



**Regional Watershed Advisory Board
MINUTES
October 11, 2017**

PRESENT: Walter N. Regan, Chair
Kelly Schnare, Vice Chair
Russell Dmytriw
Jennifer Rocard
Rose Featherstone
Tim Boudreau
Kevin Hooper

REGRETS: Aaron Ezekiel
Derek Vallis

STAFF: Cameron Deacoff, Environmental Performance Officer
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 5:04 p.m. and adjourned at 6:56 p.m.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Walter Regan called the meeting to order at 5:04 p.m. in the Maxine Tynes Room, 2nd floor, Alderney Public Library, 60 Alderney Drive, Dartmouth.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – September 20, 2017

MOVED by Russell Dmytriw, seconded by Kevin Hooper

THAT the minutes of September 20, 2017 be approved, as presented.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

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

The Board added two topics for discussion:

10.1 Halifax Water and its connection to the work of the Board

10.2 Oathill Lake Conservation Society

The agenda was approved as amended.

4. BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES – NONE

5. CALL FOR DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTERESTS – NONE

6. CONSIDERATION OF DEFERRED BUSINESS- September 20, 2017

6.1 Water Quality Monitoring Review

Staff asked the Board to consider the following questions at their September 20, 2017 meeting:

1. Why should HRM have a water quality monitoring program?
2. If a program is developed, what should it achieve?
3. If a program is developed, how should HRM assess whether the program is achieving its aims?

The Board discussed each of the questions, adjusted them slightly for clarity and then summarized key points:

1. What is the value to HRM and its citizens of a water quality monitoring program?

It is crucial to have an ongoing, efficient, scientific and comparable testing and monitoring process in place to understand the overall water quality and any changes over time. The following points were noted:

- Supports human and ecological health and welfare
- To aid in long term municipal planning
- Citizens see this as an expected public service which falls to the municipality and its citizens (no Federal or Provincial oversight presently)
- It demonstrates the value the municipality places on water systems and provides an opportunity to engage citizens through education and public engagement
- Provides data for science based decisions which support the implementation of initiatives such as the Green Network Plan
- It aligns with the national Federal Sustainable Development Strategy

- Water quality can contribute to economic growth and development as a natural asset which supports a good standard of living through quality of life for citizens, production/industry, tourism and the potential for future carbon trading
- To assess development and industrial impacts and regulate polluters
- As a preventative measure, early avoidance of later expensive lake clean-ups and a strong message to potential polluters with baseline data in place setting measurable standards
- It supports property values and saves taxpayer expenditure on new water infrastructure
- Healthy ecosystems are naturally more resilient to uncontrollable future climate change events
- It should include biological (e.g. algae blooms) and event monitoring (e.g. floods)

The Board posed the question of the willingness of citizens to contribute additional taxes to fund water quality monitoring. There may be merit in polling the citizens to identify if this is a priority for them and/or to educate them on the matter. The municipality recognizes this as a priority as identified in the Green Network Plan. This presents an opportunity to change the status quo, take a lead and educate/engage everyone in taking responsibility.

2. What are the primary objectives of a municipal water quality monitoring program?

The following points were noted:

- Water resource management, including pollution prevention
- To address the values expressed in question 1, designed to aid and support the whys
- To provide trends analysis for ecological and human health
- To create healthier water systems and improve water quality
- To establish a baseline used to assess long term trends in water quality
- To research, look forward and prevent with an opportunity for remediation
- To evaluate and police human impact where polluters are held accountable; should be incorporated into development agreements and by-laws
- To create an achievable basic plan to ensure the longevity of the program it should be relatively simple, inexpensive and possibly automated; the province has an automated program with 5 stations that could be referenced.
- To provide public education which can result in a better understanding of cause and effects of water quality and ways of preventing pollution affecting the lakes in their area
- To create a "State of the Water Quality Report" which is shared annually with the public
- To include citizen science data and potentially incentivize this science to engage the community

The Board further discussed how citizen science could be incorporated. There are many active groups in HRM concerned with water in their communities and it was suggested that the Municipality's programs would be complimentary to this work and therefore should be leveraged. The Municipality would hold and maintain the core data; groups would be incentivized to conduct the data collection and the Municipality would then do the data analysis to be shared with the public and interested stakeholders. Data of acceptable quality already collected by these groups could be included. This outreach program would benefit from the ongoing efforts of already dedicated volunteers.

It was suggested that additional or complimentary objectives could be found by revisiting the 2010 Stantec Water Quality Functional Plan and using this report as a starting point.

3. If a program is developed, how should HRM assess whether the program is achieving its aims?

It will be important to consider what objectives are set for the program and then measure if they were met through an internal and/or external technical (peer) review. The program will continue to evolve through the feedback received during these reviews.

Other considerations for an effective assessment include:

- Employ robust quality control and quality assurance practices

- Establish and employ benchmarks: number of stations sampled, number of engagement events, number of Blue Beaches recognized
- Investigate trends and changes in public perception regarding the program and results by employing education and outreach components
- Identify who will be using this data: the municipality, the public, other stakeholders and how they will use it
- The best practise becomes: test, prove, set standards, promote
- The Real Time Water Quality Monitoring Program conducted by the government of Newfoundland and Labrador in 2012 is a strong example of an effective program that could be referenced

An important aspect of the program should be delivering an annual report on what is achieved, listing what objectives were set and what was done. The program should be more than simply data collection. It should become the foundation for strong decision making. This program will be an important part of the Green Network Plan and can help measure its demonstrated values and stated goals.

6.2 Discuss possible motion to request being able to advise on future phasing of the Sawmill Creek Daylighting Project

The Board agreed that they would need to have a better understanding of what is involved in the next phase in order to determine if their expertise would be of value to the project. Daylighting of rivers is happening in many areas and this is a chance to educate both the Board and the public on its benefits.

7. CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS & DELEGATIONS – NONE

8. INFORMATION ITEMS BROUGHT FORWARD – NONE

9. REPORTS/DISCUSSION – NONE

10. ADDED ITEMS

10.1 Halifax Water and its connection to the work of the Board

The Board sees a clear relationship between Halifax Water and the Board, particularly as it relates to watershed issues. Although it is not presently in their mandate, members agreed that it was necessary to liaise with Halifax Water in some formal way. This is a missing link and missed opportunity and the Board would like to pursue making this connection. In order to make this happen the Board would like to ask Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee to revisit their terms of reference where the Board's mandate is updated and relevant to the work happening in the municipality.

10.2 Oathill Lake Conservation Society

The Board recognized the effective, high quality work being done by the Oathill Lake Conservation Society and suggested inviting them to make a presentation at a future Board meeting.

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING – November 8, 2017 at 5:00 p.m., Maxine Tynes Room, Alderney Public Library, 60 Alderney Drive, Dartmouth

12. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 6:56 p.m.

Sharon Chase
Legislative Support