

Meeting Minutes

City of Guelph

Water Conservation and Efficiency Public Advisory Committee (WCEPAC)

May 16, 2017

City Hall, Meeting Room B

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

Meeting Chair: Paul McLennan (PM)

Present: Mike Darmon (MD), Patty Quackenbush (PQ), Hugh Whiteley (HW), Amy Pawlick (AP)

Regrets: Louise Cottreau (LC), Renuka Baral (RB), 1 vacant seat

Staff: Arun Hindupur (A), Claire Collinson (CC), Emily Stahl (ES), Heather Yates (HY), Karen McKeown

Agenda Items

Welcome to all

Item 1

Welcome and Introductions – P.McLennan, all

Item 2

Confirmation of last meeting's minutes (September 29, 2016) – circulated edited version to Committee. Edits provided by P. McLennan; confirmed.

Motion: To approve minutes from the September 29, 2016 meeting.

Motion Approved by McLennan

Seconded by unknown

Carried

Item 3

Committee Vacancy and Committee Term of Service – H. Yates

First vacancy filled with Amy; Moving to fill outstanding vacancy. This is going to Committee of the Whole in June. Will advise of confirmation once complete.

Terms of service: Water Conservation and Efficiency Public Advisory Committee Terms of Reference indicate 10 years' Service; this is outdated. As per the Citizen Appointment Policy, 8 years is the maximum Committee service from one resident and it supersedes our Terms of Reference.

A summary of committee members terms on the PAC is provided:

Renuka Baral

- Term of office: November 2012 to November 2018
- Year the maximum eight years' term is reached: 2020

Mike Darmon

- Term of office: December 2009 to November 2018
- Year the maximum eight years' term is reached: 2018

Louise Cottreau

- Term of office: November 2012 to November 2018
- Year the maximum eight years' term is reached: 2020

Paul McLennan

- Term of Office: November 2012 to November 2018
- Year the maximum eight years' term is reached: 2018

Hugh Whiteley

- Term of Office: January 2011 to November 2018
- Year the maximum eight years' term is reached: 2018

Patricia Quackenbush

- Term of Office: December 2009 to November 2018
- Year the maximum eight years' term is reached: 2018

Amy Pawlick

- Term of Office: March 2017 to November 2017
- Year the maximum eight years' term is reached: 2025

Discussion:

HW: Would it be helpful for ½ the committee to leave at an earlier time, so not so many members leaving at once? So as not to have to find four replacements at the same time.

HY: It will be a loss to the Committee the contributions of the current members.

ES: We do get a healthy number of applications when we have to fill vacancies. Individuals must apply if they wish to be on the Committee.

PQ: Could people shadow a committee member?

ES: Yes but must still then apply. It does not mean they automatically get on the committee.

HW: Industry will be a strong factor in the future, should recruit industry members

ES: We cannot solicit specific members as it is a citizen committee. However, we can include "assets" for the committee.

HW: EAC has specification based on spatiality interests

ES: Heather will look at term of reference, confirm with Clerk's to see if we can solicit for certain representation from the population - ACTION

PM: Try to get someone from Cargill

HW: Brewing industry is focused in water conservation standards, consider someone from that industry

PM: How many meetings before deadline to step down?

HY: 3 more meetings this year, 2 or 3 in 2018

HW: Not good to have too many members step down together, loss of continuity

HY: ACTION ITEM - plan to move forward on recruiting

Item 4

Water Efficiency Awards – Public Utility and Youth-based Education Program categories – H. Yates

City of Guelph was honoured with 2 awards at recent Ontario Water Works Association conference in Niagara Falls

- Public Education and Awareness category for the City's H2Awesome school program; and
- Award of water efficiency excellence for the 2016 Water Efficiency Strategy.

This was communicated to the public via a [news release](#).

Thanks to PAC for their continued participation not only with the Community Liaison Committee for the Water Efficiency Strategy Update, but for their continued contributions to reviewing and suggestions for the successful water efficiency programming in Guelph.

Water bottles were distributed to committee members. The water bottles were co-funded with Energize Guelph – Guelph's extension of the provincially funded program Healthy Kids Healthy Communities, which encourages kids to choose water as their first choice of drink.

Discussion:

ES: The new Water Smart Business program is taking off. On May 1, Steven Snopkowski joined the team as the Water Smart Business Program Coordinator working with the ICI sector.

Item 5

Stormwater Utility Fee Credit – A. Hindupur, C. Collinson

Attachment A – presentation

Discussion:

AH: A cost/benefit analysis on credit versus rebate program for stormwater features is still to be completed

PQ: Is it one time because a credit system is hard to monitor?

AH: Yes, hard to determine if property managers are maintaining the feature; as opposed to credit program.

PQ: Are other municipalities completing verifications on maintenance?

AH: Yes, they are verifying maintenance of feature by simple drive-by because they have an ongoing credit program not a rebate structure. Since the City already has a successful water conservation program doing rebates why not use that?

MD: Will rebate be yearly?

AH: No, one time to see if cost/benefit. Currently evaluating rebate for residential and credit for non-residential.

PQ: New legislation must provide Stormwater Management on some ICI sites. Are you considering crediting them for things they already have to do?

AH: Yes, must retain 1" of water on larger properties that would be recognized. Through site plan applications it would be reviewed – such as, must have oil grit separator. If a property manager is not maintaining the feature, they would not continue to get credit.

PQ: Are you looking at credit for increasing non impervious areas?

AH: In some cases. If a large expansive parking lot was located in an environmentally sensitive area – would we have them to go from asphalt to interlock? We would want to avoid that. However, we could consider something else like rain gardens, for example.

PQ: What has been the public reaction to the stormwater utility?

AH: Engineering had planned for more calls; call volume has been modest. Also PIC meeting was modest. Ads on buses and information online to be proactive seems to have been successful.

HW: Stormwater utility rates are a moving target.

AH: Corporate asset management plan identified \$ 4 per month for residential properties. This is significantly less than Kitchener (who started at approximately \$7/month). Mississauga is \$100 per year.

HW: Kitchener is also going up with a large percentage.

AH: City of Guelph stormwater rate utility forecast is \$4 for 2017, 2018 \$4.60 up for Council approval.

HW: Of the 1% tax levy included in the 2017 tax rate, does stormwater get any?

AH: No because that is funding the tax base programming.

HW: Will it goes to roads?

ES: No. Roads, sidewalks, funding getting together so that combine projects to ensure funding is matched on both sides between the non-tax and tax budgets.

PM: Advantage to rebate eliminates future paperwork, less administration work for verification. And aligning with programs the City already offers.

AH: Yes. Council will want to see efficiencies achieved through less administrative burden.

HW: Example in Germany – user fee where you pay for what you use, and includes fixed costs element. This could be suitable for Stormwater

AH: Currently in the United States there are challenges with a user fee-based system because you must provide an optional way for them to reduce use. Unlike taxes, which you cannot opt out of.

Item 6

Civic Accelerator Water Use Challenge: AlertLabs Flowie and Rebate – E. Stahl

Attachment B – presentation

Discussion:

PQ: What are you finding with insurance companies? \$299 for the cost of the unit may scare people.

ES: Hit and miss, Alert Labs lobbying insurance companies to give a discount – there is a warranty on par to other home systems – eg: nest, ecobee all have monthly fees.

PM: Can this replace monitoring programs?

ES: No not replace, we have our watr app being released at the end of May. The paid subscriber-based option (AlertLabs Flowie) provides real-time information.

PM: Can you obtain permission from people to see their data?

ES: We could buy 44,000 devices and put in homes – but lots of work. We have been using these on high water calls and monitoring for short periods of time to demonstrated leaks, etc.

HW: How many high water calls does Guelph Water Services get?

ES: I do not have the answer at the moment. There are a number of investigations.

HW: Newspaper story about over \$2000 water bills utility said a leak in Ottawa(?)

ES: There is a trigger system in the Guelph Hydro billing system. A customer will receive a letter if water use seems extreme or out of the ordinary.

MD: Does it read faulty meter?

ES: Yes. Because it straps to the water meter, it reads the same (if under, over) that the meter picks up.

MD: Are there any products available with accuracy that goes on pipe?

ES: No this is the best product on market for the use we have. This pilot provides business case to see if we can move forward with this.

PM: If insurance break is year over year – this would be excellent!

MD: Is this new for insurance companies?

ES: Yes, some success in TO on large properties in getting a reduced insurance rate.

PQ: Could the City promote which insurance companies offer discounts?

ES: No, but AlertLabs can. The City's website does link to Alert Labs.

HW: Are you looking at associations to show this to – eg the restaurant example?

ES: Yes, AlertLabs has done a lot of outreach. We presented to other municipalities at the OWWA conference.

Item 7

Public Education and Communication Strategy – H. Yates

Attachment C – presentation

Discussion:

PQ: Guelph's success comes back to seasonal water restrictions – has brought it back to groundwater community – conservation message should built on it more. Exploring growth in the market "have you considered these additional options eg: Alert Labs?" Everyone knows about OWUP. Remember did postal code profiling (water intensity mapping paired with demographic information)? Consider matching communications strategies to it.

ES: We have not tackled it yet. WES supports a targeted approach in programming and hoping the PECS will advise how best to target messages.

HY: As advised and suggested by this committee, we want to target rentals, and student housing.

MD: [passed around bookmark] Show cubic metre of water that was in hydro bill.

ES: Guelph Mercury Tribune is still a good way to get information out to the public. Facebook sponsored ads continue to be successful, bus ads, signs around city.

HW: Is there an umbrella group that has a public educational committee to speak with other jurisdictions.

HY: We speak with the Water Efficiency committee with OWWA, Canadian National Water Efficiency Network, Canada Water Works Association.

ES: AWE does – Guelph is a leader – we look to US for what they are doing to get some tips and tricks, also keep up to date with best practices.

HW: Do any of these organizations have social science research committees or groups? There is a continuing group from the formerly federally funded research in social science. It may be Water Network or CWN. Testing for effectiveness if CWN was serious about social science in society – they could produce a startup meeting for ideas – working group. Recruit Guelph-based industries – for TV ads – that want to save water. Would UofG get more involved?

MD: Benefits that we are limited to growth – have we pushed economic message. Consider expanding this.

HY: [RBC Canadian Water Attitudes Study – 10 year report](#). It profiles the national interest in keeping water public, constraints around water. Key messaging for water efficiency is understanding what it takes to get water to your tap - if you value tap water you will use it efficiently.

PQ: Growth not a good message – antigrowth sentiment gets messy.

HY: The most success we have had around this is using the Permit to Take Water clause that requires a municipality to demonstrate they are using water efficiently before they apply for a revised permit. It has been topical given discussion at Council around other local permit holders.

HW: Talking about water rate study it needs to be recognized if one is looking at an 80% fixed charge, you will not find water use efficiencies. When presenting annual water rate increase, it should not be presented as % increase to public, but rather total water bill increase to an average household. If you saved XX litres a day, a household would see no increase to their bill.

MD: Simplify message – if you are one person it should cost XX in household water use.

HW: Affordability in US predicts 20% of households will not be able to afford their water bill – lobbying should be considered; linked to income or basic needs support program.

ES: Affordability and subsidies will be considered as part of the 2019 rate review

ACTION: ES to bring Billing Exemption Study to next meeting.

Item 8

General Program Updates and Outstanding Business – H. Yates - Auto-shut off faucets – as per Mike’s request

[2010 research of office tower by Koeller & Co. and Veritec Consulting Inc.](#)

Research by Bill Gauley 2016. Residential faucets “saving very little of very little” because it is primarily behavior based in residential applications. Greater opportunity with showerheads... more to come on that.

Criteria for residential non-potable water reuse systems working with technical services project manager to develop:

- Terms of Reference for technology specifications (greywater and rainwater harvesting);
- Application procedure for technology vendors/suppliers to pre-qualify as a preferred vendor; and
- City will be able to circulate a list of providers to interested members of the public

- Will review Aquartis – greywater/rainwater combine as provided by Paul McLennan

Item 9

Other business – all

HW: American brewery announced they are going off municipal supply, solely provided by water reuse. Will be attending Clair-Maltby planning session, advocating distributed water supply systems to be examined.

HY: Water softener study partnering with Region of Waterloo on survey to ultimately get 9 participating households in Guelph to install alternative media softening devices to test for a full year. If you wish to participate, the [survey](#) is also available online.

HW: Will there be results to show how many water softeners in Guelph – curious differences between Guelph and region?

HY: Yes

Item 10

Adjourn at 9:15 pm

Next Meeting:

Wednesday, September 13

Wednesday, November 29