



MARKHAM ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Minutes
April 17, 2014

ATTENDANCE

Members

Chuan Li, Chair
Mark Angelini
Jocelyn Cheung
Adam Poon
Diane Ross
Carrie Sally

Council

Deputy Mayor Jack Heath
Regional Councillor Joe Li

Staff

Prabh Banga, Sustainability Coordinator
Bev Shugg Barbeito, Committee Secretary

Regrets

Karl Lyew, Vice Chair
James Lin, Immediate Past Chair
Kevin Boon
Phil Fung
Marie LeGrow
Amanda Napoli
Amol Rao
Muhammad Rashid
Vern Ricksen Tam

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Markham Environmental Advisory Committee (MEAC) was called to order at 7:12 PM with Chuan Li presiding as Chair.

2. CHANGES OR ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

The agenda was accepted with the following changes:

Items deferred to another meeting

5A Earth Hour Wrap Up
5B Underground Garbage Transportation System

Items added

Earth Day Event Wrap Up

3. ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES OF THE MARKHAM ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON MARCH 20, 2014

It was

Moved by Adam Poon

Seconded by Carrie Sally

THAT the minutes of the Markham Environmental Advisory Committee (MEAC) meeting held on March 20, 2014 be adopted as distributed.

CARRIED

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

A. INFORMATION REPORTS – MARKHAM INITIATIVES

Prabh Banga, Sustainability Coordinator, reported on the Markham Organic Home Gardens initiative; there have been 450 sign ups already, 50 obtained during the MEAC Earth Day event. Markham is accepting applications for the allotment garden on Kirkham Drive. The community garden in Cornell will open officially on the long weekend in May. In response to Committee interest, she will investigate the possibility of setting up a tour of a community garden for the Committee.

Prabh Banga advised that Graham Seaman, Senior Manager Sustainability, would like to attend a future MEAC meeting to speak about solar co-ops.

In response to committee questions, Prabh Banga agreed to bring information about textile recycling to the next meeting.

B. FOLLOW UP ON ACTION ITEMS

Chair Chuan Li reviewed the action items; all were completed for the Earth Day event which took place on April 12, 2014.

5. NEW BUSINESS

A. ROUGE DAYS AND DEPUTY MAYOR'S WALK

Chair Chuan Li reported that Rouge Days is an event organized by the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) to raise awareness of and celebrate the Rouge watershed. This year's event will be held from June 5 – 8, 2014; it will feature walks, guided tours, and information booths. MEAC will partner with Deputy Mayor Jack Heath to host a photo scavenger hunt as part of the Deputy Mayor's Annual Walk scheduled for June 7 from 1:00 – 3:00 pm. Chair Chuan Li will send Committee members an email requesting volunteers to assist in organizing this event or to attend the TRCA planning meeting to be scheduled from 1:00 - 3:00 pm on either May 14 or 15, 2014.

Deputy Mayor Jack Heath reported that the walk would begin at a point near the intersection of Highway 7 and Highway 48, progress south to Milne Park and then north to Toogood Pond. Phil Ling, a past chair of MEAC, will help to coordinate the walk; Deputy Mayor Jack Heath will invite him to attend the next MEAC meeting to discuss the plans. Other volunteers will be needed to handle registration and to serve as guides.

B. PARKLAND DEDICATION

It was reported that the City of Markham has begun a Parkland Dedication Study to review and update its existing parkland dedication policies and procedures. The study examines current approaches to park planning and acquisition by the City and outlines best practices. The goal of the parkland dedication approach for Markham is to ensure that the City can provide the right amount and type of space at the right locations for the current and future residents of Markham. Biju Karumanchery, Senior Development Manager, Planning and Urban Design Department, will make a presentation on this subject to MEAC at the May 2014 meeting.

C. VISIT TO A STORMWATER BEST PRACTICE SITE

Chair Chuan Li will follow up with Deputy Mayor Jack Heath to make arrangements for a tour, which will likely be scheduled for a Saturday.

D. EARTH WATCH CANADA'S DESTINATION ZERO CARBON (DZC) PROJECT

Committee members were reminded of the Earth Watch Canada presentation in June 2013 and were asked for feedback. It was recommended that Eco Watch Canada pursue funding through the MESF program, and identify connections with school boards, in particular, the York Catholic District School Board, through the Waste Management department.

E. EARTH DAY WRAP UP

Chair Chuan Li advised that the Earth Day 2014 event was the most ambitious event organized by MEAC in 3 – 5 years; it featured booths for 15 different organizations, 5 acts on stage, a Lion Dance with an Earth Day theme, and Rock the Bike, at a community event for the first time. She thanked Deputy Mayor Jack Heath for his ideas and input into stage events, Regional Councillor Joe Li for arranging sponsorship of the MEAC banner, Prabh Banga for providing supplies and connections to the City, and Committee members such as Karl Lyew for overall coordination of the event; Amol Rao for artwork of the MEAC banner; Jocelyn Cheung for artwork and printing of the poster, bookmark and passports; Diane Ross for creating a survey for attendees and compiling the results; Adam Poon for coordinating audio/visual matters; Carrie Sally for assistance in many aspects of the event; Mark Angelini for coordinating Rock the Bike; Kevin Boon for single-handedly manning the popcorn machine during the entire event; Adam Poon who shared emcee duties, Jocelyn Cheung, Diane Ross, and Amanda Napoli for taking pictures; and all Committee members who assisted on the day of the event.

Committee members provided feedback on the event as follows:

- The number of attendees was “awesome” because people came to the venue to go shopping; 204 passports were collected;
- Space was somewhat tight for the number of booths;

- Having two groups of booths/tables so far apart from each other was not ideal; attendees did not realize that the two groups were part of the same event. It was considered very important for future events to position all booths close together;
- The venue was very noisy so that organizers had to raise their voices to communicate information to attendees;
- The acoustics were poor so that sound from the stage was muffled making it difficult to understand what was being said;
- It would be helpful to develop an Earth Day media kit; Adam Poon did arrange coverage by Asian TV stations and newspapers;
- There was a significant language barrier between organizers and attendees which made it difficult to communicate information about programs; it was suggested that coworkers that speak multiple languages, in addition to high school volunteers that do also, could help bridge this gap;
- Attendees appeared to be most interested in getting something for free rather than getting information about programs;
- 70 surveys were completed; attendees preferred the animal show, the program booths, and Rock the Bike; Elements identified for next year's event were passports, Rock the Bike and workshop sessions. Diane Ross will compile and then present the survey results at a future meeting;
- The "Aim to Sustain" Awards ceremony was a good addition to the program; Committee members were in favour of including this in future Earth Day event programming;
- Rock the Bike was not as heavily used as expected. This may have been because it was not visible where it was located at the rear of the stage, or that attendees may have felt that only certain people could go on stage to use it, or that the need to sign a waiver possibly turned people away, or the fact that people didn't know it was free. It would be helpful to have a sign to advertise its availability;
- Rock the Bike was understaffed - in future, it would be best to have three people to staff this: one on the bike at all times, one to invite attendees to try riding the bike, and one to manage the line up;
- The Popcorn was not handed out in expected quantities, perhaps due to being located separately from the stage and also lack of signage indicating that it was free (with no strings attached);
- It would be preferable to use venues where there would be a mix of cultures which would represent the diversity found in Markham;
- It was suggested that the Committee consider hosting the Earth Day 2015 event at the Thornhill Community Centre; Committee members agreed with the suggestion. Diane Ross will investigate whether the Thornhill Community Centre would be available as a venue for MEAC's Earth Day event on April 18, 2015.

Committee members also mentioned they would be interested participating with the Sustainability Office in events during the summer months that are similar to Earth Day e.g. the Unionville Festival; Prabh Banga will provide a list of such events for discussion at the next meeting.

6. OTHER BUSINESS

A. MEMBERS' BIOGRAPHIES

Chair Chuan Li reported that she has added pictures for Amanda Napoli, Phil Fung, Kevin Boon and Karl Lyew; she reminded other committee members to send her their pictures so they can be added to MEAC LinkedIn site.

B. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Chair Chuan Li asked Committee members to let her know of any interests or initiatives they would like added to agendas for future meetings.

Committee members discussed the possibility of creating an award for developers/builders who construct green buildings, similar to the award given by the Accessibility Committee for developers who incorporate accessibility features in their projects. Adam Poon will investigate the feasibility of such an award and report back to the Committee.

7. ADJOURNMENT

It was

Moved by	Adam Poon
Seconded by	Carrie Sally

That the Markham Environmental Advisory Committee adjourn at 8:55 PM.

CARRIED

8. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Environmental Advisory Committee will be held on Thursday, May 22, 2014 at 7:00 p.m. in the Ontario Room.