



MARKHAM ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
CANADA ROOM MARKHAM CIVIC CENTRE

November 28, 2024

7:00 PM

Minutes

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

The Markham Environmental Advisory Committee convened at 7:08 PM with Stuart Cumner in the Chair.

2. CHANGES OR ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

The following changes were made to the agenda:

Addition to the agenda – 5. B. Blue Community

3. ADOPTION OF SEPTEMBER 26, 2024, MARKHAM ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The approval of the Minutes was deferred to the next meeting as there was no quorum.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

The Committee briefly reviewed the action items from the previous meeting.

5. CERTIFICATIONS UPDATE

A. BIRD FRIENDLY CITY CERTIFICATION

Victoria Choy advised that Markham has made a lot of progress in its bird-friendly practices and spoke of what would be required of the City to obtain formal certification. The first step would be to form a bird team.

Ms. Choy advised that most of the bird accidents happen during migration due to light pollution and an increase in high-rise buildings. To help prevent bird accidents, Texas turns

off its lights during bird migration. The Committee discussed engaging the community on the issue of bird mortality and the important role birds play in the environment, expressing concern that there has been a significant decrease in the bird population from 10 -20 years ago. The Committee recognized that as a society we must change our ways with respect to night lights and the use of glass on balconies and other structures to protect birds.

Graham Seaman, Director of Asset Management & Sustainability, advised that Markham has adopted most of Flapp's recommendations regarding protecting birds and that all of the City's major facilities are compliant with Flapp's Bird Friendly Guidelines. Mr. Seaman explained that the City does not like pursuing certifications due to the cost and work associated with maintaining the certification. However, the City does implement the best practices of these organizations. The Committee was welcome to review Flapp's Bird Friendly Guidelines and to advise the City of any gaps in its policies with respect to protecting birds.

The Committee suggested that the City should promote or communicate what it has done to protect birds and it discussed how the private sector could be encourage to follow the Bird Friendly Guidelines. The Committee thanked Ms. Choy for her update on the Bird Friendly Guidelines and questioned how they could support the City's work on protecting birds during migration. Jack Heath and Sarena Karpouzis were interested in joining a bird team if one was formed. Jack Health also recommended reaching out to Past Councillor Valerie Burke on this subject matter.

B. BLUE COMMUNITY CERTIFICATION

Victoria Choy reviewed what it means to be a Blue Community and questioned if this was something Markham would want to pursue.

Graham Seaman, Director of Asset Management & Sustainability, advised that the City is interested in meeting the intent of this types of certification, but does not want to formally pursue the certification due to the cost and the work required to maintain the certification. Mr. Seaman welcomed any feedback on the gaps in the City's programing in this regard.

5. BICYCLING AS PART OF MARKHAM'S OVERALL TRANSIT PLAN

Vicky Choy provided an overview of an email from Peter Miasek, Chair of the Cycling and Pedestrian Advisory Committee, on bike lanes. The email reported that bike lanes are part of Markham's transit strategy as they support a healthy lifestyle and less parking. Additionally, it explained that the City is working on improving the connectivity and safety of its bike lanes so that cycling is an option for more people not just the seasoned cyclist. The email noted that this is being done as part of a broader transportation and micromobility study.

6. CFUW RESOLUTION

Victoria Choy presented a resolution that the Canadian Federation of University Women (CFUW) passed requesting the Federal Government to extend the short-term prohibition of

deep-sea mining due to little information available on the damage it will cause to the ocean's ecosystem. Industry wants to pursue deep ocean mining as the minerals required to make EV batteries can be found in the rocks at bottom of the ocean. Ms. Choy advised that she will circulate a video on this matter to the Committee. Ms. Choy questioned what the Committee could do to help prevent dee-sea mining, such as engaging the community on the topic or writing a letter to the Federal Government.

7. FOOD WASTE AND FOOD INSECURITY SUB-COMMITTEE UPDATE

Christina Wong provided the following update from the Food Waste and Food Insecurity Sub-Committee:

- The Sub-Committee continues to work with the York University students on food food waste and insecurity.
- To date there have been two meetings with the students which were held at York University.
- The students working on the project are in fourth- or fifth-year of university and are pursuing different degrees, including engineering, kinesiology, and computer science.
- The students met with York Region Staff to learn about what is currently being done to address food security and where there are their gaps in solving the problem.
- Noted that York Region is mainly focused on why low-income residents cannot access the food they need.
- Areas in York Region that struggle with food security include Southeast Markham and Georgina.
- An upcoming meeting with the students will focus on selecting an issue that they want to work on.
- The students are discussing how to get their message out to the right people.
- Discussed a social media campaign run by various organizations on environmental matters.
- Discussed how Markham could support and promote the student's message if there was a trustworthy resource that residents could be led to, such as a York Region webpage.

Graham Seaman suggested separating the issue of food waste and food security and letting the students determine which topic they want to address, as the issue becomes too complex if tackled as one issue.

8. NEW BUSINESS

Curbside Giveaway

Led by Paddy Wong, the Committee briefly discussed Markham's Curbside Giveaway Day. The Committee thanked Kimberley Dunsmoor for listening to their recommendation to proceed with the day. The Committee suggested the following for future Curbside Giveaway

Days: holding two days per year: one in the fall and one in the spring, communicating the day more broadly, and that the weekend of Markham Fair be avoided when choosing a date for the day.

Net Zero Retrofits

Graham Seaman, Director of Asset Management & Sustainability, provided an update on the City's net zero retrofits. Currently the City is retrofitting the Mount Joy Community Centre, the Thornhill Community Centre, and the Clatworthy Community Centre. These types of retrofits depend on approval of a business case and receiving grants or other incentives from other levels of government. Funding for other similar projects was not successful at this time.

There is now a stronger business case for converting the City's fleet to EVs, except for larger vehicles due to the EV market for this type of fleet still being in the development phase. At this time, the City is focusing on ensuring that it has the charging infrastructure in place so that it can convert the City's fleet to EVs. A report to Council will be brought forward to Council on this matter in the next few months.

JOLT Canada – Electronic Vehicle Charging Stations

Graham Seaman, Director of Asset Management & Sustainability, advised that a proposal from JOLT Canada has been received for free charging stations for EVs for up to 30 minutes on high volume streets. The stations would bring a revenue stream for the municipality as the stations would have an advertising board. The charging station would require a dedicated parking space to operate. The Committee was asked for its feedback on the proposal.

The Committee expressed some concern regarding placing these stations in residential areas and where parking is already problematic but was interested in learning more about the proposal. Members were encouraged to visit the JOLT Canada website to learn more about their products.

Earth Month

Graham Seaman, Director of Asset Management & Sustainability, advised they are looking to try something new this year for Earth Month with the objective of attracting a broader audience and to make it simpler to organize. The plan is to hold a series of smaller events throughout the month of April that focus on five or six environmental issues that the City would like to engage residents on. The example of having a tree planting event at Milne Park was provided as one of the smaller events that may be held.

2025 Sustainability Work Plan

Graham Seaman, Director of Asset Management & Sustainability, inquired if the Committee would like his staff to provide presentations on some of the projects they are working on in 2025, which includes updates on projects that were presented in 2024.

The Committee was interested in staff providing these presentations at upcoming meetings.

Deconstruction of Buildings

The Committee briefly discussed the deconstruction of buildings. Markham has done this in the past. An example of deconstruction of a large metal warehouse on the Pan Am Centre site was provided.

Get Your Lawn off Gas

The Committee asked for an update on the “Getting Your Lawn off Gas” initiative and on the Sustainability Offices plans 2025. Graham Seaman agreed to provide an update on this at the next meeting.

Changeover of the Chair and Vice Chair

The Committee discussed possibly holding an election for the role of Chair in February as it is the best practice to have turnover in the role of Chair to promote new ideas. The Committee’s tradition has been for the Vice-Chair to take over the role of Chair after a one- or two-year term, but due to personal reasons this is not possible. Members were encouraged to think about who may be interested in serving the roles of Chair and Vice-Chair in preparation for the next meeting.

9. NEXT MEETING

The next Markham Environmental Advisory Committee Meeting will be held on February 27, 2025, at 7:00 PM.

10. ADJOURNMENT

The Environmental Advisory Committee adjourned at 9:04 PM.