

ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY
STANDING COMMITTEE
MINUTES

September 5, 2013

PRESENT: Councillor Barry Dalrymple, Chair
Councillor Jennifer Watts, Vice Chair
Deputy Mayor Reg Rankin
Councillor Lorelei Nicoll
Councillor Darren Fisher
Councillor Bill Karsten
Councillor Steve Craig

STAFF: Mr. Mike Labrecque, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer
Mr. David Greener, Solicitor
Mr. Richard MacLellan, Manager, Energy and Environment
Ms. Laurie Lewis, Diversion Planning Coordinator
Ms. Jennifer Duncan, Environmental Performance Officer
Mr. Quentin Hill, Legislative Assistant

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1. CALL TO ORDER

The Chair called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. in the Dartmouth Chamber, 90 Alderney Drive, Dartmouth.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – August 8, 2013

MOVED by Councillor Nicoll, seconded by Councillor Fisher, that the minutes of August 8, 2013, be approved as circulated. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

3. APPROVAL OF THE ORDER OF BUSINESS AND APPROVAL OF ADDITIONS AND DELETIONS

Additions: 9.1 Municipal Climate Change Action Plan Submission- Presentation from Staff

9.2 Presentation Request – Ecology Action Centre- Seven Lakes Development: Storm water Project

Deletions: 6.3.2 Clean Nova Scotia – Partnership Opportunities (Rescheduled for October 3, 2013)

MOVED by Councillor Watts, seconded by Councillor Nicoll, that the order of business be approved as amended. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

4. BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES

4.1 Business Arising – None

4.2 Status Sheet

Councillor Dalrymple advised that through an error the status sheet was not included in the agenda packages. He requested that an update be provided on Blue Mountain Birch Cove at the next meeting.

In agreement with Deputy Mayor Rankin, Mike Labrecque, Deputy CAO advised that a planning matter that had recently been at Regional Council, had referenced and spoke to the Blue Mountain Birch Cove issue. He stated that he would update the Committee via email.

5. CONSIDERATION OF DEFERRED BUSINESS – NONE

6. CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS & DELEGATIONS

6.1 Correspondence

6.1.1 Presentation Request from Sweet Cheeks Diaper Services.

A presentation request dated August 12, 2013 was before the Committee.

Ms. Laurie Lewis, Diversion Planning Officer, advised that staff had reviewed the correspondence and noted that it was not a matter under municipal jurisdiction. She explained that the re-use option that the firm listed is something that's part of HRM's Green newsletter and website and this is provided to the public.

Councillor Watts stated she had previously spoken with the business owner on the issue. She explained that the business owner was trying to convey the message that it is in the interest of the municipality to support his bid to the province, as disposable diapers make up a big portion of waste sent to the landfill.

Ms. Lewis stated that currently it is estimated that one to two percent of waste in the landfill is disposable diapers.

Councillor Dalrymple declared conflict of interest as the request was from a resident in his area who he had many conversations with. Councillor Dalrymple removed himself from the meeting at 1:15 p.m., Councillor Watts assumed the Chair at 1:15 p.m.

Councillor Nicoll suggested that the Committee recommend to Council to ask the Mayor to send a letter of advocacy as to what HRM is doing and the impact on the landfill.

Deputy Mayor Rankin suggested that in fairness to the applicant, staff might have a discussion with UNSM or the Resource Recovery Board on the issue. He stated that other municipalities might be interested in the diaper disposal matter as well.

Mr. Labrecque stated that staff could reach out to the UNSM and discuss the matter.

The Committee in agreement indicated there was no need for a presentation. Councillor Watts requested a future update from staff on the disposable diaper matter. She noted that the solid waste review was forthcoming and there might be other solutions brought forward.

Councillor Dalrymple resumed chair at 1:20

6.2 Petitions - NONE

6.3 Presentation

6.3.1 Plasco Energy Group

Alisdair McLean, Plasco Energy Group, gave a presentation on Plasco Energy Group work and technology in the waste energy and provided the following highlights:

- Plasco Energy Group converts 98% of non-recyclable materials into plasma that's used to produce energy.
- Currently running a test facility in Ottawa, with future locations to be opened in the U.K. and other areas.
- Number of benefits for HRM; Plasco to fund, build, and operate facility; Plasco assumes all capital costs.
- Annual payroll for Plasco facility expected to be 3.6 million.
- Do not use water for the process and any water is removed from waste and treated.
- Power produced is sold on the grid.
- City only pays for garbage processed by Plasco.

The Chair thanked Mr. McLean for the presentation and opened the floor to questions.

Deputy Mayor Rankin stated that a number of competing technologies are in the market for processing waste. He advised that HRM would want to be satisfied that the technology that was presented by Mr. McLean was proven. Deputy Mayor Rankin commented that the cost of processing the waste according to the Plasco presentation was intriguing. He noted that it is in line with the Regional Plan to consider options for closure of the landfill. He expressed support of considering the project though not fully endorsing it, but to give it fair consideration as an option for the plan for solid waste beyond the year 2022.

Mr. Labrecque reminded the Committee that staff is in the midst of the Solid Waste Review as directed by Regional Council. He explained that part of the review is to look at other alternative technologies and that other options are likely come out of the consultation process. He stated that the presentation provided some useful information. In agreement with the Deputy Mayor, he cautioned that the technology needed to be proven.

MOVED by Deputy Mayor Rankin, seconded by Councillor Nicoll refer the information provided in the Plasco presentation as part of the solid waste review; and provide a copy of the presentation to the Community Monitoring Committee as an information item.

Mr. MacLean clarified that the municipality would assume no risk. He further explained that the existing plant in Ottawa is a commercial scale demonstration facility, which has a capacity of 135/tonnes a day; with a permit to process 85/tonnes a day. He noted that it is called a commercial demonstration facility as it is only one module; a complete unit that takes garbage and produces electricity. He advised that when the full plant is completed in Ottawa it will be 3 units and there will be no scale up risk required. He noted that the Municipality will be able to come see how the plant operates. He agreed that municipalities should not feel the pressure of proving the technology. He further explained that HRM would be able to go to Ottawa and the United Kingdom and be able to see the plants in operation before making any decision.

In response to a question from Councillor Fisher, Mr. McLean stated the goal is to reduce landfills down to the small percentage that Plasco could not process, he stated that if the plant was down they would not be able to process that waste and there would still be a need to have landfills. He noted that the more plants that were built would be able to handle the waste when a facility needed to shut down for maintenance.

Councillor Nicoll wanted to know if there would be redundancies in services, as she noted that Ottawa did not have the same sorting procedures as HRM.

Mr. McLean advised that the curbside pick-up in Ottawa is similar to HRM. He noted that HRM does more pre-processing of black bag garbage and is unlike any other place in the world. He noted that the pre-processing could be a mutual benefit to HRM and Plasco; as the pre-processing would generate a lot more electricity and more revenues which would turn into lower gate fees for HRM.

Councillor Watts stated that the presentation was helpful and very clear. She requested information on where the waste to energy process is with the province and the legislative ability to do so.

Mr. McLean advised that he had meetings with the Nova Scotia Department of Environment. He stated that currently the province has come out with a discussion paper where the definition of incineration is redefined to include technologies similar to Plasco. He explained that Plasco is watching and participating in the discussion. He explained that what they do is no incineration and the European Union does not view their technology as incineration.

Ms. Lewis stated that the Department of Environment is consulting a review of solid waste regulations. She noted that the review is still internal with the Department. She explained that it would include a review the definition of incineration and would take in consideration of the changes in technology.

In response to Councillor Watts, Mr. McLean advised that they do not require pre-processing of waste from the municipality. He stated that their business model has considered the ability to process any waste as it comes to the facility. He noted that people are investing in the technology because of guaranteed rates of return. He explained that their interest is the defined total revenue per tonne. He stated that they are indifferent if that return is from mostly electricity and no gate fee; he said if they are producing more electricity, than it would make sense to lower the gate fee. He stated that the 3 module system allows for one processor to shut down and operate while maintenance is undertaken; allowing waste to continue to be processed.

Councillor Craig remarked that he found the discussion fascinating and is amazed at the change in technology over the past 20 years. He expressed support of the motion put forward by Deputy Mayor Rankin

Deputy Mayor Rankin requested staff provide their preliminary observations in the next several months. He advised he would like to see the costs in comparison from Ottawa in comparison to their conventional methods. He stated it was important to capture and quantify the benefits. He requested information on the leachate and if there would be a treatment facility and is that in the cost of processing.

Mr. McLean stated that the price did include the processing of leachate and water onsite and would meet the standard to safely discharge into the environment. He stated that there are other opportunities in Canada; however, he noted that the most dynamic market for their technology was in the United Kingdom. He stated that the UK policies made it a great place to introduce the technology. He indicated the challenge in Canada is there is no national policy and policies vary in each province.

Councillor Dalrymple thanked Mr. McLean for the presentation and answering questions of clarification and called for a vote on the motion. **MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

6.3.2 Clean Nova Scotia – Partnership Opportunities

This item was deleted from the agenda, see page 3.

7. REPORTS

7.1 Staff

7.1.1 Municipal Climate Change Action Plan Submission

Ms. Jennifer Duncan, Environmental Performance Officer provided the presentation to the Committee on behalf of the Energy and Environment Department. She noted that she was giving the presentation because the submission was over 2000 pages and the department felt the presentation was necessary.

Ms. Duncan explained that Municipal Climate Action Plan Submission (MCCAP) was required because of the 2010 and 2014 gas tax and municipal funding agreements. The funding agreements were where the municipalities were required to submit a MCCAP to Service Nova Scotia. She stated that HRM has been dealing with climate change for over 10 years and that the municipal submission shows how HRM meets the MCCAP submission request.

Ms. Duncan explained that staffs approach to the MCCAP submission was to:

- Overview how existing policy, planning, and administrative activities at HRM meet the requirements;
- How work is embedded in policy in the Halifax Regional Municipal Planning Strategy (RMPS);
- Overview of current work related to climate change adaptation; and
- Demonstrate how adaptation is engrained in municipal activities.

Ms. Duncan advised that it was determined through the study that HRM has met the MCCAP guidebook requirements. She stated that the plan has been submitted to the Service Nova Scotia and is currently being reviewed.

9. ADDED ITEMS

9.1 Councillor Fisher – Solar City Update

Councillor Fisher requested that an update be provided on the Solar City Program.

Mr. Richard Maclellan advised that currently there are 132 contracts signed for the program. He noted that the next update would be a budget update with more detail in the coming months.

9.2 Presentation Request –Ecology Action Centre – Seven Lakes Development Storm Water Project

Correspondence dated August 29, 2013 was before the Committee.

MOVED by Councillor Watts, seconded by Councillor Nicoll to invite Ms. Jocelyn Rankin and Ms. Jennifer West from the Ecology Action Centre to provide a presentation on the Seven Lakes Development at a future ESSC meeting.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

10. NOTICES OF MOTION

11. NEXT MEETING – October 3, 2013

12. IN CAMERA - NONE

13. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 2:25 p.m.

Quentin Hill
Legislative Assistant