



**West Hants**

something inspiring awaits

**WEST HANTS REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY  
Municipal Climate Change Action Plan (MCCAP) Committee  
February 15, 2023 – 11:00am  
Sanford Council Chambers / Zoom**

**PRESENT:** Rupert Jannasch, Councillor (Chair)  
Debbie Francis, Councillor  
Sara Poirier, Director of Planning and Development  
Shelleena Thornton, Protective Services Designate  
Diana Gibson, Financial Services  
Todd Richard, Director of Public Works  
Mark Williamson, Resident Member  
Peter Moore, Resident Member

**STAFF:** John Ogilvie, Climate Action Coordinator  
Alex Dunphy, Planner  
Vanessa Lake, Planning Assistant

**REGRETS:** Scott McLean, Councillor

**PUBLIC:** There were no members of the public present.

## **Call to Order**

Chair Jannasch called the meeting to order at 11:00am. He noted that the Directors were currently in another meeting and will join MCCAP as soon as they are able. Todd Richard, Sara Poirier, and Diana Gibson arrived at the meeting at 11:15am.

## **Approval of Agenda and Additions**

Moved by Debbie Francis and seconded by Shelleena Thornton that the agenda be approved as circulated. Motion carried.

## **Approval of Minutes**

Moved by Debbie Francis and seconded by Mark Williamson that the minutes be approved as circulated. Motion carried.

## **New Business**

### **Recommendation Report: PACE Policy (John Ogilvie)**

John gave an overview of the report circulated to the Committee. The PACE Policy follows the PACE By-law which was approved by Council in October 2022. The policy includes sections regarding qualifying properties, the approval of applications, specific parts of participation agreements, program charges, and the list of eligible upgrades. At this time, the policy is only drafted to include residential properties, with a subsection that may allow commercial in the future. Defining the eligible properties as “existing dwelling units” will allow rental properties to participate, which will be signed through a participation agreement with their landlord. John’s intent with the policy is to be broad in range but specific to certain upgrades. The potential upgrades are both cost effective and work to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in a way that does not affect a homeowner’s ability to pay for or stay in their home. The participation agreements will be worked on with PACE Atlantic after the policy is approved. Staff hope to have a Spring 2023 launch for the program. There are no direct financial implications with the PACE policy as Council has already approved a \$300,000 contribution from the Municipal reserves. This money will continue to be cycled through as others pay back their loans. PACE Atlantic and staff are still investigating leveraging additional funds from private sources, combining the PACE program with the Canadian Greener Homes initiative, and potential funding from the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM). This will hopefully encourage more uptake of the program.

John also noted that last week he attended a conference for PACE programming hosted by the FCM. One of the main focuses of the event was embedding equity into the PACE program, so no one is unintentionally excluded. It is not only financial issues which hinder the public, but other

barriers such as language or being uncomfortable having a stranger in their home. It is important to have a program that reaches and supports everyone without judgement. Some attendees suggested adding emergency/quick upgrades to the list; for example, if someone's sump-pump in their basement failed, a replacement could be fast-tracked into the program. Based on the broad and open nature of the PACE Policy and program, the CAO or their designate can consider and approve emergency repairs/upgrades that are part of the eligible upgrades.

The floor was opened to questions and comments. Mark was concerned that the \$300,000 would be used up quickly. John had detailed financial discussions with PACE Atlantic. The municipal funding will help to leverage private funding with a 10:90 split. This was also discussed at the conference. Over time, PACE is evolving to include more private funding. The payback period is specified as a maximum of 20 years, but through the participation agreement, individuals can sign for less, depending on their situation, allowing for faster repayment. Mark commented on the rising interest rates and the 5% admin fee, which could saddle homeowners with significant debt. John agreed that interest rates are indeed a concern, but homeowners will have to do these upgrades eventually, and offering a lower rate may offer incentive to do so sooner rather than later. Chair Jannasch asked about the sources of private equity. John replied that PACE has a credit union, an investment bank in BC attuned to PACE programming. Chair Jannasch asked if John could get more information on this credit union. Debbie asked if it was possible for a motion of Council to increase the amount, and Diana replied that Council could top it up, but they are not able to go through the finance corporation for a loan at this point because they require a finished project and the municipality to own the assets. Diana had spoken with the bank and a line of credit is available for this type of project. They were offering Prime [-0.5%], but the issue is that Prime is always fluctuating and we cannot guarantee consistent interest rates. Peter asked if there was an overlap with Nova Scotia Power or the ability to piggyback off other programs. John replied that this is a major intent of PACE, and all kinds of grants are considered. Chair Jannasch asked if the list of eligible projects was cast in stone; for example, to install a woodstove would require building a chimney. John replied that ancillary upgrades are included, and the list is very broad on purpose to allow for such things. Chair Jannasch commented that clotheslines should be on the list, as they are both very green and visible action. The committee agreed this would be a good addition.

Moved by Debbie Francis and seconded by Peter Moore that the MCCAP Committee recommends that Committee of the Whole recommends that Council approve the PACE Program Policy in a manner substantively the same as the draft set out in Attachment A, with the addition of clotheslines, of the report to the MCCAP Committee titled "PACE Policy", dated February 15, 2023. Motion carried.

**Decision Request: Committee Name (Sara Poirier)**

Before Sara's presentation, Chair Jannasch and the Committee congratulated Sara on her new position as Director of Planning and Development and thanked her for all her hard work.

At the Chair's request, Sara investigated possible name changes for the MCCAP Committee. She provided background information on the history of the MCCAP Committee and what similar committees are named in other municipalities across the province. Changing the name would require changes to both the Meeting and Committee Procedural Policy and the Committee Terms of Reference and would need to go to Council for a final decision. Sara's report was sent to the Committee prior to the meeting, and she opened the floor to discussion.

Chair Jannasch does not think the name needs to be changed right away but thinks it would be appropriate. The idea stemmed from a resident who was unable to find the Committee due to its name. He would prefer to not use broad language, so it does not invite potential issues or an increased workload. Everyone pointed out names or words/phrases they liked from the list of examples Sara provided, and Chair Jannasch suggested having a memorable acronym may help as well. Peter suggested putting it out to the community for better engagement, such as in a newsletter, or engaging with youth in schools. Sara agreed it's a good idea to get the community involved, and the Committee agreed to delay a decision on this. As this is not a priority item, it can be addressed as time permits. The first step will be to put a small item in the newsletter to gauge where the community stands.

#### **Business Arising from the Minutes – Workplan Updates**

##### **Update: Sustainable Communities Challenge Fund (John Ogilvie)**

John has not heard anything back yet regarding this solar project.

##### **Update: EV Chargers Opening (John Ogilvie)**

In December, the Grand Opening was held for the two electric chargers. One is located at the community centre and the second at the sports complex. Each has two ports with a level two charge capacity. A small event was held, with the Mayor, CAO, Chair Jannasch, John, other staff, and representatives of the Clean Foundation present. Electric vehicles were available for test drives. The Clean Foundation was able to provide more information to those present.

Shelleena asked about the uptake. As of January, 18 separate users were logged, with the charger at the sports complex seeing the most use. The equivalent of about a dozen trees were planted in emissions saved. Peter asked for clarification about these "18 users." There is a connected app where users make an account, and each account is logged separately. This could mean one account per family vehicle, or multiple accounts (ex. husband and wife) for one vehicle. It does not count each separate vehicle.

##### **Update: Coastal Protection and Flood Planning Policy (Alex Dunphy)**

The Public Hearing for this item was held on January 24 and was approved by Council. It has been sent to the Department of Municipal Affairs for review. Alex has a meeting with the Senior Planner for the Province tomorrow (Feb. 16) and hopes to be able to discuss this file. Mark

asked if the new setbacks have been released. Alex replied that they have not, and this policy is a holdover which shows Council's intent to meet the regulations when they are implemented.

### **MCCAP Priority Projects / Roundtable Discussion**

These two agenda items were grouped together into one discussion.

Sara noted that John is working on MCCAP priorities from the action plan, specific local items from the action plan, and anything that comes up through the Committee or Council related to climate action. John would like direction on which next action item the Committee would like him to focus on instead of speaking broadly about all the different things he could do.

John noted that it may be beneficial to have a specific project in mind set aside so when funding for such a project comes up, the Committee is ready to apply for a quicker turn-around. Chair Jannasch asked how much time the PACE program takes up for John currently. John replied that most of his time has been consumed by the PACE program at present. The By-law and Policy are the most staff-intensive, but after implementation, more of the administrative responsibility goes to PACE and opens more of John's time. John has also been looking through the action plan for items he can start and keeping an eye out for any relevant grants.

Mark pointed out that moving away from oil heating was a goal, and asked what the Municipality is doing about it, and what is being done about new builds. Sara noted that the Province does not have a restriction on oil heating at present. In the Summer of 2022, John and summer student Will Chapple conducted building reviews and audits with a checklist from Natural Resources Canada. A project John has in mind is a Community Building Retrofit Program, with funding from the FCM, to develop a retrofit plan and determine the future use of municipal buildings to reduce emissions.

Sara attended the Sustainable Communities conference held by the FCM last week, and shared some of the things she learned. One of the workshops she attended was on climate budgeting - making sure Council is aware of these upgrades and that they are included in the budget. There are not only financial benefits, but social and health benefits too. It is recommended to do what is in your control first and focus on the highest emitters first. Mark noted how precise timelines are hard to have with how much waiting is involved for some projects and agreed that focusing on projects within our control is a good idea.

Debbie asked if there is already enough ongoing. She said a lot of progress *has* been made, and there is already a lot in progress. She commented that more community engagement would be great, and after implementation, John could work on promoting the PACE program.

John mentioned that The Clean Foundation completed their report about converting Planning and Development's vehicles to electric. A green fleet would save both emissions and money. He will have more details for the Committee in the near future.

Alex mentioned that he attended a Protecting Wetlands workshop on February 2 hosted by the Ecology Action Centre. Many attending had not heard of Marsh Bodies, which is something this

Municipality is quite familiar with. A report will be generated and sent out some time later and Alex will share this with the Committee.

**Next Meeting Date / Adjournment**

The next meeting date is scheduled for April 12, 2023. The Committee will be notified of any changes.

Moved by Debbie Francis that the meeting be adjourned at 12:50pm. Motion carried.

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**Chair's Signature**