

# Environmental Advisory Committee

Minutes

November 26, 2015

**Present:** Gary Brown, Martin Cathrae, Councillor Chuck MacInnis, Councillor Steve Ireland, Shelley Innes, Carol Williams, Public Works Manager Dave Powers

**Absent:** Anne de Gobeo, Silvia Blanchard

Call to Order by Gary at 17:12

Approval/Additions to Agenda: Approved M/S Carol/Martin

No pecuniary interests declared.

Minutes of the previous meeting were passed by email.

## Old Business

- Web page: Ideas for December and January: Christmas Tree Disposal, see if anything comes from Alfred's Talk.
- Landfill site: Plans to update statistics on landfill usage patterns and bypass. Councillor MacInnis reports that CAO has action to get landfill statistics report. Ongoing.
- Recycling Bin Locations and Plans: Councillor Ireland has a report with locations from Public Works Manager. We will attempt to ask for one more for this year. We looked at available designs and chose one that has openings on the side to not get filled with snow.
- LED Street Lights Update: Councillor MacInnis reports they have started to arrive and installation will commence near the sewage treatment plant.
- Solar Composters Update: Councillor MacInnis reports nothing new to report.
- Declaration of the Right to a Healthy Environment: Councillor Ireland had given us a report by email. Council did not pass our declaration as it was worded. Gary will look at the declaration and we can go over the wording for our next meeting. Gary will attempt to meet with the CAO to go over the declaration as they may have some insight into modifications. Gary will also resend it to us so we can give input.
- Update on Merrickville-Wolford 2020: Shelley reports that things are on hold until the new year.

## New Business

- Pipeline: We will carry this forward to next meeting.
- Strategic Plan: We want to be clear on where we fit in to the strategic plan process. Councillor Ireland reports that we will be a stakeholder group that gets consulted on the plan. We will address what we would like to recommend in future meetings. Councillor Ireland will send us the last Economic Development Plan (the closest thing we've had to a strategic plan in the past) developed by the Economic Development Committee in 2010 so we can see where we can fit in our recommendations. The next step will be for Council to have a special meeting to look at the framework that the Strategic Plan Committee put together. As well they will look at how to do the data collection.

## Guest Speaker

### Alfred Von Mirbach from ecoPerth on effective use of rural landfill.

Alfred Von Mirbach has been working on creating and effective waste diversion solutions since 1990. He has designed and launched award-winning recycling and composting programs as a municipal staff person and as a consultant, and spent countless hours doing waste characterization studies (i.e. garbage sorts) to determine just how effective programs actually are. Projects have ranged in scale from small township depots to waste minimization strategies for the City of Winnipeg. Recently, he has worked with Waste Diversion Ontario to create tools for waste diversion coordinators. EcoPerth: [www.ecoperth.on.ca](http://www.ecoperth.on.ca) Stewardship Ontario: [www.stewardshipontario.ca](http://www.stewardshipontario.ca) Association of Municipal Recycling Coordinators [www.amrc.ca](http://www.amrc.ca) (Biography from: <http://crcresearch.org/innovator-database/alfred-von-mirbach>)

The following is a summary of his talk:

- The first step is to figure out what is being thrown out in our municipality with a **waste survey**. He recommends we go on waste day and choose 30-40 bags at random, take them somewhere and do a really quick general survey of what's being thrown out. Total weight, approximate amounts of recyclables, organics, yard waste, electronics, and actual waste.
- We talked a bit about the option of clear bags and other tools like different fees to enforce/encourage diversion. The general idea is there needs to be a number of things coming in at once, not just one thing that a lot of people will be negative about. For example Perth moved to bi-weekly pickup for waste, which could have been a big issue but at the same time they also brought in organic waste pickup. Don't rush into changes, do things right and package a number of changes at one time with lots of notice. Try to keep it net zero for cost as much as possible. Be realistic, don't sell it as a smooth road.
- Regarding our **contracts** with our pickup services. We should get involved and get help with re-negotiating them. Alfred has found in the past that there are huge savings and even more items picked up (for the same cost) if we are able to go over the contracts and different companies in detail. WDO (Waste Diversion Ontario) has sample contracts that we should look at. If we don't have someone around that can spend the time, we could think about an environmental sciences student.
- **Organics**. We should investigate the backyard composters and see if we can possibly team up with Merrickville Goes Green to do a zero cost (sell at cost) sale of them. (Norseman Environmental seems to team up to do a truckload sale of "The Earth Machine" composters).
- Perhaps an event where we could broker a **yard waste pickup** event. We wouldn't have to be the ones to do the pickup per se, but we could get a vehicle/trailer on a day and give good notice that we'll be doing yard waste pickup for a minimal fee.
- In general, any time we have an idea we should just try it as a **pilot project**. Don't make any promises, don't make it big, just try it once and see if it works, maybe it grows, maybe it dies but we tried something.
- Possibly teaming up with a local business that creates organic waste to see if the Ministry of the Environment would allow us to do a pilot of just accepting their organics to the landfill and seeing how that goes.
- **Extending the life of our landfill**. Construction & Demolition Waste is a big thing. There are companies who we could pay to come in and take away a "roll off" trailer of C&D waste. It would involve taking a look at our tipping fees to adjust them to be in line with other local municipalities and giving lots of notice. Currently our tipping fee is \$50/Ton which is far less than other local municipalities. Alfred thinks Perth is around \$115/Ton. Our fees are charged on an estimate of weight as we don't have a weigh scale. We would need to figure out if it then makes sense to get a weigh scale for the landfill. There are some ways to even use the waste (for berms for instance).
- TD Graham in Kemptonville has done a lot of work within the waste industry and has lots of designs on hand for nice printed materials. Having a **website** that has nice graphics and doesn't look like a bland municipal webpage is important. It's not apparently very expensive to have a separate domain and website.

- **Larger Recycling Boxes.** Perth switched to larger “yellow” boxes, about twice the size. Their recycling increased about 20% afterwards, indicating some people once their boxes were full were then throwing things in waste. It may be possible to get them very cheap by piggybacking on a larger order by someone else nearby. The colour also played a part, they’re a cheery colour. (Yellow is for containers, blue stays for fibre). Regarding costs for things like this, if it’s something you really want people to do, make it free, incent the good stuff, disincent the bad stuff (increase waste fees for example).
- We talked a bit about the options for **rural pickup**. It would be a positive thing for the landfill due to more diversion, but how to work the extra cost is hard.
- Tay Valley had great success with a program where they increased the fees for dropping off waste at the landfill, but did a one to one reduction of fees for every bag of recycling they also brought.
- Matching people up at the landfill for needs/has type exchanges.
- **Layout** of landfills, we already have a pretty good layout with all the diversions before the waste. Have a visual representation of what goes where in the landfill. Literally we could have a can nailed to a board, eg, cans go here.

Motion related to presentation: So that more waste may be diverted from the Landfill, Carol moved that \$3000 be budgeted for recycling promotion. Seconded by Shelley.

Next Meeting: January 14<sup>th</sup> 2016, 17:30 (No December meeting due to Christmas, so we moved the January meeting up 2 weeks. The February meeting will return to the normal schedule)

Adjournment: 19:07 M/S Martin/Shelley