



Energy & Environment Advisory Committee

MINUTES

A meeting of the Energy & Environment Advisory Committee (E&E) was held on December 5, 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, Anita Jacobsen, Zach Kritzer, Mike Sullivan, Ken Clarke, Geoff Krauter, Councillor Larry McCabe, Anna Stratton, Julia Schneider, Linda Wakenhut

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

Regrets: Vanni Azzano, Craig Merkley, Sadaf Ghalib – Manager of Climate Change Programs

1. Call to Order

Councillor McCabe, Chair called the meeting to order at 4:03 p.m.

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

Reading of the Respectful Workplace Policy.

2. Declaration of Pecuniary Interest

None declared.

3. Welcome New Members

Councillor McCabe welcomed new members Anna Stratton, Julia Schneider and Linda Wakenhut. Members and staff introduced themselves.

4. Election of 2024/25 Committee Chair and Vice-Chair

Staff declared nominations open for the 2024/25 Chair of the Energy & Environment Advisory Committee. Mike Sullivan put forward his name for Chair.

Staff asked if there were any further nominations. No further nominations were made.

Motion by Ken Clarke

Seconded by Geoff Krauter

THAT the nominations for the 2024/25 Energy & Environment Advisory Committee Chair be closed. Carried

Mike Sullivan indicated that he would allow his name to stand.

Motion by Julia Schneider

Seconded by Geoff Krauter

THAT Mike Sullivan be elected as the 2024/25 Chair of the Energy & Environment Advisory Committee. Carried

Staff declared nominations for the 2024/25 Vice-Chair of the Energy & Environment Advisory Committee open. Councillor Burbach nominated Anna Stratton.

Staff asked if there were any further nominations. No further nominations were made.

Motion by Geoff Krauter

Seconded by Councillor McCabe

THAT nominations for the 2024/25 Energy & Environment Advisory Committee Vice-Chair be closed. Carried

Anna Stratton indicated that she would allow her name to stand.

Motion by Councillor Burbach

Seconded by Geoff Krauter

THAT Anna Stratton be elected as the 2024/25 Vice-Chair of the Energy & Environment Advisory Committee. Carried

Mike Sullivan will now commence chairing the meeting.

5. Adoption of Previous Minutes

Motion by Geoff Krauter

Seconded by Anita Jacobsen

THAT the minutes from the Energy & Environment Advisory Committee meeting dated November 7, 2024 be adopted as printed.

6. Working Group Updates:

Ecological:

Anita Jacobsen provided the following updates from the Ecological Working Group:

- In mid-November, Craig Merkley, Quin Malott – Cemetery, Parks & Forestry Manager, Rob Davies – UTRCA and Ms. Jacobsen met to discuss how to coordinate their various efforts to follow the invasive species plan for the upcoming year. Possibly creating a formal agreement between the City and the UTRCA regarding the control of phragmites and Japanese knotweed moving forward, collaborating to produce year-end reports for the City regarding efforts to control invasive species;
- Experimentation in T.J. Dolan has been completed to try to control the larger buckthorn trees. A weed wrench was previously used to pull out saplings (up to 2”) any larger it does not work. They cut the buckthorn at ground level and covering them up with a small sheet of thick black poly to block any sunlight and then covered that with mulch as well. This prevents any sunlight getting to the cut stump of the buckthorn and it should just die;
- SDSS has built two sections of the boardwalk and they are ready to be installed in T.J. Dolan once they can access the area better. The shipment of lumber for the next round of board walks has been sent to the school to start the next sections. Each section is 16 ft. long. There are no plans to keep the boardwalks cleared in the winter months, as it is not a maintained trail through T.J. Dolan;

Councillor Burbach reported that during the recent budget discussions, there is \$10,000.00 allocated to executing the Invasive Species Management Plan included in the 2025 Community Services budget. This is in addition to the funds that E&E has requested.

Councillor Burbach also reported that it has been determined that the water at the John Street weir is healthier when the stop logs are not in and the water can flow freely. However, the UTRCA stated that they cannot leave the stop logs out as they have always been in the weir. An environmental assessment will be required in order to leave the stop logs out. The City included \$40,000.00 in the draft 2025 budget to make some minor changes to the weir and place the stop logs back in.

7. Manager of Climate Change Programs Update

Deferred to January meeting.

8. Supervisor of Waste Operations Update

Emily Skelding, Supervisor of Waste Operations provided an overview of the 2025 Draft Waste Operating Budget and was available for questions. The presentation included:

- key activities planned for 2025;
- new initiatives planned for 2025;
- significant variances of the 2025 proposed budget vs. the prior year budget.

Linda Wakenhut inquired if Stratford could be more progressive with their recycling efforts, for example, cups or other containers that you may receive from restaurants. Mike Sullivan stated that he has previously raised the idea of charging a tax on drink containers. A management report regarding the E&E recommendation on a take-out container levy program will be going to Council in the new year.

Geoff Krauter recommended the I.C.I. Waste Working Group could re-form and collect information regarding this initiative. If any E&E members are interested in restarting the working group, there can be further discussion at the January meeting.

Larry McCabe noted that many small restaurants currently use Friendlier Company and biodegradable containers for take-out. The restaurant community in Stratford is at the forefront of environmental issues, dating back to the slow food market in the 1990's. It is less likely to have large chain restaurants participate in programs such as these.

9. Active Transportation Advisory Committee (ATAC) Update

Vicky Trotter stated the committee reviewed and finalized the remaining 2024 budget purchases.

Councillor Burbach noted that the intersection at Road 111 and Hwy 7/8 will be a signalized intersection. A detailed design has not yet been provided showing the pedestrian infrastructure. There is a website that people can provide feedback and comments regarding the project by the deadline of January 3, 2025.

Mike Sullivan stated that he was informed that if the City of Stratford wants to have pedestrian and cycling infrastructure, they would need to submit a request. Councillor Burbach stated that this is a difficult intersection as it is an MTO project that borders Perth East and the City of Stratford.

10. E&E Committee Motions Update

Vicky Trotter, Council Committee Coordinator, provided the following update on previous E&E motions:

October 3, 2024 meeting:

The Director of Building and Planning is drafting a memo to E&E regarding fossil fuels and new developments. Once the memo is complete it will be forwarded to the committee for their information.

The Energy & Environment Advisory Committee requested Stratford City Council direct staff to investigate the legislative regulations of a take-out container levy program for the City of Stratford. A management report is going to Council for their direction to either move forward on the recommendation or file it. Ms. Trotter anticipates this report will go to Council in January at the earliest.

November 7, 2024 meeting:

The Energy & Environment Advisory Committee recommended a student position be added to the Community Services Department staffing for the summer of 2025 to implement the Invasive Species Plan and that grant funding opportunities be reviewed to fund the position.

The committee also recommended that 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.

Director Wolfe responded that budgets have already been put in and this was not brought up during their deliberations. Unless a grant or funding elsewhere is available, they will not be hiring an additional student. Requests of this nature will need to come in sooner to give staff a chance to build it into their workplace. Staff are already looking at Canada Summer jobs grants to help fund existing student positions.

Ms. Trotter stated that if E&E members would like to see this additional student position added in the future, they could make a recommendation to Community Services in the spring to have it considered in deliberations.

Six heavy duty boot brushes were purchased and delivered. They are currently at the Clerk's Office for installation in the spring and will be paid for out of the 2024 budget.

Turtle crossing signs for Romeo Street have been ordered and will also be paid for out of the 2024 budget.

Staff reviewed minutes back to 2020 to confirm a previous E&E motion regarding free transit and a previous motion was not found in any minutes. If the committee wishes to make a current recommendation to Council on this issue they can do so.

Mike Sullivan stated that the City of Orangeville has now done this successfully and they are the same size as Stratford. Ms. Trotter noted that the City of Orangeville received funding from the County of Durham to help decrease the costs.

Julia Schneider recommended that Council consider re-assessing their times for transfers. If they could be extended to allow people more time to make stops, it may encourage ridership. Ms. Trotter will confirm current transfer times with the Transit Manager and inquire if there has been any consideration to extending the times and report back to the committee.

Felicity Sutcliffe inquired if there will be any future free days to ride the bus, like they recently had for International Transit Day. Ms. Trotter will inquire about this with the Transit Manager and ask if there are also stats on any previous free days that have been offered.

11. Business Arising from Previous Minutes

11.1 Climate Conversations Update

Felicity Sutcliffe updated members on the November 28, 2024 Climate Conversation on buildings, land use and adaptation. There were great speakers and the event was well attended. Ms. Sutcliffe reviewed some of the issues discussed and provided written notes to E&E members.

11.2 2025 Budget and Climate Lens

Mike Sullivan reviewed some items that he had forwarded to staff for discussion including:

- an update on the study which was completed of the feasibility of heat pumps in the arenas;
- only two vehicle purchases included in the 2025 draft budget are electric;

- draft budget for the Planning Division notes an emphasis on environmentally responsible development, what does this mean for fossil fuels for heat and hot water;
- what actions in the Climate Change Action Plan are feasible;
- what involvement does the Manager of Climate Change Programs have with the Grand Trunk Renewal, development of the storm tax, geothermal heating and water study.

Highlights of the discussion included:

- Councillor Burbach reported that there has been discussion at Council regarding heat pumps in the arenas and staff is going to prioritize the use of heat pumps and solar options as much as possible;
- Councillor Burbach stated two more electric vans have been included for expansion requests;
- extensive discussions took place at the budget meetings around the various pros and cons of electric vehicles depending on their planned usage;
- environmental studies will need to be completed on the Grand Trunk site for sensitive use, such as building housing on the site;
- the expansion request for climate change was defeated at the Finance Committee Budget meeting;
- Anna Stratton noted that it is wonderful to see that there is a climate lens being used throughout the budget and questioned how it is being monitored and what resources are being put towards monitoring the climate lens affecting each part of the budget;
- Mike Sullivan stated that an expansion request for additional communications staff was included in draft budget;
- Mr. Sullivan suggested splitting the Communication Coordinator position and the Community Energy Liaison;
- Councillor Burbach and Councillor McCabe will discuss splitting the FTE funds at the December 9, 2024 meeting.

Motion by Anna Stratton

Seconded by Geoff Krauter

THAT the Energy & Environment Advisory Committee recommends to the Finance and Labour Relations Committee the expansion request for a full-time Communication Coordinator be split between the Communication Coordinator and the Community Energy Liaison to help advance community wide outreach and programming stemming from the Community Climate Action Plan. Carried

12. New Business

None Noted.

13. Upcoming Events

Climate Conversations:

- Alternative Energy Options – January 23, 2025 @ 7:00 p.m.
- Waste Not, Want Not – February 27, 2025 @ 7:00 p.m.
- Natural Assets – March 27, 2025 @ 7:00 p.m.
- Walking the Talk of a Green City – April 24, 2025 @ 7:00 p.m.
- Industry & Circular Economy – May 22, 2025 @ 7:00 p.m.

14. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Energy & Environment Advisory Committee will be held on Thursday, January 2, 2025, at 4:00 p.m., Rotary Complex – Mansbridge Room, 353 McCarthy Road, W., Stratford ON

15. Adjournment

Motion by Councillor Burbach

Seconded by Geoff Krauter

THAT the December 5, 2024, Energy & Environment Advisory Committee meeting adjourn. Carried

Meeting Start Time: 4:03 P.M.

Meeting End Time: 6:10 P.M.