



MARKHAM ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES

**Ontario Room, Markham Civic Centre
January 16, 2020**

Attendance

Members

Christopher Ford, Chair
Ashok Bangia
Caryn Bergmann
Kevin Boon, Immediate Past Chair
Martin Bush
Morgan Davies
Karl Fernandes
Karl Lyew
Nadine Pinto
Frank Vignando
Natasha Welch

Regrets

Stuart Cumner
Victoria Genge
Phil Ling
Diane Ross
Paddy Wong
Jennifer Wong, Sustainability Coordinator

Council

Regional Councillor Joe Li

Guests

Bogdan Hlevca
Charlie Liu, Student
Shannon Logan
Mary Louise Prosen
James Tang, Student
Chris Williams

Staff

Jacqueline Tung, Community Engagement
Assistant
Bev Shugg Barbeito, Committee Coordinator

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Markham Environmental Advisory Committee (MEAC) was called to order at 7:05 PM with Christopher Ford presiding as Chair. He welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions were performed.

2. CHANGES OR ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

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

- Social Media account

The agenda was accepted as amended.

3. ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES OF THE MARKHAM ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON NOVEMBER 21, 2019

It was

Moved by Martin Bush
Seconded by Kevin Boon

That the minutes of the Markham Environmental Advisory Committee (MEAC) meeting held on November 21, 2019 be adopted as distributed.

CARRIED

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

A. INFORMATION ON MARKHAM INITIATIVES AND COUNCIL MATTERS

- Regional Councillor Joe Li reported that a 3-day workshop about waste and environmental management will be held in February; he will arrange for a MEAC member to attend. He also noted that in March he will attend a conference about how smart cities deliver services to residents.

B. FOLLOW UP ON ACTION ITEMS

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

5. NEW BUSINESS

A. ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR

Chair Christopher Ford advised that Caryn Bergmann and Morgan Davies had expressed interest in serving as Vice Chair. After discussion, they agreed to serve as Co Vice Chairs.

It was

Moved by Natasha Welch

Seconded by Martin Bush

That Caryn Bergmann and Morgan Davies be elected as Co Vice Chairs of the Markham Environmental Advisory Committee (MEAC) for a one-year term.

CARRIED

B. REGIONAL EAC MEETING DEBRIEF

Chair Christopher Ford advised that “engaging differently with residents” featured prominently in the discussions at the Regional EAC Meeting. York Region staff spoke of interactive events. It was noted that Regional EAC meetings are a good way to meet and share ideas with EAC members of other York Region municipalities, and the all MEAC members are welcome to attend future meetings.

C. CLIMATE EMERGENCY

For the benefit of new members and guests, Chair Christopher Ford reviewed the background related to this item. In spring 2019, Committee members were advised that, in the previous few months, there had been a groundswell of concern relating to a climate change emergency facing the Earth. At that time, MEAC voted that it was in support of the principle of declaring a climate emergency and prepared a declaration to that effect for consideration by Markham Council. MEAC members suggested edits, and the then Chair Kevin Boon, Vice Chair Christopher Ford and Phil Ling finalized the draft declaration. The draft declaration was discussed with Regional Councillor Jack Heath and also forwarded to Regional Councillor Joe Li for review and comment. It was suggested that the draft declaration be amended to be context sensitive to Markham initiatives and achievements, and to include what action MEAC would expect from Council. It had also been suggested that, prior to presenting the declaration to Markham Council, it would be helpful for MEAC to approach individual Markham Councillors to learn their reactions to the draft declaration.

Christopher Ford reminded the Committee members of Graham Seaman’s presentation at the November meeting which focused on the many sustainability related projects that Markham has initiated and the many achievements that it has realized. It had been advised that the term “emergency” might be interpreted to mean that there was an emergency because Markham was not doing enough. Markham Council would not agree with that, and as a result, the declaration might not win the support of Markham Council.

Keeping this in mind, Christopher Ford opened discussion as to whether MEAC would wish to change the approach of the declaration. He suggested including a reaffirmation of the leadership that Markham Council and staff have shown via the many sustainability-related initiatives which have been implemented, but also including language to recognize that the earth now faces a climate crisis, with the word “emergency” excluded.

It was

Moved by Martin Bush
Seconded by Frank Vignando

That the Markham Environmental Advisory Committee (MEAC) retain the phrase “climate emergency” in the declaration.

CARRIED

Chair Christopher Ford will share the working copy of the declaration with Committee members so they might provide input. The final draft will be sent to Committee members so that it can be discussed and finalized at the next meeting. Then, the finalized draft declaration will be sent to the Environmental Issues Committee chaired by Regional Councillor Joe Li, so the two committees might coordinate this initiative. It is hoped the declaration would be presented to Council in April; this would coincide with Earth Day events and also give the committees additional time to increase support for the declaration. In the interim, Committee members will continue to speak with individual Council members about the declaration.

D. PLANNING FOR MARKHAM EARTH DAY 2020

For the benefit of new members and guests, Jacqueline Tung provided an overview of past Earth Day events and suggested that this year Markham and MEAC would try a different format with two small events and one larger event.

The two smaller events were envisaged as:

- Sustainability blitz to be held on April 18 from 10 AM – 2 PM at five Markham Community Centres; it is hoped that 2 MEAC members could attend at one of the Community Centres to share simple ways families can contribute to Sustainability achievements and also to get ideas from residents about what initiatives Markham should focus on. Jacqueline Tung advised that she is working with Corporate Communications to produce a sign depicting a “honeycomb” of MEAC achievements.
- Park Clean Up to be held on April 25 from either 10 AM – 12 PM or 10 AM to 1 PM at Toogood Pond, in conjunction with Markham Public Libraries and Toronto Regional Conservation Authority (TRCA); Jacqueline Tung advised that this was meant to be a family-friendly event with family-oriented films and activities for children, such as a scavenger hunt.

The larger event was envisaged as an Eco-Market of sustainable vendors to be held on June 13 from 10 AM to 4 PM; the venue has not yet been determined. It is thought that there could be from 10 – 20 vendors, including local farmers, and featuring among others, Zero Waste products, local produce, and electric vehicles for demonstration purposes. Jacqueline Tung plans a sign showing Markham’s green initiatives and why Markham is a leader in environmental matters.

The Committee discussed possible themes and agreed on the theme: Climate Action.

It was

Moved by Natasha Welch
Seconded by Kevin Boon

That the Markham Environmental Advisory Committee (MEAC) adopt the theme “Climate Action”.

CARRIED

It was

Moved by Morgan Davies
Seconded by Nadine Pinto

That the Markham Environmental Advisory Committee (MEAC) plan two small events and one large event to be held in Spring 2020 to celebrate Earth Day.

CARRIED

In response to questions from the committee, it was reported that the Cornell Residents Association will host an Earth Hour event.

Chair Christopher Ford will advise when the Earth Day subcommittee will meet next.

6. OTHER BUSINESS

- Chair Christopher Ford reported back on discussions from the Earth Day subcommittee on the topic of creating a social media account for the committee in order to promote events to younger people and increase their engagement in environmental matters. Student James Tang discussed the benefits of using social media to engage with residents, in particular youth. Jacqueline Tung advised that it would be possible to have such an account but that it would not be supported by the City.

It was

Moved by Natasha Welch

Seconded by Kevin Boon

That the Markham Environmental Advisory Committee (MEAC) support acquiring a social media account.

CARRIED

- Markham Review produces an article for Earth Day; last year Karl Lyew and Kevin Boon provided comments. Committee members were asked to consider providing comments this year. Christopher Ford advised that he would make himself available for this interview.
- To honour the victims of the Ukraine International Airlines Flight PS752, four of whom were residents of Markham, Committee members were asked to consider signing books of condolences located in the Great Hall at the Markham Civic Centre.

7. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Markham Environmental Advisory Committee will be held on Thursday, February 20, 2019 at 7:00 p.m., in the Ontario Room, Markham Civic Centre.

8. ADJOURNMENT

It was

Moved by Karl Lyew

Seconded by Martin Bush

That the Markham Environmental Advisory Committee adjourn at 9:00 PM.

CARRIED