



Whitby Sustainability Advisory Committee Minutes

November 6, 2024, 7:00 p.m.
Hybrid Meeting
Whitby Town Hall

Present: Wenda Abel
Sara Best, Vice-Chair
Janet Dignem
Brian Kelly
Patti Mavins
Catherine Philogene
Bryan Widner, Chair
Bob Willard
Zartasha Zainab

Also Present: Councillor Leahy, Mayor's Designate
Kristin Palilionis, Staff Liaison, Climate Change Coordinator
Heather Ellis, Council and Committee Coordinator (Recording Secretary)

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1. Call to Order
 2. Declarations of Conflict of Interest

There were no declarations of conflict of interest.

3. Approval of Previous Minutes

Recommendation:

Moved by Brian Kelly

That the Whitby Sustainability Advisory Committee minutes of October 2, 2024 be approved.

Carried

4. Presentations

4.1 Ingrid Janssen, Volunteer, Little Forests Durham

Re: Little Forests Durham Program

Ingrid Janssen provided a presentation regarding the Little Forests Durham Program. Highlights of the presentation included:

- information about the Little Forests Durham Program;
- the average size of a little forest, also known as a mini forest, and the steps taken to prepare the area for planting;
- details about the diversity of vegetation planted in a mini forest;
- a summary of the research and methodology of planting mini forests; and,
- the program's goals for 2025 including raising community awareness, participating in community events, working with community partners, and increasing the number of team members and volunteers.

A question and answer period ensued regarding:

- the criteria for selecting tree and shrub species for mini forests;
- whether pioneer species are considered suitable for mini forests;
- the categorization of weeds;
- the criteria for selecting planting sites;
- outreach opportunities to increase municipal awareness of the program;
- approximate expenditures to plant a mini forest;
- whether Little Forests Durham would register as a charity;
- collaborating with local schools to continue research into mini forests; and,
- details about the benefits of mini forests in urban spaces.

Recommendation:

Moved by Bob Willard

That the Whitby Sustainability Advisory Committee requests that Council direct Staff to collaborate in 2025 with Little Forests Durham and the

Whitby Sustainability Advisory Committee to select potential sites on Town property for the establishment of a mini forest.

Carried

5. Delegations

There were no delegations.

6. General Business and Reports

6.1 Whitby Sustainability Advisory Committee Work Plan Review

Bryan Widner requested feedback from the Committee regarding the Committee's Work Plan.

Discussion ensued regarding:

- the Committee's Work Plan outcomes achieved in 2024;
- assessing the Committee's 2025 Work Plan goals;
- circulating the 2025 Work Plan to Committee Members for comments and feedback for discussion at the December meeting; and,
- investigating grant applications and program opportunities for managing invasive plant species.

6.2 Committee Participation at November Town Christmas Events

Kristin Palilionis requested feedback from the Committee regarding their attendance at November Town Christmas events.

Discussion ensued regarding the availability of Members and attending events that aligned with the Committee's mandate.

6.3 Sustainability Events

Kristin Palilionis provided an update regarding Waste Reduction Week events including the Repair Cafe, Hard to Recycle Items event, and the Waste Reduction event.

7. Correspondence

There was no correspondence.

8. Council Update

Councillor Leahy provided an update regarding:

- the November 18, 2024 Special Council Meeting to provide Council education and training regarding the 2025 Budget;
- proposals from private businesses to install Level 2 EV charging stations in the Town; and,
- Remembrance Day events in Whitby.

A question and answer period ensued regarding the advertising boards on the proposed Level 2 EV charging stations.

9. Other Business

9.1 Weather Preparedness Handouts

Bryan Widner requested that the Committee consider developing communication materials for residents to promote weather preparedness and climate change resiliency.

Discussion ensued regarding:

- avenues for distributing materials to Whitby residents;
- focusing on climate change preparedness information in response to resident feedback gathered through the Town's Emergency Preparedness and Climate Change Survey;
- collaborating with Staff to develop materials for distribution to residents; and,
- increasing the availability of online platforms for the Committee to post sustainability and educational information for residents.

9.2 News Releases

Brian Kelly provided updates regarding two provincial news releases which included:

- supporting the construction of new homes by making it easier and more affordable for new development to connect to the province's electricity grid; and,
- Ontario's energy policy.

10. Next Meeting

Wednesday, December 4, 2024 - 7:00 p.m.

11. Adjournment

Recommendation:

Moved by Catherine Philogene

That the meeting adjourn.

Carried

The meeting adjourned at 8:58 p.m.

Note: These minutes were approved by the Whitby Sustainability Advisory Committee on December 4, 2024.