

# Meeting Minutes



City of Guelph

## **Water Conservation and Efficiency Public Advisory Committee (WCEPAC)**

February 5, 2020

City Hall, Meeting Room D

From 7:00 to 9:00 p.m.

Meeting Chair: Grant Parkinson (GP)

Vice-Chair: Jaime Boutilier (JB)

**Present:** Louise Cottreau (LC), Eric Meliton (EM), Robert Orland (RO)

**Regrets:** Justin Arbuckle (JA), David Worden (DW), Travis Pawlick (TP), Emma Thompson (ET)

**Staff:** Karen McKeown (KM), Stephanie Shouldice (SS), Steven Snopkowski (SSn), Steve Yessie (SY), Heather Yates (HY)

## **Agenda Items**

### **Item 1, 2 and 3**

Item 1, Welcome to all

Item 2, Approval of the Agenda

**Motion:** To approve the November 27, 2019 meeting minutes.

**Motion** made by JB

**Seconded** by GP

**Carried**

Item 2, Declaration of Conflict of Interest – None heard

### **Item 4**

World Café Style Brainstorming – K. McKeown, S. Snopkowski, H. Yates

The committee broke into small groups and discussed questions posed by City staff regarding potential new programs that are outlined within the [Water Efficiency Strategy](#) but not yet realized. The discussion for each program was considered one 'round' and proceeded as follows:

1. Committee members were reorganized into new discussion groups.
2. A brief presentation was provided to introduce the proposed program and question(s).
3. Brainstorming occurred within groups for approximately 15-minutes.
4. The round ended with an approximately five minute debrief to discuss prominent ideas and themes that emerged from the brainstorming session.

## Round 1: Irrigation program – K. McKeown

See the posted "Irrigation Program Presentation"

### Questions prior to group discussions:

**RO:** Why would someone not install a backflow prevention device and what is the fine if you do not have one installed in an instance when it is required?

**LC and HY:** Backflow prevention devices need to be properly installed by a certified plumber and require annual inspection and maintenance. This can cost hundreds of dollars. There is a \$5000 fine if you did not have the city engineer approve your lawn sprinkler system. Non-compliance with the [Backflow Prevention By-law \(By-law Number \(2016\) – 20028\)](#) can result in a fine of not more than \$10,000 for the first offence and, on a subsequent conviction, to a fine of not more than \$25,000. Staff will confirm infraction fines with Building Services if exploring some type of related program.

**HY and KM:** A concern is that an irrigation program could inadvertently encourage more irrigation system installations. The program must have enough incentive to encourage the adoption of more efficient technologies or practices, but not be so substantial that it promotes irrigation system installations. One option could be a retrofit-only program.

### Brainstorming debrief:

#### LC and RO:

- Provide a technology instead of financial incentive (e.g. free rain sensor or smart meter).
- Consider a decommissioning rebate. This would address concerns about an irrigation program encouraging people to install irrigation systems.
- Significant education is required since it is a topic not previously addressed by the City.
- The Turf Grass Institute could be a great resource.
- Consider using City Parks as a model case.
- Summer students could be used to monitor neighborhoods likely to have irrigation systems and educate on them; enforcement of Outdoor Water Use Bylaw remains responsibility of officers.
- A \$300 rebate would not be significant enough. For example, this amount would only be enough to replace two broken sprinkler heads.
- Consider encouraging the use of irrigation systems that use rainwater.
- Utilize an education campaign (i.e. videos) to demonstrate unique lawn watering methods.

#### EM, JB, and GP:

- Utilize an exclusive vendor relationship for an ICI irrigation program. These approved vendors would have to work solely with weather-based systems and be required to properly install and set irrigation systems.
- Encourage re-naturalization of unused ICI land in place of irrigation. Re-naturalization would reduce landscaping costs, support the urban forest canopy and pollinator species and does not require watering.
- Connect with the Region of Peel and City of Toronto about their irrigation programs.
- As the largest users, ICI should be targeted, but the general public also needs to be educated. Knowledge about the backflow requirements could deter installations and information about the backflow prevention requirements is currently difficult to find.
- Support integrating irrigation programs with rainwater harvesting programs. This could include communication about how the cost of drinking water used for irrigation includes wastewater treatment costs as well, even though irrigation water does not make it to the Wastewater Treatment Plant.

- Ensure the program aligns with the Outdoor Water Use program and the associated water use restrictions.
- Target the “set it and forget it” attitude associated with many irrigation systems.

## **Round 2: Industrial, Commercial, Institutional Healthy Landscapes program – K. McKeown**

ICI Healthy Landscapes Presentation

### **Questions prior to group discussion:**

**EM:** Does Guelph have a target for the urban forest canopy?

**KM:** Yes – 40%.

**RO:** Are green rooftops included as part of Toronto’s tree canopy goal?

**EM:** No. Toronto and Peel Region each have a tree canopy goal of one million trees.

### **Brainstorming debrief:**

**JB, RO and EM:**

- Three barriers will likely be capital costs, lack of knowledge, and administrative requirements.
  - Capital investment could be reduced through partnerships with suppliers (e.g. nurseries) or landscapers, property tax incentives if they meet tree canopy requirements.
  - Administrative effort could be reduced through City provision of business cases or guidelines for designing and implementing ideal landscapes.
- Participating ICI properties could be provided rebates or discounts at local nurseries. This partnership could benefit local nurseries or landscape companies through increased sales.
- Consider Credit Valley Conservation’s Greening Corporate Grounds program.
- Include diverse impacts as part of the business case. For example, air quality and public health, reduced heat island effects, and reduced CO2 emissions. Perhaps University of Guelph student(s) could help develop this business case.

### **LC and GP:**

- There is significant potential to convert unused parking spaces into green spaces. Could conduct surveys to identify underutilized parking spaces that could be converted to green spaces.
- **RO:** Starting in big cities, it is expected that people will increasingly use shared fleet vehicles. This could result in more underutilized parking spaces.
- **SS:** This idea has the potential for additional savings through reduced stormwater fees.
- New development plans and site approval processes could include requirements for canopy cover or number of trees planted.
  - **EM:** Town of Caledon offers incentives (e.g. reduced property tax or expedited permits) for new developments that choose to pursue LEED certification indoors and outdoors. This approach attracts desired stakeholders for growth while also reducing development impacts.

## **Topic 3: Industrial, Commercial and Institutional Sub-metering Program – S. Snopkowski**

ICI Sub-metering Presentation

### **Questions prior to group discussions:**

**LC:** What is the difference between a sub-meter program and the current water audit conducted through the Water Smart Business program?

**HY and SSn:** Water Smart Business only evaluates water use within a very short time (only a snapshot of water use), whereas a sub-meter program would allow for long-term water monitoring.

**Brainstorming debrief:**

**EM and LC:**

- Consider the results of the ICI study conducted by Watermark Solutions.
- Focusing on a target segment may be an effective approach. Consider the Carlisle Ontario case.
- Could utilize preferred/exclusive vendor discounts for submeters.
- Strip malls will likely be driven by leaks or tenant complaints or demand.
  - **SSn:** Increasing costs of water rates might also be an encouraging factor.
- It will be important to consider who is responsible for water use. It might be helpful to find ways to place responsibility on both the tenant and property owner.

**GP, JB, and RO:**

- Consider that ICI property owners or managers may have a difficult time discerning what is appropriate or high water use due to the sporadic water use in such facilities. It is much harder to discern a leak or inefficient water use from normal operational processes.
  - **SSn:** Agree that it is a learning curve but notes that it is possible to discern water use profiles and patterns; maybe education needed.
- Contact large customers who have already used sub-meters to identify lessons learned and understand their experiences. Perhaps conduct an online survey and then a more in-depth phone survey.

**Item 5**

**Education and outreach presentation – S. Shouldice and S. Yessie**

Education and Outreach Presentation

SY presented on Fix-a-leak and wacky water week (March 16-21, 2020), a week-long event that includes outreach, educational activities at libraries, the H2O Go festival, and a booth at the eMERGE EcoMarket. These events coincide with the school boards' March Break.

The presentations regarding Immigrant Services and Blue Built Home outreach were postponed until the next meeting due to the extended discussion of previous agenda items.

**Discussion:**

There were no questions or comments from the committee.

**Item 6**

Meeting adjourned 9:16 pm

**Next Meeting:**

Wednesday June 17, 2020 from 7 – 9 p.m. City Hall, Meeting Room D