

REGULAR MEETING OF ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY INNOVATION COMMITTEE

Wednesday, May 8, 2024 – 4:30 p.m.

Township of South-West Oxford

Council Chambers

Present: Chair Jim Pickard; Mayor David Mayberry; Cathy Reeves (community representative); Councillor Valerie Durston (4:34 p.m.); and David Schell (community representative)

Regrets: George Klosler (community representative)

Staff: Works Superintendent Adam Prouse, Chief Building Official Howard Leaver, Clerk’s Assistant/Records Management Co-ordinator Nicole Chambers

Call to Order

Mayor David Mayberry called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m. and a quorum was present.

Motion to Accept the Agenda

Resolution No. 1 Moved by Howard Leaver
Seconded by David Mayberry

RESOLVED that the agenda for the meeting of the May 8th, 2024 Environment and Energy Innovation Committee be approved, as amended (Land Swaps and Boundary Adjustments).

DISPOSITON: Motion Carried

Land Swaps and Boundary Adjustments

Cathy Reeves inquired about the “land swap” item that was on the May 7th Council Meeting Agenda. She expressed concern regarding land swaps and boundary adjustments, and that there should be conditions placed on land sales or swaps when environmental features are present (significant or not), as is the case with other real estate transactions. She noted that Council should confirm that the minimum buffers are met, and these features be protected, enhanced and restored. She further noted that while Oxford County’s Official Plan for environmental policies have these recommendations built-in, implementation is severely lacking, especially when there is a change in land use. She encouraged the Committee and Council look into if other policies exist that could strengthen the implementation of existing plans.

and Inform Earth Day event to the next Council Meeting, and work with Councillor Pickard to develop communication material for this event.

EV Charging Station in Mount Elgin

Nicole Chambers provided an update to the Committee with regard to the EV Station at the Mount Elgin Community Centre. Clerk Julie Middleton has been in touch with ChargePoint – the company that provides the technical support to the charging station. David Isenberg, Activation Service Supervisor at ChargePoint has noted that they do not have any tokens to activate the station, he has reached out to the Sales team to assist with retrieving these needed tokens. As soon as he has received the tokens, he should be able to activate the station. Committee Members discussed the implications to the Community Centre hydro usage and billings. Mayor Mayberry noted that the cost to the Mount Elgin Community Centre would be fairly minimal. This will be added to the next meeting agenda for follow-up.

Flood Forecasting Presentation

Committee Members recommended sharing the Flood Forecasting Presentation YouTube video with staff – a presentation will not be required at this time.

Further discussion took place regarding tours of the low impact development in Bayfield, Ontario – a tour can be scheduled at the request of the Committee. Mayor Mayberry noted that residents should be encouraged to explore low impact development options when applying for building permits. Cathy Reeves noted the benefits of the low impact development – allows for complete infiltration rather than run-off. It was recommended that Council consider options for low impact development (e.g., sidewalk design) during the construction of Phase 6 in Mount Elgin.

Heat Pump at the Municipal Office (Council Chamber)

Rick's Heating and Cooling provided a quote to supply and install air-source heat pumps (mini split units) at the Municipal Office. They originally proposed two units, but Howard Leaver advised that only one unit would be necessary due to the capacity and usage of the room. He noted that the unit would be installed on the northern outside wall, where the Township map currently is located. He added that when it needs to be used, staff would need to turn the thermostat down so that the furnace does not turn on. Mr. Leaver noted that he is unsure of how much energy the heat pump would save and how long it would take to recover the cost – an electrical audit may be required. Compared to the furnace, the unit would be cheaper to run.

The Committee requested a breakdown of energy usage for the furnaces at the Municipal Office. At this time, we are unable to determine these figures, as the office only has one natural gas meter – usage is not broken down per furnace unit.

Cathy Reeves advised that it may be worthwhile installing a heat pump to service the basement, as the temperature is coldest in that location during the winter. Mr. Leaver questioned whether one unit would be capable of heating the entire basement area, as it may not be able to reach the different offices (would be located in the kitchen). Discussion took place regarding the construction of the municipal office (additions) and the ductless heating system present.

Mr. Prouse expressed concerns regarding the cost of bringing enough power over to generate the unit, and whether or not there is enough room (in the grid) for another big power source to be installed. Mr. Leaver will inquire with Tim Smith – this will be brought back to the next meeting agenda for further discussion.

Solar Panels – Works Shop and Municipal Office

Discussion took place regarding adding additional panels to the Beachville Fire Station. EARTH are willing to complete a study on the advantages for being on time-of-use, as compared to the two-tier system. Could put a restrictive device on the system so it can only produce the maximum hydro permitted – would help generate additional solar power during cloudy days when less electricity is produced. Adam Prouse inquired about the price per panel, Howard Leaver noted that due to the existing framing and wiring present, it is anticipated that the connection would be easier and cost less to install. Mr. Prouse noted it might be a better investment to install more panels at the Beachville Fire Station instead of the Municipal Office and Works Shop.

Councillor Pickard requested that Mr. Leaver provide a cost for installation of solar panels at the Beachville Fire Station and Public Works Shop at the next meeting.

Works Superintendent Adam Prouse to follow up with EARTH regarding proposals to install solar panels at the Public Works Shop, and increase the number of panels at the Beachville Fire Station (capacity of the lines).

It was noted that the solar panels at the Salford Community Centre are on a 10kw micro-fit program and the terms cannot be changed for another 9 years.

Item to be added to next meeting agenda for further discussion.

Experimental Acres Pilot Program

The Committee discussed the [Experimental Acres](#) pilot program in Wellington County, which provides supports for the first year of trying new farming practices on a small

scale. The goal of this pilot is to backstop risk, develop a community of support and assist in capturing the business cases that can demonstrate what will be worth repeating.

Cathy Reeves noted that this would be a great option when the municipality is ready to offer more incentive programs. Mayor Mayberry questioned what problems our landowners are currently facing, and how we could offer programs to address existing issues. David Schell noted that there have been issues with the removal of fence rows and trees, which increases wind erosion and reduces habitats for creatures. Ms. Reeves added that wind breaks can increase yields up to 20%. Mayor Mayberry commented that wind breaks increase temperature and moisture, which also positively impacts yields.

Correspondence

Links

The Committee reviewed the links compiled by Cathy Reeves.

[News Article: "For cities and towns trying to cut out plastic, here's what's worked and what hasn't"](#)

Discussion took place regarding the aspects included in the article, including:

- Plastic bag ban overturned in court (deemed unconstitutional);
- Continuation of “bring your own bag” trend; and
- Municipalities have a long way to go with regard to reduction of single-use plastic consumption.

Discussion Items

Foldens Trail Alternatives

Discussion took place regarding possible eco-friendly alternatives for the new trail in Foldens, which is being installed around the outskirts of the baseball diamond. Cathy Reeves provided this information to the Foldens Hall Board for review, but has not heard any feedback. She noted that Peter’s Paving currently has the contract. Public Works will not do any winter maintenance on the walking trail. Mayor Mayberry noted that is important that the Township empowers and encourages Committees to take responsibility for their own amenities. Mr. Prouse noted that the Township does have servicing standards, but there is not a low impact development policy that has been approved by an Engineer or Council. The Township may wish to explore this option during the planning process when a new subdivision is proposed.

