

**City of St. Catharines**  
**Citizens' Advisory Committee on Community Sustainability**

**Wednesday, January 29th, 2014**

**Committee Room 1, St. Catharines City Hall**

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**Minutes:**

**Attendance:** Marty Mako (Chair), Councillor Mathew Siscoe, Bernie Slepko, Erin Britnell, Phil Baranoski, Dan Romanko, Vanessa Aykroyd

**Guests:** Jane Hanlon (Greening Niagara), Marcy Heit (Community Care of St. Catharines & Thorold), Kristen Sullivan (St. Catharines Green Committee), Katrina Kroeze (Niagara Sustainability Initiative), Meghan Langille (student intern), Jesse Matthews (Green Committee member), David Heywood (Green Committee co-chair), Melaina Gasbarrino (community member)

**Regrets:** Sam Mahboob

**Staff:** Marco Marino

1. Chair Mako called the meeting to order at 4:44 p.m.

That the agenda for the January 29th, 2013 meeting be approved.

Moved by: Councillor Siscoe

Seconded: Bernie Slepko

**Carried**

2. **Adoption of Minutes:**

That the minutes of the November 27, 2013 meeting be approved.

Moved by: Councillor Siscoe

Seconded by: Bernie Slepko

**Carried**

3. **Delegations:**

- Kristen Sullivan and Members of the Green Committee:
  - Looking to listen and hear what the Sustainability Committee wants to accomplish
  - Started in 1995, educating the public on green initiatives
  - Have done 8 school yards in 3 years and provided public education on the importance of the tree canopy
  - Restoration projects include Urban Renewal – naturalizing 12 Mile Creek Valley
  - Major goal is to use their budget of \$38,000/year and partner on a larger project that will have more impact and ultimately a better result for the community

- Meetings are held on 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of every month in Committee Room 1 and all meetings are open to the public
- Jane Hanlon, Greening Niagara (formerly Climate Action Niagara):
  - Applied for Niagara Prosperity Initiative funding, part of the Niagara Community Garden Network – with reps in each city
  - Their website lists all Niagara community gardens, size of the plots and other info
  - Working with Project Share – sharing info and resources to combat poverty
  - 2 locations requesting community gardens in St. Catharines - 1. Port Weller 2. Port Dalhousie
  - They conduct a needs assessment when deciding where to place a community garden, will have 18 gardens facilitated across Niagara by June 2014
  - Can teach about using a window construct to get seedlings growing early
  - They currently have a 5 year lease behind general hospital, and just renewed that lease for another 5 years
  - Site required soil contamination studies – it is 12,000sq/ft, has 56 plots, is the largest in Niagara and has a waiting list
  - No longer are just individual people taking on plots, organizations are taking them on too (ex. Dig Brock, AIDS Niagara)
  - Currently working with the Town and Pelham and the City of Thorold – have started visioning sessions to see how best to move forward with initiatives
  - Developed a seed bank
  - Provided workshops on organic growing methods and insect infestation – at Walker Industries and John Deere employment groups – by the end of the sessions the groups teach and run themselves
  - Food security workshops are also provided – called “Food Security 201” they also teach canning in 5 municipalities, pickling and smoking
  - When looking at the viability of successful garden properties they work through a “15 Point Plan”
- Marcy Heit, Community Care of St. Catharines & District:
  - In their 14<sup>th</sup> year of planning community gardens – 30 plots total at Torosian Park on Ventura Drive, which is in close proximity to Niagara Regional Housing
  - Partnership already in place with Housing, City and Community Care
  - Each plot has an owner and there is currently a 3 year waiting list
  - There have been discussions with Rick Lane – Director of Strategic Initiatives (City of St. Catharines) to look at expansion opportunities
  - They currently have water access at this site, very important when trying to start a community garden
  - This project at Torosian Park took 9 years to get buy in from the community
  - Used to have money to supply people with bus tickets, allowing volunteers from outside of the area to get there, funds are no longer available for this
  - Community gardens increase availability of healthy food choices at the food bank
  - Obligation sheets are given out to those who join, and they are expected to fill them out and be part of the planning days prior to a new season of planting
  - Shed is currently on site to store equipment after it is used - a key system is in place to access the shed, and a deposit is required from users for access to the tools. The deposit is then returned to the users upon completion.

- Wood stakes for planting are needed, and plots could use 20 each, no budget for this
- On planting days they have a BBQ available on-site to keep things festive and encourage participants to stay connected
- Comments and questions of presenters:
  - May be beneficial for our committee to focus on existing gardens as opposed to starting something new
  - Should consider the fruit tree trail – accepting community groups to provide labour
  - Mentioned the need for youth engagement in community gardens
  - Comment about composting – is there an option to have this done on site?
  - Marco offered to draft a project plan for the Committee with priority areas for action in 2014 and present it at the next meeting

#### **4. Notice of Motion**

- No notice of motion

#### **5. Motions**

- No motions

#### **6. New Business:**

- Phil Baranoski to report back on the Brock University TREN 2P14 class presentations – this item was deferred to the meeting on Feb 26, 2014.

#### **7. Adjournment:**

- That the January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2014 meeting be adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

Moved by: Erin Britnell

Carried