



**Regional Watershed Advisory Board
MINUTES
August 9, 2017**

PRESENT: Walter N. Regan, Chair
Kelly Schnare, Vice Chair
Russell Dmytriw
Derek Vallis
Rose Featherstone

REGRETS: Jennifer Rocard
Tim Boudreau
Aaron Ezekiel
Kevin Hooper

STAFF: Holly Richardson, Energy and Environment Acting Program Manager
Cameron Deacoff, Environmental Performance Officer
Shilo Gempton, Planner
Sharon Chase, Legislative Support

The following does not represent a verbatim record of the proceedings of this meeting.

The agenda, reports, supporting documents, and information items circulated are online at halifax.ca.

The meeting was called to order at 5:05 p.m. and adjourned at 7:05 p.m.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Walter Regan called the meeting to order at 5:05 p.m. in the Maxine Tynes Room, 2nd floor, Alderney Public Library, 60 Alderney Drive, Dartmouth.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – July 12, 2017

MOVED by Russell Dmytriw, seconded by Derek Vallis

THAT the minutes of July 12, 2017 be approved as presented.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

3. APPROVAL OF THE ORDER OF BUSINESS AND APPROVAL OF ADDITIONS AND DELETIONS

There were no changes to the Order of Business.

4. BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES – NONE

5. CALL FOR DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTERESTS – NONE

6. CONSIDERATION OF DEFERRED BUSINESS – NONE

7. CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS & DELEGATIONS – NONE

8. INFORMATION ITEMS BROUGHT FORWARD – NONE

9. REPORTS/DISCUSSION

9.1 STAFF

9.1.1 Watershed Management and Water Quality Monitoring Program Review – continuation

The following was before the Board:

- Extract of Regional Watersheds Advisory Committee draft minutes dated July 12, 2017

Cameron Deacoff, Environment Performance Officer, gave a brief update to the Board. There was a staff meeting in July and work continues on the project charter. A presentation was also delivered last week identifying that a review is underway with the project deliverables being prepared for Regional Council by year end.

The Board asked for clarification on how the approval process will work. Cameron Deacoff explained that the project is focused on addressing the needs and mandate of planning and development where program managers confirm key requirements, plans and outcomes. Once these are approved the Charter is amended and then sent to the director.

The Board discussed the definition of Watershed Management. Specific watersheds need to be identified as a starting point. There are 9 Primary and 44 secondary watersheds mapped in HRM. These are included in the State of the Landscape Report. Four types of watersheds were identified: developed, undeveloped, seasonal and permanent. Each has unique needs based on size, levels of threat and stress on the watershed. It was suggested that one definition may not fit all. It would be a benefit to focus on protecting the undeveloped watersheds. There have been 10 studies to date done on planning areas or geographic watersheds which were under development pressure. Watershed management must include the management of development. There appears to be a disconnect between the science from the watershed and water quality studies and how the city manages development. Development objectives must be integrated holistically with the findings of the studies.

Cameron Deacoff explained that recommendations from these studies do not presently form part of policy which planning applications legally consider, therefore gaps can exist. The watershed review needs to find a way to integrate these findings for the studies to be effective. They would need to be adopted into Land Use Policy before they have any legal impact on development agreements.

A question was raised whether the Board could play a role in providing updates to the Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee when studies are completed to share key findings. The Board is presently consulting on the over-arching Green Network Plan and the Watershed Review and Water Quality Monitoring, which will influence secondary planning policy, regional policy and land acquisition moving forward. The Green Network is a policy document with broad applicability and the board's input and contributions can be included in the final document. The timing of this work is very important as it will be finalized by the end of September to be ready for Council by the end of November. It was suggested that an annual review of water issues for Council could become a best practise to keep these concerns front of mind. It is critical to make the link between stressors on watershed, best practises from science and monitoring of study and test results and policy sets where decision making frameworks are supported by forward thinking policy which guides secondary planning and any regional plan updates.

The Board then discussed Water Quality Monitoring. The Board felt that HRM's water quality standards need to be better than the lowest acceptable level. The Board asked which areas would be chosen for monitoring and what criteria would be used? The Green Network Plan should highlight the diverse landscapes in HRM and that these flow across several individual watersheds. It would be important to analyse the state of each watershed; for example, the remediation and contamination of the watershed and any threats to protected areas. Specific watersheds of concern could be highlighted, setting standards and targets to achieve. The Board discussed how their advice and recommendations are best shared with HRM to be effective. The topics of Watershed Management and the Green Network Plan can be seen as separate or that the Board's recommendations are best achieved through the Green Network Plan. The water quality monitoring and watershed planning review are responding to specific programs that are active now. This will then be connected to the broader policy framework of the Green Network Plan. The timing is challenging as these two large pieces of work are happening at the same time. Comments and suggestions for review need to be outcome based to be effectively added to the Green Network Plan.

MOVED by Russell Dmytriw, seconded by Rose Featherstone

THAT the Regional Watersheds Advisory Board recommends that the Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee recommend that Halifax Regional Council request a staff report on implementing and integrating watershed management planning on a watershed by watershed basis.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

The Board also discussed reinstating water quality monitoring for all watercourses. They explained that this is needed for the protection of the environment and the public. It also provides an opportunity for the Municipality to be a leader in protecting the local environment, aquatic life and its watercourses.

MOVED by Kelly Schnare, seconded by Derek Vallis

THAT the Regional Watersheds Advisory Board recommends that the Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee recommend that Halifax Regional Council request a staff report on reinstating and expanding the watercourse quality monitoring program and fund it appropriately.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

9.1.2 Draft Halifax Green Network Plan Review

The following was before the board:

- Halifax Green Network Plan Primer Report dated March 2017

Holly Richardson, Energy and Environment Acting Program Manager, noted that the Halifax Green Network Plan is about 75% complete. Goals, objectives and key concepts are being reviewed by staff and they are looking for RWAB's help and assistance. The Board would advise and give direction as it relates to their mandate with that information shared via meeting discussions and minutes. It is hoped that a public draft would be shared in mid to late September which would expand on the primer, offering action items and strategic direction. Staff will bring this draft to the Board in September for discussion and feedback. These topics could be used to shape the discussion: review general direction, how it is interrelated with the watershed plan, focus on water quality and what water policies need to be integrated.

Doug Olsen, consultant gave a presentation on the Halifax Green Network Plan. A copy of the presentation was submitted for the record. They explained that the interconnected green network focuses on HRM's extensive land and aquatic systems and their development, conservation and protection. This plan will be used to inform decisions for land use and regional plans, promoting sustainable use. The planning context was reviewed. Priority plans will inform the regional plan update and these will create a consistent set of policy direction and objectives. The Board was asked what they would consider the top 10 policies that would make a difference and should be included in this plan. They reviewed the use of mapping. The watershed map showed wetlands and riparian buffers where this report proposes an aggressive approach to riparian buffer width. They also looked at what is not formally protected and would like to recommend protection guidelines. The Board's help on how to prioritize watersheds and advice on riparian and wetland buffer widths is requested. The watershed planning objectives were reviewed with the next step being the development of actions to achieve these objectives. Some joint planning and cooperation with the Province will be necessary. The Halifax Green Network Plan is a strategic plan and will need to be integrated with more specific planning such as watershed planning. The presentation concluded with a review of next steps.

The Board began a discussion on what policy areas or initiatives to include in this Green Network Plan. It was noted that Halifax Water is a key partner in achieving the objectives for source water protection. The Board appreciated the direction and objectives of the plan and would encourage the use of strong language, actions and verbs to enhance general statements. An important area to address is the mechanisms that need to be in place for land owners and developers to be held accountable to the development agreement and where the responsibility lies for what is created. A developer should be accountable in the long term for what they have built. They should also clearly include in the deed of sale what commitments have been met, making the home owner fully aware of their responsibilities. It was suggested that the Municipality could create enforcement situations, such as the Provincial wetlands compensation strategy, where fines are collected and placed in a fund which the city can use to buy property and restrict it from development. The Municipality could also define density in a sub watershed and when that is met close it to further development.

A list of other topics for consideration was created by the Board and includes the following:

- storm water treatment
- a waste management plan that creates districts and addresses septic issues
- culverts and fish passage prioritized
- watersheds need to be listed specifically, prioritized and then protected
- water courses should be restored
- biological indicators should be used to help qualify watercourses
- regular flood plain mapping on a watershed basis
- stream gauging is important
- setbacks should be public buffers of 30-100m
- ground water recharge
- storm surge and small stream storm surge

- conservation zones to be identified
- secondary plans need to apply the watershed management plan
- The Halifax Green Network Plan should be reviewed every 5-10 years

10. ADDED ITEMS- NONE

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING – September 13, 2017 at 5:00 p.m., Maxine Tynes Room, Alderney Public Library, 60 Alderney Drive, Dartmouth

12. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:05 p.m.

INFORMATION ITEMS- NONE

Sharon Chase
Legislative Support