



MINUTES

Sustainability Advisory Committee Meeting

Wednesday, September 4, 2024
2:00 p.m.
Operations Board Room

Present: Ashley Norlund, Chair
Lisa Devlin
Kim Mowrey
Greg Breen
Heather Pihulak
Stephanie Charles
Rory McMillan (left @ 3 p.m.)
Peter Kirby
Bill Mundy
Councilor Lisa Moncrief (joined @ 3 p.m.)

Regrets: Ethan Amyotee
Brie McCardle

1. Call Meeting to Order and Land Acknowledgment

Chair Ashley Norlund called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

2. Declaration of Pecuniary Interest

There were none declared.

3. Adopt Minutes of Previous Meetings

Moved by R. McMillan, Seconded by S. Charles & Carried:

That the Minutes of the Regular Sustainability Advisory Committee meeting held July 3, 2024 be confirmed as written and filed.

4. Presentation

Food Cycle Science Corp, Christina Zardo, Director of Municipal Solutions

Christina Zardo, Director of Municipal Solutions from Foodcycle Science presented a FoodCycler Food Waste Diversion program presentation. Food Cycle Science is a global leader in food waste recycling technology and is headquartered in Ottawa. They have been in business since 2011 selling on-site food waste recycling products which are sold to over 30 countries.

There are 157 North American municipal partnerships with 148 in Canada and 9 in the United States. The City of Kenora was the 10th municipality in Canada who joined the FoodCycler program.

The FoodCycler by-product is dry, sterile, odourless and nutrient-rich biomass with many beneficial uses and practical applications. You can add to garden soil, backyard

composters, integrate into existing leaf and yard waste systems, or drop off at local farms or community gardens.

The first pilot program in Kenora ran from October 2021 to January 2022 with 250 households receiving a FoodCycler FC-30 and sold out in 6 days. The recorded diversion was 240kg per year.

The second pilot program ran from April 2023 to June 2023 with 250 households receiving either a FoodCycler FC-30 or FoodCycler Eco 5 which sold out in less than a day. Recorded diversion was 233 kg per year. There are now 500 FoodCyclers in Kenora diverting ~118MT of food waste from landfill/year.

Kenora pilot highlights include: 99% of pilot participants will continue using the FoodCycler after the pilot period. 95% of users would recommend the FoodCycler to friends/family. 4.65 out of 5 star rating for the overall user experience of the FoodCycler. The average household cycles the equivalent of 238 kg per household per year. 77% of pilot participants resolved to waste less food as a result of increased awareness.

The committee was advised that Kenora could consider a City-wide decentralized organics program. This would include carbon refill dispensers, drop off options for foodizers, and the introduction of further FoodCyclers in the community.

Ashley thanked Christina for her presentation.

5. Previous Action Items

Backyard Composting Project

This is a simple idea and years ago the City gave away backyard composters. It is a lot cheaper than the FoodCycler program. Like the FoodCycler program it depends on how many people want to take it up. It is obvious that people are interested in composting. The 500 units that were available sold out quickly, so we know there is a demand. We could start with 50 units and see what the uptake was. We can get the message out to digital communications and we can get a list of who would want one. This ties in with the whole food insecurity issue. Getting people to compost goes hand in hand with getting the public to garden as well.

The City of Thunder Bay mass purchases 500 composters at a time, once every two years, and EcoSuperior provides a point-of-sale location for city residents throughout the year. The costs and subsidy rate in Thunder Bay is:

- 2018, per unit cost was \$36.19 each (\$30 after subsidy)
- 2020, per unit cost was \$35.95 each (\$30 after subsidy)
- 2022, per unit cost was \$55.60 each (\$45 after subsidy)

There were concerns that Council would support this direction and we would rely on City staff to distribute these units. It was suggested that we set a budget of how much we want to spend and that would be the number of units available to the public.

People will prefer different methods. It is a great option to provide people with another option. We could try backyard composters since we have invested in the FoodCycler for two rounds and it may be time to look at something else.

It's important to recognize the staff time that is required to allocate to this initiative as it is staff time lost elsewhere to accomplish this task.

If the committee agrees with the concept, can we work with the logistics to get the buy in and support from Council. The catalyst for this is that our landfill is filling. The concept is positive.

The committee should decide how many units they wish to support for purchasing, the details on the timing on it, any volunteer work that the committee wishes to provide and then Council can provide direction to staff.

Moved by P. Kirby, Seconded by R. McMillan & Carried:-

The sustainability proposes to Council a back yard composting proposal to the amount of up to \$5,000.

Water Fill Stations Project

Stephanie will follow up on this project.

Questions for City staff

Reporting Obligations – City of Kenora

This item will be deferred to the November meeting. Greg Breen, Director of Engineering & Infrastructure is working on finding resources to answer all of the questions posed by the Committee. He is very short staffed in some of the areas where the responses would need to come from. The committee is responsible for the plan, but the committee has no operational responsibility for the plan. The greenhouse gas emissions report was submitted to the portal to the province in June 2024 and have requested from facilities department a copy of the report. Greg will bring the report to next meeting.

6. Current Action Items

Communications

Deferred.

7. New Business

Science Carnival – September 21 from 11 a.m. – 4 p.m. and they are asking if the Sustainability Committee would like to have a table present. Last year we had someone hand out QR code cards. It was suggested that we have the QR code available again along with a couple of copies of the plan on the table.

Implementing the Sustainability Plan: Who Within the City Administration Has This Responsibility

Who within the City Administration is responsible uniquely responsible for the plan. For the most part, it falls within the Engineering & Infrastructure department. If you move through the plan, it spreads out throughout the E & I department. Mr. Breen thought it might be helpful in this meeting to talk through it a little and talk about the amount of time we have to get through all the plan. Can talk about vacancies in the

department which are preventing us get through the plan. Can talk about 2025 priorities and 2026 so we can talk about the outyear priorities.

To start, there is not one staff individual specific in the City who is responsible for the plan or sustainability as a whole directly.

Building on the existing energy plan – Theme 1 –

#1 – Facilities department is responsible for submitting green house gas submissions report. We can have a look at that and have a conversation about what reasonable targets may be for the next year. We need to be considerate about how we are going to achieve those targets. Sometimes depending on the facility, we are talking about in order to achieve the goal may be different for different buildings. That facilities department we are down one staff person and have an acting role. We are about to recruit a Project Coordinator. In the short term, the goal would be to provide preliminary conversations and can dive deep into that. It will be a longer-term goal we can dive into over the coming years. There are recommended reduction targets within the plan.

#2 – energy conservation retrofit - one goal for the department is the City doesn't have a full list of all of the facilities and all of our assets within those facilities. The state we are in currently, the goal may have been set prematurely. Once we fill the Project Coordinator, we can start to complete that inventory. The City is in a position where we are playing catch up on equipment replacement and so some of the improvements are going to come naturally, with equipment replacement. We can track trending usage.

#3 – this, on top of the existing facilities, what are the improvements being made, and how do we reduce emissions to demonstrate the reduction. This one comes back to a baseline to start with. In coming years as we complete projects, we are able to start to share that information with the public. Our department needs to be set up but needs a baseline to get started.

#4 – the General Manager of Public Works would be responsible for this. This position was just posted as it is currently vacant.

#5 – we do have one electric vehicle in the fleet which is a Zamboni at the Rec Centre. Typically, they are ran on propane. Both of our arenas we have heat recovery systems which helps heat the building. At the Discovery Centre we have heat pumps that pull heat out of the lake to help heat the building. Those three items are in existence right now. Greg will check with Asset Management to see what is included and if trees are included or bike lanes. Green energy infrastructure is planned in 2025 at the Museum we are installing solar panels on the roof as part of the roof project. In the project we could have some display boards and talk about solar panels. Public demonstration project and that project may be eligible under the health adapt program. This will be a pilot for the City and as far as other re-roofing projects the Kenora Recreation Centre is the next building and there is potential every time we are doing roof replacements. This is a lens that is always on for any new project that is coming up. We have had a flip in the Operations Centre staffing wise and both this committee and the Accessibility committee are to have a lens on including these aspects when creating projects.

#6 – micro transit – the committee would like to speak with VIA regarding the opportunity for electric vehicles as the new micro transit. Heather will arrange either while they are here for the public open house, or via zoom at our next meeting.

#7 – micro-farming – struggling a little with this item because not sure how this is City work. The measure of success in the plan is having locally grown food year round.

#8 – implement local household composting initiatives – we are accomplishing that. We have hit 200 households in the plan, but we don't have definitive data. It would be interesting to repeat the evaluation data. It would be interesting to know if that is still the usage, before we consider another round. She works for a business, and we want to ensure that it isn't biased. Some were already composting, so not sure the numbers are 100% accurate. We had one success, and we are potentially going into a second initiative and this goal would be achieved. There has been progress.

#9 – community composting program - Peter has been studying composting for years. Communities as small as Morden are doing community composting. They can't do it under the landfill site under their ECA. Community composting feasibility study – undertaking a pilot program is another piece, and this is a massive goal under this plan. If we are going to start down this path, what is the priority? A feasibility study would require Council to support.

#10 – reuse – potential to revisit in 2025. Prepared to work with Lisa to come up with a proposal for Council and could do a pilot project. Not convinced it's not doable. In 2025 what that looks like, if committee wants to have discussions with Council on how staff proceed if it's a pilot or not. Can't bring it up until April. The staffing was important in the report this spring because the previous area at the Transfer Station was misused, and items weren't properly managed where people were just dodging tipping fees.

#11 – water bottle filling stations – we will get some follow up information.

#12 – water security – need a broad discussion with the committee and what this looks like for the committee. Extending the water lines to Rat Portage goes a long way with them having safe drinking water. Sharing and teaching water resources. Recognizing the NIBY statements of the First Nations and maybe developing our own statement. We all have a responsibility for the sustainability of the water and putting it out there might be an interesting way to start. We can bring in our new Indigenous Relations Advisor and that could include traditional education.

#13 – healthy shorelines program – another item that we would be looking for the committee to bring to Council and promote that we bring a consultant in for this. The plan says support doesn't mean that we add our own component. Would like to see it expanded beyond Lake of the Woods. We could broaden it to all the bodies of water in our area.

#14 – flood risk areas – this is another one that we need some consultant support on and would take some budget dollars. We have some information on areas that are prone but when you talk about putting together a master plan and the time and resources needed for this. We would need to put budget towards it and as the City is building out capital budgets, we have to think about it and how we incorporate out of

this plan into our 10 year capital plan. Teika Newton may have information that would be useful in this area.

We can say we have made some progress on some of these initiatives, and we have about 7.5 years ahead of us to advance the plan. Suggest the committee think about a priority setting meeting or agenda topic so we can talk about what priorities may be for 2026/2027 and set ourselves on a path. Spring of 2025 we will need to start planning for 2026.

There are two for 2025 in the budget. Stormwater feasibility financing study and Museum solar panel project.

The committee should be thinking about 2026/2027 priorities next. It is a plan that is supposed to be flexible, but it is not clear the mechanism how the committee would bring that forward.

8. Next Meeting Date

Wednesday, November 6 @ 2:00 p.m.

9. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 4:05 p.m.