



West Hants

something inspiring awaits

**WEST HANTS REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY
Climate Action Committee (CAC) Meeting Minutes
April 9, 2025, 11:00am – 11:32am
Sanford Council Chambers / Zoom / YouTube Live**

PRESENT: Deputy Mayor Debbie Francis, District 5, Chair
Councillor Bonnie Smith, District 10
Councillor Jim Ivey, District 11
Jamie Juteau, Resident Member
Deanna Snair, Chief Administrative Officer's Designate
Kari Fougere, Acting Director of Planning & Development
Carmen Dewar-Miller, Financial Services Designate
Todd Richard, Director of Public Works
Kathy Kehoe, Director of Community Development

STAFF: John Ogilvie, Climate Action Coordinator
Vanessa Lake, Meeting Secretary

PUBLIC: There were no members of the public present.

REGRETS: Shelleena Thornton, Protective Services Designate

Call to Order and Introductions

Deputy Mayor Francis called the meeting to order at 11:00 am. Everyone introduced themselves and their designation (i.e. Councillor, resident member, or staff). Deputy Mayor Francis read the Land Acknowledgements, reminded everyone of the expectations from the Code of Conduct, and outlined the emergency exit procedure.

Approval of Agenda

Moved by Jamie Juteau and seconded by Councillor Smith that the agenda be approved as circulated. Motion carried unanimously.

Approval of Minutes (February 26, 2025)

Moved by Councillor Ivey and seconded by Jamie Juteau that the minutes be approved as circulated. Motion carried unanimously.

New Business

Recommendation: CAC Terms of Reference Amendments (John Ogilvie)

Staff expect to bring a recommendation report forward at the April 22, 2025, Council meeting with amendments to the *Meeting and Committee Procedural Policy*. John used this opportunity to suggest some housekeeping amendments to the Climate Action Committee's *Terms of Reference*. The amendments are largely to correct grammatical errors and to align the Terms of Reference with the *Meeting and Committee Procedural Policy*. Another notable change is to include the WHRM Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emission Local Action Plan as one of the reference documents for the Committee. John's full report was circulated to the Committee and is available on the municipal website with the agenda package.

Councillor Ivey asked if the GHG Emission Local Action Plan was a separate document. John confirmed that it is, and it can be found on the municipal website under the Climate Action Committee page. He can also send it out to the Committee if they want.

Councillor Ivey mentioned the stormwater management plan that Council recently discussed. He thought the document would have come to the Climate Action Committee for review before Council, but it did not. It may be too late for input, but he felt the document should still be reviewed by the Committee as it relates to their mandate and suggested it may be considered for adding to the list of reference documents.

Councillor Ivey felt that public comments are extremely valuable and was concerned about removing that section from the Terms of Reference. John explained that the ability for public comments is not being removed but that the *Meeting and Committee Procedural Policy* already

speaks to a public comment period and the policy overrides the Terms of Reference. The public are still welcome to provide input during the CAC meetings.

Moved by Councillor Smith and seconded by Councillor Ivey that the Climate Action Committee recommend that Council approve the amendments to the Committee's Terms of Reference, as shown in Attachment A to the report "Amendments to the CAC Terms of Reference", dated April 9, 2025. Motion carried unanimously.

Information: Solar PV Feasibility Study (John Ogilvie)

John's report and a copy of the feasibility study were circulated to the Committee and are available on the municipal website. There is no recommendation; this is bringing the report prepared by CBCL Limited forward for review and discussion. John outlined some key points regarding solar feasibility on municipal facilities.

Due to the size of the document, Councillor Ivey suggested bringing the report back again for further discussion after Committee members have had a chance to read it in full. He asked for John to explain the meaning of net present value as it relates to the solar projects in the study.. He noted that there is a large variance in cost.

John explained that a negative net present value means that the rate of return is lower than the discount rate applied to the financial assessment; meaning, the project won't provide adequate financial value in its lifetime. Some of the parameters used to assess the financial feasibility were based on a worst-case scenario that included the Municipality taking out a loan if the installation were to cost more than \$150,000. At present there is no certainty of external grants or funding, so it cannot be included as part of the financial analysis. In some cases, the net present value speaks to the non-financial feasibility of some of these projects. If the Municipality wanted to undertake a such a project, it would need to be analyzed more deeply.

Councillor Ivey noted that in his report, John said the study came in under budget, and there is an opportunity to look at the Community Centre or Sports Complex as options. The Community Centre is already set to undergo a structural assessment. Because part of that structural assessment will determine whether solar panels can be mounted on the roof, some of the leftover grant money may be used to help pay for it. John is still discussing with the Department of Natural Resources and Renewables (DNRR) if and how much of their funding they may contribute to the assessment. If there is still funding remaining, John may speak with CBCL about including the Sports Complex as an addition. Deputy Mayor Francis said putting solar panels on the Community Centre may be a Council-level discussion, and they should wait for the final report regarding the structural assessment.

Director Richard asked how much of the land at the 293 Wentworth Road treatment plant was considered and if they looked off-site as well. He noted a higher-elevated parcel in behind the plant. John doesn't think that parcel was assessed, but he said the lands right next to the plant were reviewed. Part of the study was making sure the sites could be assessed by net metering,

and the further from the meter, the more it would cost. Director Richard asked if there just wasn't enough surface area. John replied that that is part of it, and that a geotechnical investigation would be required. Ground-mount systems tend to be more expensive. Director Richard asked if it would be possible to do a follow-up with the other parcel. John noted that may require more funding and time.

Councillor Ivey asked about the payback period and the lifespan of a solar field. John replied that solar panels are generally guaranteed for at least 25 years, with the other components such as micro-inverters needing to be replaced every 10 years. This cost is built into the assessment.

Business Arising from the Minutes

Update: Climate Change and Healthy Vulnerability Assessment (John Ogilvie)

On Monday, March 24, 2025, John attended the launch event with NS Public Health in Beaverbank. They spent the day going over what they expect to get out of this assessment, what factors they are going to include, and the indicator groups they are going to use. Those in attendance provided feedback. John outlined some of the factors that were discussed. This will be a three-year project per their funding period. In the coming months, John will be updated on what will be considered, any background information, and where the Municipality and staff may be able to help.

Update: NSPI Level 3 Chargers (John Ogilvie)

Two new Level 3 chargers have been installed by Nova Scotia Power Inc. (NSPI) at the Sports Complex (16 Centennial Drive). John did not yet have the exact date, but the new chargers will be open for public use very soon. He explained that NSPI provided and will run the chargers, while the Municipality provides the space for them. Councillor Ivey asked if NSPI were looking to expand. John said they hope to, and the Committee can certainly offer support and discuss other areas where they may be installed. There are specific criteria that must be met, such as being near a 100-series highway.

Deputy Mayor Francis asked about the existing Level 2 charger at the Sports Complex. John explained that it was moved up by three parking spaces, to make room for the new chargers. There are now six charging ports available (two on each charger). He added that there is also a Level 2 charger at the Community Centre at 78 Thomas Street. John monitors the usage of these chargers monthly and says the uptake is very good. He will bring a 2-year update to the Committee in the fall.

Roundtable Discussion

Councillor Ivey reiterated bringing the flood study component to the Committee, if possible.

John will be bringing a recommendation to Council at the end of the month to apply for the Flood Risk Infrastructure Investment Program (FRIIP) with the Province to help offset the costs of the municipality's Home Flood Protection Pilot Program (HFPPP). He will be seeking to offset up to 50% of the program budget allocation, up to \$240,000.

Public Comments

The public is encouraged to attend the meeting or contact staff directly with any questions or comments. There were no members of the public present at this time.

Next Meeting Date / Adjournment

The next meeting is scheduled for September 10, 2025. The Committee and the public will be notified if there are any changes.

Moved by Councillor Ivey and seconded by Jamie Juteau that the meeting be adjourned at 11:32am. Motion carried unanimously.