

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

Notes of the March 27, 2013 Meeting

Committee Room, St. Catharines City Hall

Present:

Marty Mako (Chair)
Councillor Mathew Siscoe
Councillor Greg Washuta
Dan Romanko
Phil Baranoski
Bernie Slepko
Vanessa Aykroyd
Erin Britnell
Erin O'Hoski (staff)

Regrets:

Sam Mahboob

Presenters:

Joanne Tessier, Assistant Director of Financial Management Services

Approval of the Minutes of the February 27, 2013 Meeting

The minutes of the February 27, 2013 meeting were approved.

Asset Management Presentation

Joanne Tessier and Erin O'Hoski provided information regarding the importance of asset management in the municipal sector and the approach undertaken by the City of St. Catharines.

Erin O'Hoski explained research related to the national municipal infrastructure deficit and significant developments that have been achieved to address funding shortfalls. These developments include allocation of federal and provincial gas tax revenues to municipalities; 100 per cent GST rebate; creation of the Building Canada Fund; and various infrastructure stimulus spending programs.

Unfortunately, attempts to address the national infrastructure deficit will not solve this issue until there is a clear understanding of the current shortfall. In 2012 a number of national organizations partnered to release the [2012 Canadian Infrastructure Report](#)

[Card](#). This research found that 30 per cent of infrastructure ranges from “fair” to “very poor” condition and the cost to replace this infrastructure is estimated at \$171.8 billion.

Another significant finding of the report was that the municipal sector requires greater capacity to assess and manage their assets. In August 2012 the Ontario Ministry of Infrastructure announced the first phase of the Municipal Infrastructure Strategy comprising \$51 million over two years to fund infrastructure repairs that have been identified as priorities in asset management plans.

Joanne Tessier outlined the City of St. Catharines’ plans to address the issue of asset management, as outlined in a [report to City Council](#) on December 10, 2012. An interdepartmental team is working to develop a comprehensive asset management plan that includes state of local infrastructure; desired levels of service and an asset management and funding strategy. The City is early in the process of development a comprehensive asset management plan, and looking to complete the plan by the provincial deadline of December 31, 2013. The plan would be subject to Council approval prior to that date and staff would be seeking sustainability perspectives from Members in the fall of this year.

Vanessa Aykroyd commented on the issue of capacity of existing infrastructure, particularly in light of increasing emphasis infill development. The data, once available could inform new policies related to reducing wear and tear on traditional infrastructure.

Phil Baranoski raised the issue of maintenance of existing buildings. Councillor Siscoe explained that the building stock is a critical component of the asset management plan because this has been an issue in the past. Phil also raised concerns over coordination of infrastructure at the regional level.

Bernie Slepko raised the issue of divestment of buildings. Joanne Tessier explained that asset divestment is considered in the plan but any facility closures would be a Council, not a staff, decision.

City of St. Catharines Active Transportation Committee

On March 18, 2013 City Council passed the following motion, moved by Councillor Elliott:

That the City of St. Catharines form an Active Transportation Committee of Council to provide a committee for residents, elected officials and staff to meet regularly for the purpose of improving conditions for active transportation within the municipality and the connections to other parts of the region and with the goal of creating an Active Transportation Master Plan for the City to be included as a component of the City’s Transportation Master Plan, and the Committee be

essential for providing useful input into the City's application for status as a Bicycle Friendly Community and other active transportation initiatives; and

That staff be directed to report back on April 8, 2013 with a recommendation with regards to the terms of reference for the committee and the committee composition.

Members have been asked to provide input into this report, with particular regard to the potential relationship between committees, and the potential role of sustainability in this process.

Dan Romanko commented that land use is inextricable from the design of an active transportation networks. There must be a strong understanding of where people are going at different points of time and networks designed accordingly.

Members commented that the composition of the committee should be diverse. Particularly, the committee should seek representation from youth, older adults and persons with disabilities. There must be a mix of both cyclists and non-cyclists in order to ensure all modes of active transportation are considered.

Information Sharing

Several members attended the launch of Our Community Food Store at Mahtay Café on March 6. Follow up will be circulated to members following the meeting.

Marty Mako and Bernie Slepko reported on the Council presentation regarding increased Sunday service for public transit. While the decision was not reversed, increased profile and attention resulted, and members are hopeful that increased Sunday transit will move forward as planned in 2014.

Vanessa Aykroyd will be attending an event related to biodiversity in the city and will report on outcomes at the April 24 meeting.

Bernie Slepko indicated that he continues to participate in the District School Board of Niagara's accommodation review in hopes of maintaining a presence in the downtown core.

Other Business

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, April 24 from 4:30 to 6:00 p.m. at St. Catharines City Hall. The theme scheduled for this meeting is local food security. Vanessa Aykroyd agreed to lead the team building exercise at this meeting.

The theme for the May 29 meeting is compact, livable neighbourhoods.

The meeting adjourned at 6:10 p.m.