



**REGIONAL WATERSHEDS ADVISORY BOARD
MINUTES
July 11, 2019**

PRESENT: Linda Campbell, Chair
Emma Bocking, Vice Chair
Rose Featherstone
Andrew Sullivan
Tony Blouin
John Carter

REGRETS: Jim Abraham
Laura McCallum
Carol Cameron
Melissa Lee
Ceo Gaudet

STAFF: Shannon Miedema, Manager of Energy and Environment
Cameron Deacoff, HRM Water Resource Specialist, Energy & Environment
Savanna Cabrita, Intern Energy and Environment
Sharon Chase, Legislative Support, Office of the Municipal Clerk

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

The agenda, supporting documents, and information items circulated to the Committee are available online at Halifax.ca

The meeting was called to order at 5:19 p.m. and the Committee adjourned at 7:05 p.m.

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Chair called the meeting to order at 5:19 p.m. at HEMDCC Meeting Space, Main Floor Alderney Gate, 60 Alderney Drive, Dartmouth.

Round table introductions were made, welcoming new members to the Board.

2. COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Halifax will be hosting an Aqua Hacking Competition in 2020. Teams compete and share creative solutions for water issues; teams are presently recruiting members for this event. More information can be found at <https://aquahacking.com/en/aquahacking-challenge>.

The Chair encouraged members to bring events and news to share at each meeting.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOVED by Emma Bocking, seconded by Rose Featherstone

THAT the minutes of June 13, 2019 be approved as circulated.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

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

Additions:

11.1 Presentation from Stantec re: Pollution Control Study

The Board agreed to deal with this item as the first order of business to accommodate the presenter via teleconference call.

MOVED by Rose Featherstone, seconded by John Carter

THAT the agenda be approved as amended.

Two-third majority vote required.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

5. BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES - NONE

6. CALL FOR DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

Andrew Sullivan declared a conflict of interest for item 11.1 Pollution Control Study Report, explaining that they had worked on parts of this report.

7. CONSIDERATION OF DEFERRED BUSINESS – NONE

8. CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS & DELEGATIONS - NONE

9. INFORMATION ITEMS BROUGHT FORWARD – NONE

10. REPORTS/DISCUSSIONS

10.1 STAFF

10.1.1 Water Quality Monitoring Program Development

Cameron Deacoff, HRM Water Resource Specialist, provided a presentation on consideration of objectives and priorities for the proposed Water Quality Monitoring Program. A copy of the presentation is on file. Deacoff invited the Board to provide recommendations for the objectives of the Water Quality Monitoring (WQM) Program, including input on the scope and content for the contracted work.

Planning and Development's 2019/20 business plan commits to developing a recommendation to Halifax Regional Council on a Water Quality Monitoring Program. The scope of the project would look at specific considerations which were reviewed; it may also be expanded to include some additional opportunities. A WQM Program involves: monitoring, assessment and management (plus feedback loop). Deacoff outlined what factors create an effective assessment program. The Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment (CCME) provides a Canada-wide framework for water quality monitoring. In 2010 Stantec provided a WQM functional plan which was presented to Regional Council for information. The Regional Plan Objectives and Halifax Green Network Plan are both current policies that support this work. There have also been some recent watershed studies that note some WQM objectives. Deacoff summarized the draft program objectives which will frame the discussions as the program is developed.

Deacoff confirmed that there were funds set aside this year to develop the program and the same amount again in year two to implement the program if approved by Regional Council. They hope to issue a consultant contract soon. It is important that it be a sustainable program that takes a practical approach to meet HRM objectives. A partnership model that would include the Province as well as volunteer and community groups is something to consider. The Board supported a community partnership approach. It would be important to look at who is already doing what and to increase the knowledge and capacity of these groups. This also supports the value of public education. It is important that the program follows a clear method or approach where it: establishes baseline data, establishes trends (impact of development), develops follow-up steps based on results and develops controls to prevent deterioration. It was noted that community groups would need to have clear guidelines on how to collect data to prevent uneven results from various sources. Deacoff confirmed that the consultant would be asked to complete a jurisdictional scan; review existing data and studies and some technical detail work. The program can take a risk-based approach or priority-based approach; which would need to be defined during its development.

The Board commented on some areas of focus to be considered in the program's development. It would be valuable to look at previous programs and review how the data gathered was used in decision making. Planning objectives which look at development impacts and how wetlands and water resources are protected is important. A sentinel system of data collection must be used to monitor special and temporal trends over time. Baseline data is very important to determine if efforts are making a difference and successful. The ongoing collection of data will show trends and indicate trigger points or alert staff ahead of a critical situation. The 2010 Stantec Report took a risk-based approach; a priority-based approach might look at each of HRM's 16 districts and identify areas of interest in each: recreational/tourist impact; active community groups providing partnerships; specific bodies of water. The Board sees importance in conducting a comprehensive mapping exercise to prioritize and focus on development areas and to quantify the rate and type of changes taking place in both lakes and watersheds. The WQM Program needs to focus on what is done with the data gathered and how it is used in decision making. Then data can be measured (after decisions are made) to see impacts and results of changes implemented. The Board values the involvement of the universities and an opportunity to educate and train community groups; both considered important partners in the program. The Board would appreciate staff sharing the eventual "statement of work" developed as the WQM consultant is recruited.

11. ADDED ITEMS

11.1 Presentation from Stantec re: Pollution Control Study

Cameron Deacoff, HRM Water Resource Specialist, provided the Board with an update received from Halifax Water as follow-up to the Pollution Control Study findings. There was no evidence of wastewater

entering the lakes via their infrastructure. This information has also been shared publicly by Councillor Sam Austin. Staff will be meeting in early August with Halifax Water to discuss these findings.

Janeen McGuigan with Stantec was involved in the modeling component of the Pollution Control Study and joined the meeting to answer questions from the Board. They reviewed the background methodology for the study. Phosphorus loading, and E. coli are of concern for many urbanized watersheds. A reviewing summary was completed followed by field monitoring to develop a set of recommendations. The bacteria analysis expanded to include microbial source tracking done by Dalhousie University. GIS and land use mapping were used for identifying locations. CCME and Health Canada's Recreational guidelines were used as reference points. Storm event thresholds were also set.

McGuigan answered questions of clarification regarding both water fowl and canine markers in the study results, providing some specific examples of the findings. It was noted that there was a lack of good maps for wetland areas. In this study, wetlands were a small percentage of the overall land use; it was predominately commercial, road and residential in this area. McGuigan confirmed that despite the small number of storm events during the study, the sampling did provide enough data based on the duration of the sampling. Loading statistics were compared from other significant studies looking at commercial, roadway and forested area data. Results were consistent in that commercial development and then roadways are the significant contributors.

The Board emphasized the need for better wetland mapping in HRM to support environmental and development decisions. Urban lakes are under pressure throughout HRM and it is important to have ongoing and expanded discussions, making this an ongoing topic for the Board.

12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING – September 12, 2019 HEMDCC Meeting Space, Main Floor Alderney Gate, 60 Alderney Drive, Dartmouth

13. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:05 p.m.

Sharon Chase
Legislative Support