

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

Wednesday, February 26, 2014

Committee Room 1, St. Catharines City Hall

Minutes:

Attendance: Marty Mako (Chair), Councillor Mathew Siscoe, Bernie Slepko, Erin Britnell, Phil Baranoski, Dan Romanko, Vanessa Aykroyd, Katrina Kroeze (Niagara Sustainability Initiative), Meaghan Langille (student intern), Councillor Laura Ip

Regrets: None

Staff: - Marco Marino

1. Chair Mako called the meeting to order at 4:38 p.m.

That the agenda for the February 26th, 2014 meeting be approved.

Moved by: Erin Britnell

Seconded: Laura Ip

Carried

2. Adoption of Minutes:

That the minutes of the January 31st, 2013 meeting be approved.

Moved by: Erin Britnell

Seconded by: Vanessa Aykroyd

3. Delegations: None

4. Motions:

• Discussion of Priority Areas (Comments):

Priority 1:

Vanessa A – Identify areas/opportunities for growth/Class 1 soil assessment/ former residential/park lands – this can be determined by policy scoping.

Bernie S – Natural step to include City's legal team to advise on quality of lands that City could supply for community gardens. Look at liability concerns.

Erin B - Is a policy the right tool to develop to achieve our goal? Policies tend to have negative associations, are seen as enforcement driven and top-down. Would 'guidelines' or something else be a better and more empowering tool?

Marty M - City of London has already done work in this area. Instead of re-inventing the wheel, we could look to other municipalities that have developed policies/guidelines and ask for advice.

Priority 2:

Dan R – Likes the idea of marketing of front yard gardens. Condos, freeholds, city boulevards (only up to 30cm allowed) are possible locations to include.

Marty M - Perhaps a tool kit or handbook could be created by the committee.

Bernie S - Marcy Heit (Community Care) was willing to offer her front yard – we could put together an info package on front yard gardening.

Councillor Siscoe – City promised that info on front yard gardening would be up on the City website (front and centre). Marco to follow-up with Bonnie on this upon her return.

Bernie S - Tie this to carbon emissions, and we can see how it effects the carbon footprint as more and more gardens are planted. Is it measurable?

Marty M – How do we measure success of this initiative? Something for the committee to think about.

Priority 3:

Bernie S - We can show support for an initiative such as this, even if just promoting the final product to our networks.

Katrina K – Did we get a sense there are limits to developing this map and keeping it current?

Vanessa A – Scratch this idea from our work plan, this is not our mandate.

Katrina K - Greening Niagara has funding for their work, so what do they really want from us, more funding?

Phil B - Fruit trees are very delicate, need someone to look after them all the time.

Priority 4:

Not in our area of expertise or mandate to conduct. Perhaps we can support this work in the future though, once a city policy is developed.

Priority 5:

Councillor Ip – Save this priority area for the next committee. We need a better sense of what we can do now, until the end of 2014, with the resources that we have.

Vanessa A – We could make recommendations to Council to adopt a policy. Get existing resources from Halton and other regions, guidelines that are already in place and can be shared.

Priority 6:

Bernie S – Invite someone from Trillium to speak at a future meeting, about their awards.

Dan R – We should be looking at low hanging fruit. Once we have actually done something as a committee, then we can look into this.

Councillor Ip – We should start with marketing/promotion of gardens.

Vanessa A - This should be about vegetable gardens period.

Councillor Ip – Are we promoting gardening in general? Or are we promoting specifically front yard gardening?

Vanessa A - Ask Mike Anderson from the City to speak to the Trillium Awards at a future meeting, and look at sponsoring a new award for vegetable gardens.

Councillor Ip – It is an election year, we should look at giving out an award.

Priority 7:

Katrina K – A report will be coming back to the committee on the Carbon Project. Looking for continued support of NSI, so at the end we can show progress has been made. In June 2014 there will be a presentation to discuss findings of 2013, then the committee can make a decision whether to support the project going forward. My Sustainable Canada has still not chosen a Niagara institution to work with – not sure if this is in the scope of what we do.

There is an event on March 19th, 2014 concerning emerging talent in Niagara. On April 17th, 2014 there will be an event on “All About Green Buildings” at the Casablanca Inn, Grimsby. On May 28th, 2014 there is a recognition night event at White Oaks, where City of St. Catharines will be recognized.

- Phil B – Motion to approve priorities as set out in the Agenda of February 26th, 2014, including the following items:

- Committee to advise the City to develop a policy (or similar tool) on community gardens, providing consultation during the policy development phase

- A marketing toolkit will be created for the promotion of front yard gardens

- Committee to recommend that the City create a new Trillium Award category to recognize vegetable gardens

- Committee to recommend that the City continue to work with the Niagara Sustainability Initiative (NSI) and the Carbon Project moving forward

5. New Business

- Phil B shared highlights from his visit to a Brock University class. Student projects on civic engagement focused on how to increase voter turnout in the upcoming municipal election. Their projects had a budget, so ideas had to be realistic and achievable.

6. Adjournment

Moved by: Erin Britnell

Seconded by: Laura Ip

Meeting was adjourned at 6:10pm.