

ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY
STANDING COMMITTEE
MINUTES

February 6, 2014

PRESENT:

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

STAFF:

Mr. Mike Labrecque, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer
Ms. Karen MacDonald, Solicitor
Ms. Shannon Miedema, Environmental Performance Officer
Mr. Gord Helm, Manager Solid Waste Resources
Ms. Laurie Lewis, Diversion Planning Coordinator
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 – January 9, 2014

MOVED by Deputy Mayor Fisher, seconded by Councillor Karsten, that the minutes of January 9, 2014 be approved as presented. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

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

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

4. BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES -NONE

5. CONSIDERATION OF DEFERRED BUSINESS – NONE

6. CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS & DELEGATIONS

6.1 Correspondence –None

6.2 Petitions - None

6.3 Presentation

6.3.1 Bullfrog Power

Ms. Holly Bond gave a presentation on Bullfrog Power and provided the following highlights:

- Bullfrog Power helps increase renewable power in Canada by providing a high quality green power offering.
- Support and invest in the development of new renewable energy projects across Canada.
- Green energy choices provided through Bullfrog Power help offset some of the more polluting sources available.
- A large number of businesses, municipalities and residents use Bullfrog Power and it is highly recognized by a number of Canada's leading environmental organizations.

The Chair thanked Ms. Bond for the presentation and opened the floor to questions from the Committee.

Deputy Mayor Fisher questioned what the average additional cost would be to sign up for Bullfrog Power and what it might cost roughly for a 2000 square foot home.

Ms. Bond advised that it would cost an additional 2.5 cents a kilowatt hour and that would translate into approximately 25 dollars a month. She noted that they recommend to homeowners to do an energy assessment of their home before signing up. Often there are considerable savings to be found and thus the cost can be recouped through energy savings found around the home.

Councillor Craig asked why someone would sign up for Bullfrog as many of the utilities are moving towards using clean energy. He also added that if a resident is being energy efficient they are less reliant on the energy. He further questioned what the 2.5 cents a kilowatt hour was going towards.

Councillor Karsten questioned how a consumer would know that there is greener energy on the grid based on their purchase and wondered why a customer would purchase the energy if they were not utilizing the green energy.

Ms. Bond explained that the ability to buy an offsetting green energy allows people the choice of buying clean energy and it also allows for the advancement of green energy technology. She noted that some of the money is used to help advance green energy projects such as the turbine in Ellershouse through an agreement with Minas Basin which will provide green energy to their municipality. She added that the offsetting energy may not necessarily be utilized by the purchaser, but it would help assist many green projects to get on the energy grid around the country. She further added that removing 'dirty' energy is a benefit to everyone and Bullfrog Power is audited every year to ensure that it is adding green energy to the grid.

Councillor Watts wanted to know what the closest green project to HRM was that would be supported by Bullfrog Power. She also wondered if City Hall should go through an efficiency audit before considering utilizing Bullfrog Power.

Councillor Dalrymple asked if this would be closely related to work already being done on finding energy efficiencies on all municipal buildings.

Mr. Mike Labrecque, DCAO stated that there is a corporate energy plan and a community energy plan. He reminded the Committee that most of the work of HRM was working on the demand side of power in making efforts to find financial energy savings. He noted that the offsetting idea provided by Bullfrog Power would be more of meeting policy objectives. He noted that HRM has completed a number of projects that have reduced its carbon footprint.

Ms. Shannon Miedema, Environmental Performance Officer stated that there is opportunity for staff to prepare a report if requested. She noted that staff is currently updating the community energy plan and are about to go out to community engagement.

MOVED by Councillor Watts seconded by Mayor Savage 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.

Discussion ensued.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

6.3.2 Earth Hour

Dr. Robert Rangeley from the World Wildlife Federation provided the presentation to the Committee. He invited HRM to consider participating in the 2014 Earth Hour Event. He stated that the Earth Hour event would be held on March 29th, 2014 from 8:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. He requested that HRM consider participating by doing the following:

- Turn lights off of municipal buildings on March 29, 2014 during Earth Hour
- Promote Earth Hour on its network and social media outlets.
- Request the Mayor to submit a "Moment of Darkness" video and make the Halifax.ca website go dark.
- Engage with the public around climate change during David Miller's Speaking Tour
- Participate in the Earth Hour City Challenge in 2015.

The Chair thanked Dr. Rangeley for his presentation and opened the floor for questions of the Committee.

Discussion ensued.

MOVED by Councillor Karsten, seconded by Councillor Nicoll that the Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee recommends Halifax Regional Council to:

- 1. Participate in Earth Hour by directing staff to turn off the lights of municipal buildings, where possible, on March 29, 2014 at 8:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.**
- 2. Promote participation in Earth Hour through HRM's networks and social media platforms.**
- 3. Participate in the conversation around climate change during David Miller's Speaking Tour.**

4. Request a staff report to consider the costs and implications of participating in Earth Hour City Challenge 2015.

A number of Committee members expressed support for the event and requested that Dr. Rangeley provide them with information they could put on their own personal social media.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

6.3.3 TBL Resources (XT Energy Group)

Dr. Robert Wiles and Mr. Fred Bonner provided the presentation to the Committee and provided the following highlights from their presentation:

- XT has markets to use non-recyclable materials to produce Synthesis Gas (Syngas) as an alternate fuel for essential industrial combustion processes.
- Use of Syngas as an alternate fuel for industry means no new stack emission
- Syngas is widely used in industry and has been successfully used since 2009.
- Syngas could be produced from the non-metal components of the 35,000 to 40,000 tonnes per year of large bulk materials currently directly deposited in the Otter Lake Landfill.

Dr. Wiles stated that XT Energy Group is proposing to HRM to construct a Material Recovery Facility (MRF) through a Build-Own-Operate-Transfer (BOOT) agreement. The agreement would contain a 20 year contract and specified tipping fee for the bulk waste from the HRM waste stream and a lease to put the MRF at the Otter Lake Landfill. He added that the agreement would also contain a buy-out clause that would enable HRM to purchase the MRF, if desired after proven economic operation.

The Chair thanked the presenters and opened the floor for questions from the Committee.

In response to questions from the Committee, Dr. Wiles advised that they had some general discussion with HRM staff regarding their proposed project. He also added that a lot of the plastic that cannot be recycled is plastic contaminated with food waste.

Councillor Watts asked if there was a accepted business case for the project; what projects would HRM be involved in.

Dr. Wiles stated that HRM would only be involved in the building of the MRF and not involved in the Syngas. He added that the presentation was brought forward to see what interest there may be from HRM. He advised that they have several options to create the fuel source and the waste from Otter Lake was one option they would be considering. He noted that they would be taking a better look at all their options.

Ms. Laurie Lewis, Diversion Planning Coordinator advised that there have been discussions on the operations side and staff has provided any data that was required. She noted that staff would need a copy of the business case model in order for review and analysis.

Mr. Labrecque reminded the Committee that Council is currently looking at the whole solid waste strategy concurrent with the province reviewing the regulations around solid waste. He recommended that the Committee should forward the information to staff for review as all other proposals have been.

Further discussion ensued. The Committee agreed to allow staff to work with the group.

6.3.4 Curbside Monitoring Project – Staff

Ms. Laurie Lewis, Diversion Planning Coordinator provided the staff presentation to the Committee. She outlined the following three project objectives for the study:

1. Measure set out rates for garbage, average number of bags per household.
2. Measure participation rate for green cart and recycling streams
3. Measure impact of targeted education on participation in diversion activities.

Ms. Lewis advised that there were four neighbourhoods chosen for the study and were located in urban and suburban locations. She noted that over 82% of residents in the study place an average of 4 bags or less for curbside pickup. She added that of the properties which place more than 4 bags to the curbside that:

- 35% rarely or never place a green cart curbside
- 62% rarely or never place recycling curbside

Ms. Lewis stated that after the initial observations, staff sent out education packages in the neighbourhoods which were being observed. There was a small change with residents who did not put out organics or recyclables but too small to impact overall change.

The Chair thanked Ms. Lewis for the presentation and opened the floor to the Committee for questions of clarification.

In response to questions from the Committee, Ms. Lewis agreed to provide more detailed statistics from the study to the Committee. She noted that the educational packages were sent out to all households in the study, including those in excess of 4 curbside bags. She added that there was a change to all the households. She advised that none of the residents were aware the study was being taken for the first four weeks and they did not break open bags and analyze the material inside.

7. REPORTS

7.1 Staff - None

7.2 Regional Chairs Update

Councillor Watts advised that there was a recent meeting of Regional Chairs that she attended with staff. They received a status update of the meeting of the solid waste managers and groups and coordinators. They are able to meet on areas of specific concern and able to have in depth discussion. She added that there will be an upcoming meeting of the Regional Chairs and the provincial environment minister. They wish to get up to speed on the policy framework around solid waste and regulatory review and hoping to find out the next steps from that meeting.

Councillor Craig exited the meeting at 3:16 p.m.

7.3 Regional Watershed Advisory Board

7.3.1 Process/Mandate – Regional Watershed Advisory Board

A report dated January 28, 2014 was before the Committee.

Councillor Dalrymple stated that he had attended the last meeting of the Regional Watershed Advisory Board. He explained that the Board felt constrained by their terms of reference and wanted the ability to work on particular projects. In the absence of Mr. Maclellan, the Chair further advised that staff had some reservations on the motion coming from RWAB and would like the opportunity to address the request.

MOVED by Councillor Karsten, seconded by Councillor Nicoll that the Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee request a staff report to identify possible implications of:

- 1. Making changes to the Regional Watersheds Advisory Committees input process in regard to watershed studies.**
- 2. Authorizing the Regional Watersheds Advisory Board to review and comment on the Regional Plan Policy E-17 for consideration in future watershed studies.**

Councillor Karsten stated that the report listed the concerns from the board but did not feel that it was captured in the motion from RWAB. The Councillor raised concern that the wording of earlier input was too ambiguous. He noted they are an advisory board to ESSC and can't make their mandate too broad.

Further discussion ensued. **MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

8. MOTIONS -NONE

9. ADDED ITEMS

10. NOTICES OF MOTION - NONE

12. IN CAMERA - NONE

13. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 3:18 p.m.

Quentin Hill
Legislative Assistant