



## **Energy & Environment Advisory Committee**

### **MINUTES**

A meeting of the Energy & Environment Advisory Committee (E&E) was held on February 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, Casey Riehl – Recording Secretary

**Also Present:** Olivia Orsini - UTRCA

#### **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** Anna Stratton

**Seconded by** Julia Schneider

**THAT the minutes from the Energy & Environment Advisory Committee meeting dated December 4, 2025 be adopted as printed. Carried**

#### **4. Election of 2026 Vice-Chair**

Staff declared nominations open for the 2026 Vice-Chair of the Energy & Environment Advisory Committee.

Ken Clarke nominated Anita Jacobsen.

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

**Motion by** Councillor McCabe

**Seconded by** Craig Merkley

**THAT the nominations for the 2026 Energy & Environment Advisory Committee Vice-Chair be closed. Carried**

Anita Jacobsen indicated that she would allow her name to stand.

**Motion by** Ken Clarke

**Seconded by** Councillor McCabe

**THAT Anita Jacobsen be elected as the 2026 Vice-Chair of the Energy & Environment Advisory Committee. Carried**

#### **5. Delegation: Olivia Orsini, Source Water Policy and Risk Management Advisor, UTRCA – Source Water Protection and the Impacts of Road Salt**

Olivia Orsini shared a presentation with E&E with the following highlights:

- The Walkerton Tragedy, 2000;
- Multi-barrier approach for protecting drinking water;
- The Clean Water Act, 2006;
- Thames-Sydenham Source Protection Region;
- The Source Protection Committee;
- Source protection plans and assessment reports;
- Source protection plan: policy tools;
- Groundwater: Wellhead protection areas (WHPAS);
- Surface Water: Intake protection zones (IPZs);
- Drinking water threats;
- Risk management officials/inspectors;
- Part IV policies;
- Road salt;

- How road salt is a drinking water threat;
- What can source do;
- Education and outreach material;

Julia Schneider inquired if sand is a better solution versus salt. Ms. Orsini stated that yes, it is and they try to promote this as part of their best practices. Councillor Burbach noted that people prefer salt as it melts the ice, and sand provides traction.

Councillor Burbach stated that Stratford uses a combination of 75% sand and 25% salt and the City also uses a liquid brine sometimes.

Emily Skelding inquired what the options are to enforce the Act. Ms. Orsini stated that if they do not comply, individual property owners can be charged \$50,000.00 per day until they stop and corporations \$150,000.00 per day until they stop. If it is a second offence, it jumps to \$150,000.00 for individual property owners/day and \$250,000.00/day for corporations until they stop. Ms. Orsini stated they have never had a case locally where they have had to fine someone.

Emily Skelding stated that bags of salt that people want to dispose of can be brought to the City's landfill site during household hazardous waste days.

Craig Merkley inquired if there is information that can be shared with business owners to help them know the amount of salt and the best way to spread salt. Ms. Orsini stated that there is a free training video that explains the best practices. Ms. Orsini will send the link to staff to share.

Mike Sullivan inquired if the City would do an analysis this year versus other years, to compare the number of accidents, collisions and the safety of the roads generally having used less salt this year. Councillor Burbach stated that this is important data to know; having changed the process, has it changed the outcome? She will inquire with staff about doing a review.

## **6. Working Group Updates**

Ecological Working Group:

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

- SDSS has the lumber to begin the second round of boardwalks for the TJ Dolan trail. The students will build them over the winter to be installed in the spring;

- In discussions with the Parks & Forestry Manager, the large Norway Maples in the TJ Dolan area should be removed. The maple trees will be girdled to kill them and then left standing as a habitat for birds, insects, wildlife;
- An offer was made to organize a wetlands tour for E&E members this summer in the Don River area. More information to follow.

### **Community Education & Engagement Working Group (CEEWG):**

Anna Stratton reported that the working group has continued to work on the information booklet. They will send out a draft next week for E&E members to review and provide feedback and comments on. The goal is to have the final draft to the City for review by March 10, 2026.

CEEWG will meet and discuss organizing participation in the upcoming Home & Leisure Show and Earth Day events. They will work on gathering some materials should E&E decide they would like to participate. Further discussion will take place at the March meeting.

## **7. Update from the Supervisor of Waste Operations**

Emily Skelding provided the following updates:

- Inquiries regarding the new blue box program have started to slow down now after the first few weeks of people getting used to the new program;
- There is a new partnership for the blue box depot at the landfill and so far, staff has been really happy with the service. Emterra has been doing a great job emptying the bins;
- RFP's are currently out for a new 3-year organics collection contract with the potential for a 2-year extension;
- Staff is reviewing the 2025 data and there was an uptick in green bin participation. There was an extra 130 metric tons of waste collected in 2025. Some of the extra could be from downtown businesses participating and some factories now using the green bins in their lunchrooms;
- No has been no update from the Ministry on the requested increase on the household hazardous waste hours at the landfill site;

Julia Schneider inquired if green bin education can be increased to make people aware of the contamination that occurs when you throw the wrong things in, for example the stickers on bananas. Emily Skelding stated that once the blue bin program is running smoothly, they will focus on some extra educational pieces such as this.

Quinn Kearsley inquired how schools can get more involved with using the green bin program. Ms. Skelding stated that all schools are now eligible for the program. She contacted all schools in Stratford individually for the rollout. The City cannot force schools to participate and use the green bins, but it is available if they would like to. She noted that the key to success is a student involvement and custodial staff who are on board to assist.

Councillor McCabe had an inquiry from a citizen asking why the Emterra trucks could not pick up the smaller recycling bins. Ms. Skelding explained that the trucks can pick up the large and medium size bins with the same arm setting, however they have to manually change the settings for the arms each time to pick up the smaller ones and then change back for the larger sizes. As this program is rolling out provincially, this decision may have been made due to the extra time and inefficiency in much larger cities than Stratford. It is her hope that perhaps this may be revisited at a later date and staff will continue to advocate for this option for Stratford.

Mike Sullivan inquired if there was a by-law regarding when people could put their bins out the night before. Now that pick up begin at 7:00 a.m., a lot more people seem to be putting their bins out the night before. Ms. Skelding stated that the by-law does state the bins are to be placed out on the scheduled garbage day ready for pick up starting at 8:00 a.m. As they are only a month into the program, they have not been enforcing this and have not received complaints as of yet. A potential update of the by-law may be necessary.

## **8. Manager of Climate Change Programs Update**

Autumn Loosemore provided the following updates:

- Staff is in the final stages of the hiring process for the community liaison position. The hope is to have the position filled by March 2026;
- The Green Recognition Program will begin again this year and the call for nominations is now open. The deadline for submissions is March 15, 2026. A review sub-committee will be set up to review the nominations. Felicity Sutcliffe provided a brief overview of how the program works.

Mike Sullivan inquired if there will be a progress update on the Community Climate Action Plan. Ms. Loosemore stated staff looks at key metrics or programs that they can look at year after year to see how they are progressing. This is in the works, but it will not be a comprehensive review of the total emissions, like they do for the Corporate Plan. Mr. Sullivan inquired if there are actions in the plan that are being implemented that require City resources to be accomplished. Councillor Burbach stated that this work will be undertaken by the new Community Liaison staff member.

## **9. E&E Motions Update**

Vicky Trotter reviewed the motion updates that were distributed to members in the agenda package and was available for questions.

- Planning does have a draft of policy discussion paper #5 – Sustainable City. It is not a public document yet and Ms. Trotter will distribute it once available;
- The E&E required for an Indigenous representative on the committee went to the January 26, 2026 regular Council meeting and it was referred to staff as part of a broader Advisory Committee governance review;
- Ms. Trotter brought one of the new boot brush signs to show members. The signs and brushes will be installed in T.J. Dolan in the spring. The downpayment for the T.J. Dolan entrance sign has been paid and will be completed for the spring also;
- Two medium Terracycle boxes were purchased and delivered to SDSS for use in their art rooms;
- Ms. Trotter confirmed that E&E, as an advisory committee, cannot endorse Emily Chandler's letter regarding Bill 68, however there was a resolution on the January 12, 2026 Consent Agenda and Council chose to endorse it;
- Ms. Trotter shared a draft of what the E&E pop-up banner would look like. Ms. Trotter will bring a banner from another Advisory Committee to show members at the next meeting. She will also send the picture of the E&E banner to members for feedback before the next meeting.

## **10. Business Arising from Previous Minutes**

### **10.1 Climate Conversations Update**

Felicity Sutcliffe reported that there was an event held last night, February 4, 2026. She thanked E&E members for attending and assisting at the event. It was very well attended, including a good number of students. Ms. Sutcliffe reviewed some planned events that are listed under Upcoming Events with details.

## **11. New Business**

### **11.1 Review of 2025 Annual Report to Council**

As the 2025 Chair, Mike Sullivan completed the annual report for Council. Vicky Trotter provided members a copy of the report Mr. Sullivan prepared with track changes, as the report was adjusted to AODA standards and the information was formatted into the required template. The section regarding recommendations to Council was removed, as it is not requested as part of the form. Some items that were not E&E initiatives were also removed from this report. Both versions of the report have been provided to committee members for their review and final decision on what information should be submitted.

Ken Clarke stated that he thought the recommendations should be included in the report to show what E&E has been working on. Ms. Trotter clarified that all the motions that the committee passed at meetings are included in the report, these were additional recommendations regarding voting and timelines for recommendations going to Council for consideration.

Vanni Azzano stated that in his opinion, this is an annual report on what the committee accomplished and the additional recommendations should be left out.

Mike Sullivan stated that this was his first time seeing this report and completed one. He added two items, a recommendation that there be more transparency around the process where the committee recommendations get to Council, as there is still an outstanding one from 2021. Over the past year, recommendations seem to take a long period of time to get from the committee to Council, one in particular took 10 months. He questioned if Council can design a better way for recommendations to reach the ears of Council. Councillor McCabe agrees with this statement and supports a more streamlined

approach to move items through quicker. Councillor Burbach suggested that the committee could consider this recommendation outside of the report. Vicky Trotter reviewed the current process on how the committee recommendations go to Council and how some are sent directly to staff for a decision. She stated that the procedural by-law is also being reviewed and this may include an update to the 3-step process (Sub-committee, Committee, Council), which may speed the process up. Councillor Burbach and Councillor McCabe will discuss this concern with the CAO to consider a future change.

Members agreed with the edited version of the report and staff will proceed with the submittal.

### **11.2 Native Seed Packets as Giveaways**

Vanni Azzano shared an example of seed packets that E&E could use for a giveaway. The seeds are three species of native flowers and the allotment to purchase would be enough to make 250 packets. E&E Labels can be printed on the packets.

**Motion by** Anita Jacobsen

**Seconded by** Felicity Sutcliffe

**THAT the Energy & Environment Advisory Committee spend a maximum of \$400.00 to purchase enough seeds to make (250) seed packets. Carried**

Mike Sullivan no longer present at the meeting at 5:52 p.m.

### **11.3 SDSS Eco Club Update**

Quinn Kearsey provided an update on initiatives that the SDSS Eco Club are working on:

- In January, the Eco Club ran a Bill 68 e-mail campaign to MPP Matthew Rae voicing their concerns about the Bill;
- Students are currently running an in-school fundraiser for the UTRCA native species;
- They have received great feedback from students and staff regarding the success of the Terracycle boxes in the art classes and are interested in expanding with more. Vicky Trotter will send the contact information regarding the boxes to Mr. Kearsey;

- The Club is getting prepared to host the upcoming “Sustainable Bites” event at the Local Community Food Centre on April 8, 2026;
- They will also be participating in the upcoming Children’s Water Festival.

## **12. Upcoming Events**

- Energy Conservation, Renewable Energy Support Programs & District Energy (Peter Love) – March 11, 2026 (4:30–6:00 p.m.)
- Sustainable Bites - SDSS Eco Club (The Local 7-9 p.m.) – April 8, 2026
- Stratford Home & Leisure Show (Rotary) – April 11-12, 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

## **13. Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Energy & Environment Advisory Committee will be held on Thursday, March 5, 2025, at 4:00 p.m., Rotary Complex – Mansbridge Room, 353 McCarthy Road W., Stratford ON

## **14. Adjournment**

**Motion by** Ken Clarke

**Seconded by** Anna Stratton

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

Meeting Start Time: 4:00 P.M.

Meeting End Time: 5:57 P.M.