

Climate Change Task Force

August 13, 2020 – 1:35 PM

The Climate Change Task Force met on the above date through electronic means with the following members participating:

Present: Councillors Hicks, Carleton, Woodbury and Desai and Warden McQueen

Regrets: Councillors Gamble

Staff

Present: Kim Wingrove, Chief Administrative Officer; Randy Scherzer, Director of Planning; Scott Taylor, Senior Planner; Hiba Hussain, Planner; Pat Hoy, Director of Transportation; Heather Morrison, Clerk and Tara Warder, Deputy Clerk/Legislative Coordinator

Call to Order

The Clerk called the meeting to order at 1:35 PM.

Election of Chair and Vice Chair

CCTF01-20 Moved by: Warden McQueen Seconded by: Councillor Hicks

That Councillor Carleton be nominated as Chair of the Climate Change Task Force.

On motion by Councillor Hicks, nominations closed.

Councillor Carleton accepted the nomination and was acclaimed Chair.

CCTF02-20 Moved by: Warden McQueen Seconded by: Councillor Hicks

That Councillor Woodbury be nominated as Vice Chair of the Climate Change Task Force.

On motion by Warden McQueen, nominations closed.

Councillor Woodbury accepted the nomination and was acclaimed Vice Chair.

Councillor Carleton then assumed the Chair.

Declaration of Interest

There were no declarations.

Review Background Reports and Overview of Current Climate Change Initiatives

Randy Scherzer addressed the Task Force, providing an overview of the work done to date on the Climate Change Action Plan. Mr. Scherzer noted that the University of Guelph Master's students completed a report which provided recommendations to create an action plan with the goal of mitigating the County's impacts on climate change and preparing for its effects.

Mr. Scherzer outlined the process the students took to get an understanding of the current initiatives which are in place. The report provided policy recommendations and operational improvements. Some of the recommendations included:

- a. setting minimum density thresholds for new green developments
- b. implementing the recommendations of the natural heritage study
- c. developing a scoring system for evaluating new development proposals
- d. criteria such as walkability and climate change preparedness
- e. limiting new residential lots created outside of settlement areas

The report further outlined operational improvements that could be made, including tracking monthly energy tracking in administration buildings, facility retrofit programs, upgrading municipal lighting to LED, allowing telecommuting for employees where feasible, expanding broadband technology and recommendations on going paperless as much as possible. Mr. Scherzer noted recent progress on some of these initiatives, including making the planning application process paperless, through the support of IT's new planning application tracking software.

Councillor Desai then joined the meeting.

Review March 12 Council Workshop Comments

Hiba Hussain reviewed the March 12, 2020 Council Workshop comments with the Task Force.

ICLEI is the consultant who was selected in the RFP process. The organization is well versed in this type of work and are a global leader in the subject matter. They have been instrumental in creating policies and guidelines for municipalities in helping them create climate change action plans.

Ms. Hussain outlined the feedback received during the exercise with ICLEI, which included the desire to have healthy and vibrant communities and confidence in long term sustainability, more homes that are off grid, a majority of cars being electric, and a greater appreciation for protecting green spaces.

The ingredients for implementing the plan were then highlighted. These included measures to increase community engagement and support, education of staff, residents and businesses and having short and long term goals that are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timely (SMART).

Climate Change Action Plan Outline

Hiba Hussain then provided a presentation on the Climate Change Action Plan outline.

Ms. Hussain spoke to the benefits of having a climate change action plan, including reducing costs, environmental sustainability and encouraging economic growth.

She then spoke to the Partners for Climate Change Protection program which is a joint initiative between the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and ICLEI.

The target completion of the Climate Change Action Plan is the winter of 2021.

It was noted that there are many ways that municipalities can influence climate change. Over 50% of emissions are under the direct influence of local governments. The majority of emissions stem from vehicle use and heating costs and there are things that can be implemented by municipalities to help control these items through the built environment.

The Climate Change Action Plan will identify a path forward for a sustainable community and will develop a policy document to identify initiatives to be implemented which will reduce overall greenhouse gas emissions. The Plan will be a mitigation focused climate change plan that will provide recommendations on adaptation. The Plan will have both a corporate emissions component and community component.

Ms. Hussain then reviewed the proposed phases of the Plan and proposed engagement methods were reviewed as well.

Ms. Hussain spoke to the roles and responsibilities of the Task Force and requested further feedback.

Engagement Strategy – Verbal Update

Ms. Hussain addressed the Task Force on the proposed engagement strategy. The workshop series will be occurring throughout August and early September. Staff are

happy to meet with any group interested in any of the workshops so everyone can provide feedback. There will be more targeted workshops held with other groups and organizations.

Review Climate Change Survey Results

Ms. Hussain then reviewed the Climate Change survey results. It was noted that a large proportion of people are concerned about the growing cost of energy. It's important to look at what can be done in terms of education with the public about what they can do to become more sustainable and reduce energy use.

The importance of encouraging and supporting the development community to make new buildings more energy efficient and offering incentives for this was noted. There is a need to focus on regulatory measures and advocate to the province on changes being made to the building code.

From a land use perspective, a large proportion of respondents said it is important to ensure our settlement areas are developed efficiently including the redevelopment of brownfield sites and higher densities.

Respondents were also asked about electric vehicles and 70% said they would be interested in buying one. Barriers include the cost of the electric vehicle and the lack of charging infrastructure. It is important to consider the lack of infrastructure does influence people's decisions on this matter.

From a waste perspective, most people do recycle. 76% of respondents also reported that they compost. There is interest in these programs and people are taking up the work on their own in the absence of a composting program in their communities.

Ms. Hussain further noted that many respondents feel that natural areas are extremely important to them. Conservation of forests, trails and shorelines are important.

The Task Force spoke to initiatives and ideas to consider in the Plan.

Discuss the Task Force Mandate, Committee Role, Goals, Objectives and Draft Terms of Reference

Heather Morrison and Randy Scherzer provided an outline of the Terms of Reference.

Kim Wingrove noted that there are groups who have a strong membership and are doing important work in climate change. Staff noted that they are connecting with some of those groups to see about opportunities to feed into the actions they are taking.

The Task Force suggested inserting the words “and achievable” into Objective 2 to reflect the use of SMART goals.

CCTF03-20 Moved by: Councillor Desai

Seconded by: Councillor Hicks

That the Climate Change Task Force Terms of Reference be adopted as amended by amending Objective 2 by inserting the words “and achievable” after the word measurable.

Carried

Roundtable Discussion – Initiatives Planned in Member Municipalities

Chair Carleton noted that the biodigester is likely the Township’s largest environmental initiative. The Township is getting started on its own Climate Change Action Plan. A proposal has come forward for an electric vehicle charging station and retrofits have been done at local arenas.

Councillor Desai noted that the Municipality of Grey Highlands has a Climate Action Committee tasked with making recommendations to Council. Further work will be completed on the recommendations which will come forward. The Municipality is in the process of purchasing an electric vehicle.

Councillor Hicks noted that the Town of Hanover implemented a styrofoam densifier which diverts styrofoam from the landfill. The Town has completed LED lighting upgrades and has unlimited free recycling every week. There is a lawn watering by-law and the Town is implementing charging stations as well.

Warden McQueen noted that the Grey Highlands is diverting mattresses and drywall as well as styrofoam. He noted that Grey County should consider implementing electric chargers as well.

Councillor Woodbury noted that the compost and blue box programs work well and there is an electronics recycling program as well. The Township of Southgate has also purchased a hybrid vehicle in the building department, and this has worked out very well. Streetlights and arena lights have been converted over to LED as well.

Meeting Schedule

Staff will work with members to get out a meeting schedule.

Other Business

Pat Hoy spoke to an initiative that could be undertaken to help reduce runoff into the ditches. Farmers are tiling their fields at a high rate and there are benefits to considering ways to work with farmers on having storage ponds in place of tile draining their fields.

The Task Force noted that there are benefits to having a climate change lens applied to other portfolios such as affordable housing. It is important to consider energy efficiencies in affordable housing as well.

Warden McQueen noted that there are many things you can do when designing a home to create efficiencies and reduce heating costs or erosion. Use of wind breaks, trees, and orienting the direction of your home in a way that takes advantage of lights are all methods that can be utilized.

Next Meeting Dates

To be determined.

On motion by Warden McQueen and Councillor Woodbury, the meeting adjourned at 3:23 pm.

Sue Carleton, Chair