

**MARKHAM ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
CANADA ROOM MARKHAM CIVIC CENTRE**

February 27, 2025

7:00 PM

Minutes

<u>Present</u> Stuart Cumner, Chair Paddy Wong, Vice-Chair Councillor Ritch Lau Councillor Amanda Collucci Jack Heath Sarena Karpouzis Christina Wong Victoria Choy Cliff Chan Catherine Jeffrey Yash Kapur Frank Vignando Karl Lyew	<u>Staff</u> Jennifer Wong, Manager, Sustainability Laura Gold, Committee Clerk <u>Regrets</u> Graham Seaman, Director of Asset Management & Sustainability
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1. CALL TO ORDER

The Markham Environmental Advisory Committee convened at 7:00 PM with Stuart Cumner in the Chair.

2. CHANGES OR ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

There were no changes or additions to the agenda.

**3. ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES OF THE MARKHAM
ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETINGS HELD ON
SEPTEMBER 26 AND NOVEMBER 28, 2024**

RECOMMENDATION: "THAT THE MINUTES OF THE MARKHAM
ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETINGS HELD ON
ON SEPTEMBER 26 AND NOVEMBER 28, 2024, BE ADOPTED."

Moved by Vicky Choy
Seconded by Yash Kapur

That the Minutes of the Markham Environmental Advisory Committee meetings
held on September 26, and November 28, 2024, be adopted as presented.

Carried

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

5. EARTH MONTH PLANNING

Jennifer Wong, Manager of Sustainability, provided an update on the activities planned for Earth Day 2025. Instead of organizing a single large event, multiple smaller events will be held throughout April and May to highlight the City's sustainability initiatives. These activities include tree planting, e-waste drop-off, a repair café, a youth science fair, an energy retrofitting webinar, and more. Additionally, a comprehensive social media campaign featuring educational videos and a new website showcasing the City's sustainable projects will be launched. Staff are facing the challenge of explaining complex topics at a grade 5 level. Due to the long Easter Weekend, no activities are scheduled for Earth Day itself. If this approach proves successful, it may be extended to other departments in the future.

Vicky Choy offered to organize a bird walk on behalf of the Markham Environmental Advisory Committee, which could be included as one of the Earth Day events. Ms. Choy will contact Jennifer Wong to discuss the details. May was suggested for the bird walk due to more predictable weather. A member proposed holding the bird walk at Rouge Urban National Park and possibly combining it with an existing event.

The Committee expressed gratitude to the Councillors for including Vicky Choy's article on bird-friendly practices in their newsletter. Members also suggested adding a link to Staff's educational videos for Earth Month in future newsletters.

The Committee briefly discussed ways to communicate with residents in the absence of having a media outlet in Markham.

6. BIRD FRIENDLY CITY CERTIFICATION UPDATE

Victoria Choy provided an update on her work regarding bird-friendly certification. A Bird Friendly Committee has been established, with eight attendees participating in the first one-hour meeting. Recent years have seen a concerning 30% decrease in the bird population. The City of Richmond Hill has developed an effective website addressing this issue. To gather more information, Ms. Choy participated in a backyard bird count and engaged in discussions with a representative from New York City about their initiatives, such as retrofitting buildings and implementing light reduction strategies.

Jack Heath advised that a presentation on the City's Bird Friendly Guidelines will be presented to the Development Services Committee sometime this year. Ms. Choy requested to be notified of the date of the presentation.

The Committee also requested that the applicable Member of Staff provide a presentation at the next Markham Environmental Advisory Committee on City's Bird Friendly Guidelines. Laura Gold, Council/Committee Coordinator agreed to investigate who from staff could provide a presentation to staff on this matter.

7. FOOD WASTE AND FOOD INSECURITY SUB-COMMITTEE UPDATE

Stuart Cumner, Chair presented the Food Waste and Food Insecurity Sub-Committee update, which included the following:

- There have been four meetings with the York University Students to work on the food insecurity project at the university's Keele Campus.
- The students have prepared a project charter that focuses on students at the Markham York University Campus and nearby businesses managing food waste effectively and the environmental impact of doing so.
- The students conducting the project have reduced their food waste by changing their habits based on what they have learned from this project.
- The students plan on creating a Tiktok video promoting their project if permitted by the University.
- The students also used AI to create a comic strip on the problem to help promote their project and resolve the problem.
- They plan to approach businesses near the Markham York University campus to see if they are willing to use the “toogoodtogo” App to help solve the problem.
- The project will wrap up at the end of April at the end of university term.

8. PLANT BASED TREATY ACTION PLAN

Stuart Cumner provided information on the CBC article about the Plant Based Treaty Action Plan. Signing the treaty involves a commitment to promoting and supporting plant-based foods to reduce greenhouse gases. Cities that have signed the treaty include Montreal, Caledon, and Toronto.

The Committee reviewed the current initiatives undertaken by the City to promote plant-based food, including the expansion of its community garden program. Additionally, the Members deliberated on advocating for plant-based options at the City's Staff Appreciation Day and encouraging the City's third-party cafeteria to feature plant-based items.

The Committee encouraged the Chair to look at how other City's approach this issue and to report back at the next meeting.

9. ZERO EMISSIONS OUTDOOR POWER EQUIPMENT

Stuart Cumner, Chair, inquired if the City had made any progress with respect to zero emissions outdoor power equipment and spoke of some the work the City of Toronto is undertaking on the matter, including a ban on these products.

The Committee discussed zero emissions outdoor power equipment. They focused on phasing out gas-powered tools, educating the public on environmental benefits of mulching leaves, the future of federal and provincial rebate programs, and the City's need to be fiscally responsible when converting to zero emission outdoor equipment.

Further discussion on this matter has been deferred to the next meeting.

10. NEW BUSINESS

Swan Lake

Stuart Cumner, Chair, advised that Fred Peters is looking for community volunteers to assist with the environmental issues related to Swan Lake

Robert Willats

Members acknowledged Robert Willats for his contributions to the Committee and the Food Waste and Food Insecurity Sub-Committee and noted his departure from the Committee due to relocation out of Markham.

End of Plans for a Pickering Airport

Jack Heath advised that there will be a gathering on February 28th to celebrate the Federal Government's announcement to discontinue its plans to build a Pickering Airport.

11. NEXT MEETING

The next Markham Environmental Advisory Committee Meeting will be held on May 29, 2025, at 7:00 PM.

12. ADJOURNMENT

The Environmental Advisory Committee adjourned at 9:00 PM.