

Environment & Sustainability Standing Committee
May 1, 2014

TO: Chair and Members of Environment & Sustainability Standing Committee

Original Signed

SUBMITTED BY: _____
Jane Fraser, Director, Planning & Infrastructure

DATE: April 15, 2014

SUBJECT: Retail Electricity Opportunities

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

ESSC, February 6, 2014, Approved Motion: To request a staff report on looking at the possible options and opportunities for HRM presented through green energy brokers to further objectives in the corporate emissions reduction plan and/or community energy plan.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Halifax Regional Municipality Charter, Part IV Finance, Power to expend money 79 (1).

BACKGROUND

Following a presentation by Bull Frog Power, the Committee approved the following motion: To request a staff report looking at the possible options and opportunities for HRM presented through green energy brokers to further objectives in the corporate emissions reduction plan and/or community energy plan.

On November 29, 2013, the Government of Nova Scotia introduced the Electricity Reform Act. The intent is to deliver on a commitment to begin opening the market to renewable energy producers and create local investment opportunities for renewable electricity providers. The legislation enables government to develop regulation by Spring 2014, and make a submission to the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board on detailed rules. Nova Scotians are expected to be able to purchase electricity directly from renewable retailers in late 2015.

DISCUSSION

Bull Frog Power is one active participant in the renewable electricity market. Other participants are forming and developing their proposed offerings under the regulations, which are in development. The current Community Energy Plan provides direction to the municipality to examine Green Power purchasing opportunities. The 2006 version of the CEP was developed prior to the current Provincial energy policy framework. At the time, the municipality investigated an opportunity to purchase wind energy directly from two producers at a 20 year stable rate. The opportunity was not enabled to be seized without the legislative framework that the new Electricity Reform Act presents.

At this point in time, staff do not understand the opportunities that the new policy may provide to the municipality and cannot immediately respond to the motion of Committee. A better understanding of the opportunities under the Electricity Reform Act is required. The timing of this, the regulation development and submission to the UARB, and the revision of the Community Energy Plan aligns well. A component of the scope of work included in the Community Energy Plan revision project, staff will further investigate the policy and opportunities that it presents. As a result, the recommended revised Community Energy Plan will provide recommended policy direction which will enable HRM to evaluate and seize future opportunities this legislation enables.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

None

ATTACHMENTS

None

A copy of this report can be obtained online at <http://www.halifax.ca/commcoun/index.html> then choose the appropriate Community Council and meeting date, or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 490-4210, or Fax 490-4208.

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