



## **MARKHAM ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

### **MINUTES**

**Ontario Room, Markham Civic Centre  
September 19, 2019**

#### **Attendance**

##### **Members**

Kevin Boon, Chair  
Christopher Ford, Vice Chair  
Karl Lyew, Immediate Past Chair  
Ashok Bangia  
Diane Ross  
Natasha Welch

##### **Regrets**

Karl Fernandes  
Phil Ling  
Nadine Pinto  
Regional Councillor Jack Heath  
Regional Councillor Joe Li

##### **Guests**

Claudia Marsales, Senior Manager Waste &  
Environmental Management  
Stuart Cumner, Resident  
Margit Muller, Teacher

##### **Staff**

Jacqueline Tung, Community Engagement  
Assistant  
Jennifer Wong, Sustainability Coordinator  
Bev Shugg Barbeito, Committee Coordinator

#### **1. CALL TO ORDER**

The Markham Environmental Advisory Committee (MEAC) was called to order at 7:10 PM with Kevin Boon presiding as Chair. He welcomed everyone back after the summer hiatus.

#### **2. CHANGES OR ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA**

It was agreed to add the following items to Other Business:

- New members
- Election of Committee Vice Chair

The agenda was accepted as amended.

### **3. ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES OF THE MARKHAM ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON JUNE 20, 2019**

It was

Moved by            Christopher Ford  
Seconded by        Diane Ross

That the minutes of the Markham Environmental Advisory Committee (MEAC) meeting held on June 20, 2019 be adopted as distributed.

CARRIED

### **4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

#### **A. INFORMATION ON MARKHAM INITIATIVES AND COUNCIL MATTERS**

- No report was available.

#### **B. FOLLOW UP ON ACTION ITEMS**

Chair Kevin Boon reviewed the list of action items and noted that the items reflect agenda items for this meeting.

### **5. NEW BUSINESS**

#### **A. MARKHAM WASTE MANAGEMENT INITIATIVES**

Claudia Marsales, Senior Manager Waste & Environmental Management, reviewed Markham's waste management successes to date and presented Markham's plan for 2020-2023 that will include, among others, Curbside Collection Enhancements, Recycling Depot Upgrades, Promotion and Education, and Zero Waste Facilities.

However, she advised that the primary focus of the 2020-23 Waste Management plan will be on Markham's Single Use Plastics strategy since single-use plastic is now recognized as a major contributor to climate change. Forty percent of plastic produced is packaging, used just once and then discarded, and widespread litter of single-use plastic is creating a growing financial burden on local governments. Canadians may not be a major contributor to ocean plastics, but are major offenders when it comes to over-consumption and contributing to greenhouse gas emissions. Currently, there is no timeline for a Federal ban, undergoing assessment to be complete 2021 and the Province of Ontario is evaluating a ban on single use plastics with a target date of 2024.

Although there is a growing ground-swell of world-wide indignation about plastics affecting wildlife and marine life, the Plastic Bag lobby is very powerful. The Plastic Industry Association, featuring the American Progressive Bag Alliance, work to make it illegal for local governments to ban or restrict bag and other single-use plastic products. Similarly, the Canadian Plastic Bag Association appealed the bylaw banning plastics put

forward by Victoria, BC; the Court held that a bylaw could only be implemented if it could be shown that the action being outlawed would have an impact on the local community. Therefore, it is considered likely that a bylaw banning plastic bags or single use plastics put forward by any Canadian municipality, including Markham, would be challenged by this group.

As with its introduction of other waste management initiatives, Markham will demonstrate bold municipal leadership in managing this issue. Markham intends to introduce a hybrid approach: firstly, issuing a “declaration” supported by an education campaign, and secondly, possible enforcement through by-law or Provincial legislation. The declaration would call for the elimination of plastic straws in favor of paper or compostable straws across the City, with a voluntary switch to recyclable lids & cups for take-out beverages. A review after 3-6 months would be held to determine compliance. The goal would be to galvanize public support to stop using single-use items. Initially, measures for businesses to eliminate single use plastic bags and straws would be voluntary, but would be mandatory by Earth Day 2020.

Therefore, it is hoped that, in fall 2019, perhaps during “Waste Reduction Week” in October, a Council member would introduce, and Markham Council would pass, a declaration that Markham is a “single use item and litter free” municipality. Ms. Marsales reviewed the draft proposed declaration with Committee members.

It was

Moved by Karl Lyew  
Seconded by Natasha Welch

That the Markham Environmental Advisory Committee (MEAC) endorses the draft proposed Declaration in principle.

CARRIED

Ms. Marsales advised that she would welcome all suggestions for the Declaration and that she hoped MEAC would support the motion when presented to Council in October.

Chair Kevin Boon thanked Ms. Marsales for the presentation. Claudia Marsales left the meeting at 8:30 pm.

## **B. PLANNING FOR MARKHAM EARTH DAY 2020**

The Committee discussed possible plans for the 2020 Earth Day event and whether it was time to change the format of the event. Markham staff advised that it was felt that the existing format had become somewhat predictable, and that it was time for a new format such as an Eco-Market of sustainable vendors, likely to be held at a local mall, or other place that the public frequents. The subcommittee will explore this idea further and report back to the Committee.

Natasha Welch agreed to serve as a Subcommittee Co-Chair. Chair Kevin Boon will email a request to all members asking for a volunteer to serve as another Co-Chair.

### **C. CLIMATE EMERGENCY**

Chair Kevin Boon, Vice Chair Christopher Ford and Phil Ling finalized the draft declaration; Chair Kevin Boon discussed it with Regional Councillor Jack Heath and forwarded it to Regional Councillor Joe Li for review and comment. Markham staff advised that, prior to presenting the declaration to Markham Council, it would be best for MEAC members to approach Markham Councillors for their reactions to the draft declaration. It was agreed that MEAC members will each approach their local Councillor to discuss the draft declaration, answer questions, obtain feedback, and ideally, gain support for it.

### **D. MEETING FORMAT AND TOPICS**

Vice Chair Christopher Ford reviewed a draft list of presentations on a variety of environment-related topics to be scheduled for future MEAC meetings. Committee members agreed with the list and suggested other possible topics such as Ecosystem Integrity and “Getting the Word Out”. Markham staff requested information about the purpose of some topics so that they might identify appropriate staff to make presentations.

## **6. OTHER BUSINESS**

- Chair Kevin Boon reported that the Clerk’s Office has advised that 4 – 6 of new members will join the Committee in October.
- Chair Kevin Boon reviewed the Committee practice where the current Vice Chair assumes the position of Chair and the Committee elects a new Vice Chair, i.e. the current Vice Chair will become the Chair for 2020 and the Vice Chair elected for 2020 would assume the role of Chair in January 2021. Committee members were encouraged to consider this opportunity. Chair Kevin Boon will email a request to all members asking for a volunteer to serve as Vice Chair.
- Jennifer Wong invited MEAC members to attend a public presentation on the Strategic Plan to be held at the Markham Civic Centre on September 23, 2019 at 6:30 pm.

## **7. NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Markham Environmental Advisory Committee will be held on Thursday, October 17, 2019 at 7:00 p.m., in the Ontario Room, Markham Civic Centre.

## **8. ADJOURNMENT**

It was

Moved by           Natasha Welch  
Seconded by       Diane Ross

That the Markham Environmental Advisory Committee adjourn at 9:20 PM.

**CARRIED**