E&E regarding proposals and the development of Expression of Interest documents regarding the Grand Trunk Renewal

Mike Sullivan inquired if the Grand Trunk Committee is considering environmental issues or Green Development Standards. Vicky Trotter reported that the Grand Trunk Committee does have an environmental working group and the Director of Infrastructure has attended meetings to discuss initial land remediation. There has not been any environmental discussion yet regarding the proposed new building or buildings for the site. Councillor Burbach reported that members of the Grand Trunk Committee were in attendance at the previous Climate Conversation event regarding alternative energy options.

Ms. Trotter reported that the City's DEI Department has submitted a work plan for the Grant Trunk site development, which includes having Indigenous partners involved to look at each aspect as the project moves forward. If E&E members are interested in the plan, the minutes from the Grand Trunk meetings are all posted online for viewing. Ms. Trotter will inquire with the DEI Department if they can provide a copy of the work plan for E&E members.

10. Upcoming Events

- Climate Conversation: Waste Not, Want Not – March 6, 2025 @ 7:00 p.m.
- Climate Conversation: Natural Assets – March 27, 2025 @ 7:00 p.m.
- Stratford Home & Leisure Show – April 12-13, 2025
- Climate Conversation: Walking the Talk of a Green City – Apr. 24, 2025 @ 7 pm
- Earth Day Street Party – Sunday, April 27, 2025 – 11:30-2:00 p.m.
- Climate Conversation: Industry & Circular Economy – May 22, 2025 @ 7:00 pm

11. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Energy & Environment Advisory Committee will be held on Thursday, March 6, 2025, at 4:00 p.m., Rotary Complex – Mansbridge Room, 353 McCarthy Road, W., Stratford ON

12. Adjournment

Motion by Ken Clarke

Seconded by Zach Kritzer

Energy & Environment Advisory Committee
February 6, 2025

THAT the February 6, 2025 Energy & Environment Advisory Committee meeting adjourn. Carried

Meeting Start Time: 4:02 P.M.

Meeting End Time: 5:58 P.M.