

Meeting Minutes

City of Guelph

Water Conservation and Efficiency Public Advisory Committee (WCEPAC)

October 4, 2018

City Hall, Meeting Room D

From 7:00 to 9:00 p.m.

Meeting Chair: Paul McLennan (PM)

Present: Mike Darmon (MD), Grant Parkinson (GP), Patty Quackenbush (PQ), Hugh Whiteley (HW), David Worden (DW)

Regrets: Renuka Baral (RB), Louise Cottreau (LC), Steven Snopkowski (SS) (City Staff)

Staff: John Boakes (JB), Stephanie Cote (SC), Emily Stahl (ES), Heather Yates (HY)

Agenda Items

Item 1

Welcome and Introductions – P.McLennan, all

Item 2

Approval of last meeting's minutes (June 12, 2018)

Motion: To approve and circulate minutes from our June 12, 2018 minutes

Motion Approved by HW

Seconded by DW

Carried

Item 3

Staffing Changes – H. Yates (5 minutes)

Steve Yessie is our new Water Conservation Program Coordinator. Steve's work plan will include residential and education programs. The Water Efficiency Technician position has also been filled and this newest staff member will start November 1st.

The two-person Source Water Protection team has been relocated to Water Services from Engineering. Their work aligns with Water Service's one water approach and Drinking Water Quality Management Standards work.

Item 4

City of Guelph's Sewer Abatement Credit – E. Stahl (30 minutes)

Attachment A: Guelph Billing Exemptions Study_Sewer

From the billing exemption study, involving public consultation and a review of comparative municipalities, came the Sewer Abatement Credit Program which launched on July 1, 2018. Guelph industrial, commercial and institutional (ICI) customers whose processes use up or

evaporate a significant amount of water, reducing wastewater treatment needs, are eligible for a yearly credit. Only a percentage of water not being directed to the Wastewater Treatment Plant is credited to encourage conservation.

Discussion:

HW: Essentially, customers pay more for water used for irrigation, since it does not enter the sanitary pipes and travel to the Wastewater Treatment Plant, but those costs are embedded in water rates. It should be communicated to customers that they are paying more for a green lawn to encourage water conservation.

ES: Yes, that is correct.

HW: Rather than a percentage of the water used, there should be a set dollar amount that the City does not rebate to cover the sewer system's usage maintenance cost.

GP: To clarify, the customer is responsible for installing a meter on the sewage pipes to determine how much of their water is being sent to the Wastewater Treatment Plant?

ES: Yes, that is correct.

PQ: Customers have up to December 30th to apply to get a rebate for the 2018 year?

ES: Yes, that is correct.

HW: How is irrigated water calculated?

ES: An additional meter would need to be installed to measure irrigation.

HW: Is this included in the program's Terms of Reference?

ES: Yes, it is.

PQ: Was this program ever considered on a customer specific basis in Guelph? For example, the juice bottling plant in Guelph.

ES: Any water being used as part of a product cannot be rebated. This stipulation is outlined in the Terms of Reference.

HW: Could customers get a rebate from reducing water used for cooling towers?

ES: Not through the Sewer Abatement Credit program but potentially through the Water Smart Business Program.

MD: Does Wastewater measure volumes entering and exiting the plant?

ES: No. The amount of water entering a property, measured through the water meter, is assumed to be the amount of water being treated at the Wastewater Treatment Plant. All customers are subject to this assumption.

HW: The use of water rates to address social economic problems is not effective. A more effective method would be, for example, to use tax revenue from the provincial or federal level to reduce rates for low income users. The municipality should consider the mandate for water rates over supporting such social responsibilities.

ES: Many articles reflect similar positions. These considerations will be investigated during the rate review being conducted in 2019. A rate review has not been conducted in a long time, so there will be a large number of factors to investigate and consider.

GP: For water rates, it is important to consider that it may be difficult to target some groups like renters for whom water costs are covered in monthly rent.

Item 5

Water Reuse Project – University of Guelph Capstone Research Team – H. Yates (5 minutes)

Wastewater and Water Services Staff will be working with a six student University of Guelph capstone research team to evaluate the feasibility of offsetting water demand in municipal operations that do not require treated drinking water. Specifically, water reuse for sewer flushing will be considered which could conserve an estimated 40 cubic meters of potable water daily. Students will conduct research to update a feasibility study and outline parameters for a pilot project. City Staff will meet with the research group next week to review project plan and goals.

Discussion:

PQ: Suggests surveying wastewater treatment plants in addition to municipal contacts to find out how many municipalities are already practicing water reuse and in what capacity.

HW: Recommends resources from the Water Reuse Foundation including an online video that addresses perceptions of wastewater reuse; A publication on a system in the Virgin Islands that uses a membrane treatment that is 90% less energy intensive than normal and creates water suitable for potable groundwater recharge; and published research from a California case discusses low cost manganese dioxide treated sand that allows water reuse for groundwater recharge. The last case is relevant to the new green sand treatment plant being installed in Guelph.

ACTION: HW to e-mail known relevant studies to HY.

Item 6

Certificate of Recognition for Water Efficiency – H. Yates and S. Snopkowski (20 minutes)

Replacing the Water Conservation and Efficiency Awards previously presented by WCEPAC, the Committee reserved the right to recognize individuals or businesses whenever the need presented. Staff wish to recommend acknowledgement of one such business for the Committee's consideration.

HY: Requests to withdraw this agenda item due to S. Snopkowski's regrets.

PM: Approves.

Item 7

Committee structure – staff proposal for work planning 2019+ - H. Yates (20 minutes)

In preparation for the City of Guelph's Water Conservation team 2019 work planning, this discussion will explore the topics committee members would like to see brought forward in the new year and how we can structure our quarterly meetings to ensure they are as engaging and constructive for the Committee as possible.

HY: Requests permission to combine this agenda item with agenda item eight.

PM: Approved.

Item 8

Committee Succession Planning – H. Yates and P. McLennan (20 minutes)

Moving into 2019, this WCEPAC committee will see significant change as a number of long-term members reach the end of their term. We will review and discuss the transition plans being taken to fill committee vacancies and plan for the new year.

Attachment B: Committee Structure and Procedural Review

Attachment C: Water Conservation and Efficiency Public Advisory Committee Terms of Reference, Ref:09-2016

Attachment D: Advisory Committee Meeting Procedures

Attachment E: Public Appointment Policy

Discussion:

HY: City staff liaisons will review the committee's Terms of Reference (Attachment C) and submit proposed changes with the following term's appointments. The review will consider Corporate Policies (Attachments D and E), our impact on internal departments, source protection's addition to our team, the stormwater utility's development, and our partnership with wastewater. These relationships need to be addressed and formalized within the committee's Terms of Reference, limited to a focus on water efficiency.

HW: Is in favor of broadening terms of reference beyond water efficiency to allow committee members to reflect on implications beyond water efficiency.

HY: Would the committee like to define how long a Chair sits?

HW: Puts forward 2 years.

PQ: moves this motion.

PM: Agrees. Two years allows sufficient time to learn the role and know the staff liaison.

HW: To what extent does the committee allow for public interaction? The capacity for public engagement via the committee should be clearly outlined in the terms of reference.

HY: The public are welcome to attend and observe. A member of the public could apply to the staff liaison, in advance of the meeting, and register to act as a delegate to speak to the committee for five minutes about a posted agenda item. Because the committee does not direct staff work plans, the public has a greater capacity to effect change during policy/program/strategy development.

HW: In order to make public engagement with this committee easier, the agenda must be distributed effectively with significant notice.

HY: Would like to see committee's flexibility maintained as much as possible, but committees are expected to follow procedure. The Clerks office will be observing committee practices and reviewing procedures as necessary.

HW: Since this committee is not a decision making body, there is no reason that we would not allow more public engagement to improve the committee's effectiveness.

HY: Thinks current committee structure works but looks to the committee for feedback.

HY: Four committee members have reached the maximum 8-year term. Decisions regarding appointments for new committee members will be made by the new council. Everyone should have received a letter from clerks about their next term's appointment.

PQ and HW: Indicated that they have not received a letter.

HY: Please e-mail clerks and tell them if you would like to participate on the committee next term. This must be done by 4:00pm, tomorrow (Friday October 5th).

HY: The committee has not elected a Vice Chair. For continuity, a Vice Chair can replace the Chair when their term with the committee or as Chair ends. Does the committee wish to appoint a Vice Chair at this time?

HW: Vote in a Vice Chair tonight will ensure we have a Chair for our final meeting. Appointing a new Vice Chair each year will allow for continuity.

PM: This would ensure the Vice Chair, Chair, and past Chair are all on the committee. The position of Vice Chair provides coverage when the Chair is unavailable to conduct duties.

GP: Volunteers to assume Vice Chair role.

Committee votes in favor of GP becoming Vice Chair.

HY: As part of the 2019 work plan we are looking to include a formal Healthy Landscapes Program for ICI customers and the creation of a badge program for Girl Guides as part of our educational programming.

PQ: Will irrigation optimization be included?

HY: It will be considered high level. In the future we will research irrigation programs.

PQ: Scouts collect trail cards which could be included in the badge project.

PM: The badge program could be implemented province wide.

HW: Is Healthy Landscapes the only multi-res and ICI program being pursued in 2019?

HY: We are looking to upgrade City facilities and enhance Water Smart Business.

HY: Is there any opposition to the proposed 2019 meeting dates? I will reach out to clerks regarding our capacity to adjust dates to achieve timely feedback on projects.

Committee members indicated that Wednesday nights are agreeable.

ACTION: PQ to provide contact details for the national Scouts organization and Trail Card Program development to HY.

ACTION: HY to inquire with clerks about the ability to adjust proposed quarterly meeting dates with two weeks notice and committee and Chair approval.

Item 8

Other Business – All

PM: We have received a public request to consider the removal of the Bulk Metering Program. Emily Stahl (Manager, Technical Services, City of Guelph) is here to discuss this program with the committee.

ES: On July 1st 2018 the City launched a bulk metering program for new private developments. The City has no authority on private property with respect to private water infrastructure and private fire hydrants to address challenges such as water theft or leaks. The City of Guelph's new mandate requires builders to install bulk meters for these private new developments. This entails the installation of a single meter on private property past the curb stop, either above or below ground, that measures all water entering private property. The property owner receives one bill for all water entering their private property (excluding water used for fire fighting). The property owner would manage cost recovery from their units as they see fit (ex. sub-metering, rent, or condo fees). This program ensures the City has access to its infrastructure and has accurate readings of water used on private property.

To assist with the transition, the City offers a bulk metering kit and sub-meter rebates. Consultations and comparative studies were conducted during program research.

An expressed concern that has recently been brought forward to staff is that this new mandate for bulk metering of multi-residential developments contradicts our water efficiency strategy by removing accountability from individual water users. Water loss and leak detection, in addition to working with multi-residential and ICI customers, are key areas in which we can improve water efficiencies, as addressed in the City's Water Efficiency Strategy. Bulk metering allows us to more accurately monitor water use in these sectors and address discrepancies we have historically seen. The City's sub-meter rebate and flexibility with Water Smart Business Program rebates for projects that encourage water efficiencies are available to help address this concern.

Discussion:

HW: Are new meters transmitting data continuously to the City?

ES: No, but they are compliant with future Automatic Meter Reading (AMR) technology if the City moves in that direction. We will be conducting a future AMR/AMI study.

HW: In Halifax, they replenish cruise ship water using meters continuously monitored by the City. This proved beneficial because it allowed the City to identify a broken water supply line. If the City had continuous data, they could automatically alert users to leaks.

PM: If sub-meters are installed, how does the city recover the billing costs?

ES: The property owner is billed based on the water going through the City's bulk meter.

PM: There is no option for the city to install individual meters moving forward?

ES: That is correct for new developments.

HW: What about a Water Efficiency Committee for condominium complexes?

ES: This could be an option. Our work plan will include improving our communications directed towards these communities in regards to water efficiency.

HW: For the district metered areas (DMAs), how frequently is the data updated?

ES: It is minute by minute data, but uploaded every 6 hours.

HW: In the future, someone could monitor this data and alarms could be developed when leaks are identified.

ES: We currently do this for our water supply system using our SCADA program. Eventually, a screen will be developed in SCADA for DMA data to do this.

SC: Shared Guelph Water video with the committee.

Item 9

Meeting adjourned

Next Meeting:

ACTION: SC will send out a date survey for our next meeting.