



**West Hants**

something inspiring awaits

**WEST HANTS REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY  
Municipal Climate Change Action Plan (MCCAP) Committee  
November 8, 2023 – 11:00am  
Sanford Council Chambers / Zoom**

**PRESENT:** Rupert Jannasch, Councillor (Chair)  
Scott McLean, Councillor  
Deanna Snair, CAO Office's Designate  
Sara Poirier, Director of Planning and Development  
Carlee Rochon, Director of Financial Services  
Martin Kehoe, Public Works Designate  
VanEssa Roberts, Community Services Designate  
Mark Williamson, Resident Member  
Jeremy Higgins, Resident Member

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

**PUBLIC:** No members of the public were present.

**REGRETS:** Shelleena Thornton, Protective Services Designate  
Debbie Francis, Councillor

### **Call to Order and Identification of Designates**

Chair Jannasch called the meeting to order at 11:05am. Committee members identified their designations. Debbie Francis and Shelleena Thornton had sent regrets.

### **Approval of Agenda and Additions**

Moved by Sara Poirier and seconded by VanEssa Roberts that the agenda be approved as circulated. Mark requested an update on the Switch West Hants program. John will provide the update at the beginning of the Roundtable Discussion. Moved by Sara Poirier and seconded by VanEssa Roberts that the agenda be approved as amended. Motion carried unanimously.

### **Approval of Minutes (September 13, 2023)**

Moved by Sara Poirer and seconded by Carlee Rochon that the minutes be approved as circulated. Motion carried unanimously.

### **New Business**

#### **Recommendation: 2024 MCCAP Work Plan**

John provided the full 2024 MCCAP Work Plan to the Committee with the agenda package. He outlined the three new items in the Plan; implementing a Level 3 electric vehicle (EV) charger within the region, recommending that Council amend the existing municipal asset management and procurement policies to require the Municipality to prioritize sustainable options for corporate facility renovation/construction and fleet renewal, and to determine restrictions on development in flood prone areas of the Municipality during the Plan Review.

Chair Jannasch asked for clarification on where the Plan Review stands. Director Poirier gave an overview. The process began in 2017 but it experienced a delay following Consolidation and the pandemic. Council gave direction to staff to engage a consultant. The consultant will hopefully be engaged in December with the review likely to be complete by 2024-2025. The consultant will engage Council throughout the process; the final draft will be submitted for Council's review, and it will be sent to the Minister of Municipal Affairs for final approval. The only crossover between the Plan Review and MCCAP Work Plan would be the development plan for flood zones.

Moved by VanEssa Roberts and seconded by Carlee Rochon that the MCCAP Committee 2024 Work Plan be submitted to Committee of the Whole to be placed on file in a manner substantively the same as Attachment A to the staff report "MCCAP Committee 2024 Work Plan" dated November 8, 2023. Motion carried unanimously.

### **Information: Community Solar Plan Program FAQ Fall 2023**

The Provincial government issued a list of Frequently Asked Questions about the Community Solar Program, an upcoming program aiming to open by the end of 2023. The document was circulated to the Committee with the agenda package for their information. John gave a brief overview of the program. The program is intended to allow companies, nonprofits, and municipalities to operate a community solar garden between 0.5 MW and 10 MW in size, with individuals as shareholders. John noted that while the hope is to launch in fall 2023, the Province is still drafting the rules and regulations and the date may be delayed into the New Year. This is an initiative of the Province which will go through Nova Scotia Power as they own and manage the grid. If the Municipality is interested in participating, either developing a shared system or buying into one, it would be the direction of the MCCAP Committee and then from Council to apply. The applying entity would need to submit a feasibility study to be successful.

John will need more information before he can commit to an application. He estimated the cost of constructing such a system to be in the hundreds of thousands at the minimum. Director Poirier explained that there are currently no provisions in the planning documents for solar as a standalone use, but she believes it would be a Resource area like wind farms. This can be looked at through the Plan Review.

### **Correspondence: Letter from Premier RE: Clean Power Plan**

This letter was sent from the Premier to municipalities throughout the province with the Clean Power Plan attached. It was circulated with the agenda package for information. The Plan shows the developments in the past year regarding the changes with Nova Scotia Power's grid, either currently being implemented or are in the queue. The Premier outlines in his letter that a lot of these things are being targeted not just to ensure emissions reductions, but also to ensure energy security for the province and that power rates are stable. John will reach out on behalf of the Committee if they have any questions he cannot answer.

A big part of the Clean Power Plan is wind energy. The Committee discussed community feedback regarding wind farms. There are three already in the municipality and more on the horizon, and Director Poirier explained there are no restrictions on wind farms besides the criteria, but she has received correspondence from a resident in Vaughan who wants to "tighten up" those criteria. She noted that there has been no formal application for the proposed Bear Lake wind farm which has generated lots of public comment.

Director Rochon mentioned the recent assessment done by the Federal Commissioner of Environment and Sustainability regarding the federal emissions reductions plan and the projections that they are not going to meet their goals in 2030. She asked if this would affect the Clean Power Plan at all. John cannot speak on the provincial process and how fast they will be completed, but said that in the past, Nova Scotia has exceeded its emissions targets. Though there are many barriers to this development, including workforce and material availability, John considers this a solid plan.

The Committee also discussed offshore wind farms, the potential of tidal energy, and EV owners contributing to the grid by selling excess power to Nova Scotia Power.

### **Business Arising from the Minutes**

#### **Decision Request: Committee Name**

John provided a selection of options for the new Committee name. The Committee discussed these options at length and how they would like to proceed. The Committee held an informal vote between the options “Climate Action Committee” and “Climate Change Committee.” The “Climate Action Committee” won with a vote of 5-3.

Moved by Mark Williamson and seconded by Carlee Rochon that the MCCAP Committee recommend to Committee of the Whole to recommend to Council to change the name of the Municipal Climate Change Action Plan (MCCAP) Committee to the Climate Action Committee (CAC) and amend both the Meeting and Committee Procedural Policy and MCCAP Committee Terms of Reference to reflect the new Committee name. Motion carried unanimously.

#### **Update: Coastal Protection Act Survey**

Coastal property owners should have received a survey in the mail over the past few weeks. The survey asks coastal property owners questions about proposed coastal protection regulations, changes they would like to see, currently impacted properties, and whether the government could or should enforce these regulations. John received the survey himself and said the survey is very thorough. The Province wants to move forward with some form of coastal protection, but the Minister is waiting for the results of this survey before proceeding further. It was noted some of the questions within the survey appear to be leading toward a pre-determined answer regarding coastal protection on private property.

Director Poirier commented that municipal staff are eager to incorporate coastal protection regulations into the planning documents and that there is a path forward with the Plan Review. She believes something can and should be done on a municipal level at this time.

### **Roundtable Discussion**

#### **Switch West Hants Update**

The PACE program officially launched on October 25, 2023, under the name “Switch West Hants.” Within 5 hours of launch, a resident had signed up, and has since completed necessary paperwork. John said there has been a lot of interest in the program so far, and PACE Atlantic has been directly contacted by a few interested parties. Energy Assistants at PACE are also able to direct people to other opportunities that exist for residents. Switch West Hants is planning to have a table at the Christmas Craft Fair in Windsor on November 18, 2023, located at the Legion, to provide information and answer questions. They hope to hold more public

engagement sessions in the future. John explained the 5% admin fee and the 8.5% interest rate at length for the Committee.

### **Comments from the Committee**

Councillor McLean asked if anyone on the Committee had any information on hydrogen energy. John is not involved in any hydrogen discussions, but he is aware of a proposed hydrogen plant in Point Tupper. The plant would be powered by wind turbines, and much of the hydrogen power produced is slated to be sold to Germany. Mark added that the proposed Bear Lake wind farm was also considering supplying power to this plant and that is part of the public concern with the project.

Chair Jannasch attended a Webinar hosted by Tim Webster regarding sea level rise. Coastal Nova Scotia is lacking the proper instruments to measure the tides. Webster participated in a meter setup in Cumberland County. The Municipality of Cumberland contributed to the project. In total, the project cost was around \$100,000, however, the meters themselves are in the thousand-dollar-range. Chair Jannasch wondered if a meter like this would benefit West Hants. Director Poirier said WHRM can reach out to Webster to discuss their options.

### **Next Meeting Date / Adjournment**

The next meeting is scheduled for February 14, 2024, at 11:00am. The Committee and the public will be notified of any changes. Moved by Deanna Snair and seconded by VanEssa Roberts that the meeting be adjourned at 12:40pm. Motion carried unanimously.