



**ENVIRONMENT & SUSTAINABILITY STANDING COMMITTEE
MINUTES
March 5, 2020**

PRESENT: Councillor Shawn Cleary, Chair
Councillor, David Hendsbee Vice-Chair
Councillor Tony Mancini
Councillor Richard Zurawski
Deputy Mayor Lisa Blackburn

REGRETS: Councillor Steve Streach

GUEST: Councillor Lorelei Nicoll

STAFF: Kelly Denty, Director, Planning & Development
Joshua Judah Q.C., Solicitor
Simon Ross-Siegel, Legislative Assistant

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

The agenda, reports, supporting documents, information items circulated, and video (if available) are online at halifax.ca.

*The meeting was called to order at 1:02 p.m. The Standing Committee recessed to convene into In Camera (In Private) at 2:41 p.m. and reconvened in public at 2:43 p.m.
Standing Committee adjourned at 2:45 p.m.*

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Chair called the meeting to order at 1:02 p.m., in Council Chamber, 3rd Floor City Hall, 1841 Argyle Street, Halifax.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – December 5, 2019

MOVED by Councillor Hendsbee, seconded by Councillor Mancini

THAT the minutes of December 5, 2019 be approved as presented.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

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

The agenda was approved as circulated.

4. BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES – NONE

5. CALL FOR DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTERESTS – NONE

6. MOTIONS OF RECONSIDERATION – NONE

7. MOTIONS OF RESCISSION – NONE

8. CONSIDERATION OF DEFERRED BUSINESS – NONE

9. NOTICES OF TABLED MATTERS – NONE

10. CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS & DELEGATIONS

10.1 Correspondence

The Legislative Assistant noted that the Municipal Clerk's Office received general correspondence from Robert Miller, which was circulated to members of the Standing Committee.

10.2 Petitions – None

10.3 Presentations

10.3.1 Blue Mountain Birch Cove Lakes Conservation and Conceptual Plan – Allison Thorne, Conservation Project Coordinator – Urban Wildlands, and Ross Firth, Director of Conservation, Nova Scotia Nature Trust

The following was before the Standing Committee:

- A presentation request dated January 22, 2020
- A presentation on the Blue Mountain Birch Cove Lakes Conservation and Conceptual Plan

Allison Thorne, Conservation Project Coordinator, provided the Standing Committee with a presentation on the Blue Mountain Birch Cove Lakes Conservation and Conceptual Plan. Allison Thorne described Nature Trust land conservation programs for land within HRM and spoke specifically on the Blue Mountain Birch Cove Lakes Wilderness Connector. Allison Thorne noted the proposal's alliance with other

HRM priority plans. Allison Thorne provided an overview of the Nature Trust's funding proposal and suggested municipal contribution of \$700,000 toward the proposed conservation project.

Responding to questions from members of the Standing Committee regarding what land-uses are currently permitted as of right in the proposed conservation lands, Kelly Denty, Director of Planning & Development, noted that staff would have to review the zoning but proposed to provide this information to the Standing Committee. Regarding the municipal contribution request, Kelly Denty noted that the Mayor's office previously received this request by way of correspondence and staff is preparing a staff report anticipated to return to Regional Council shortly. Kelly Denty also noted that there is a conceptual boundary for the proposed Blue Mountain Birch Cove Lakes Park in the Regional Plan, and also stated that staff will explore the feasibility of returning to the Standing Committee with more detail regarding master planning for the park.

Responding to questions from members of the Standing Committee, Allison Thorne noted that Nature Trust's envisions that the Blue Mountain Birch Cove Lakes area will become a regional park open to the public for low-impact recreation and possibly evolved to include a visitor centre.

Responding to questions from members of the Standing Committee regarding off-road vehicle use in the area, Allison Thorne stated that they were aware of one trail from Hammonds Plains Road to Timberlea Drive. The speaker believes this trail skirts the southern edge of the proposed nature connector lands and the Blue Mountain Birch Cove Lakes lands but does not cross into them. Generally speaking, the Nature Trust does not permit off-road vehicular activity on its conservation lands due to the deleterious effects to the natural environment.

Responding to questions from members of the Standing Committee regarding provincial funding, Allison Thorne stated that conversations with the province have not yet occurred and that similar Nature Trust projects have not received provincial funding.

The Chair thanked Allison Thorne for the presentation.

10.3.2 Hydrogen and Hydrogen Fuel Cell Technology – TJ Lawy, Principal Engineer, Ballard Power Systems

The following was before the Standing Committee:

- A presentation request dated February 19, 2020
- A presentation on Hydrogen and Hydrogen Fuel Cell Technology

TJ Lawy, Principal Engineer, provided the Standing Committee with a presentation on Hydrogen and Hydrogen Fuel Cell Technology. TJ Lawy described Ballard Power's PEM Fuel Cell technology and products and their applications to transit, transportation and marine uses.

Responding to questions from members of the Standing Committee regarding the benefits of hydrogen buses compared to electric buses, TJ Lawy noted that the main benefits are range and rapid refueling. TJ Lawy stated that electric and hydrogen infrastructure can be used together to effectively mitigate disadvantages from each. Responding to questions from members of the Standing Committee regarding the environmental footprint of hydrogen fuel cell technologies, TJ Lawy noted that unlike for electric batteries there are no conflict materials used in hydrogen fuel cells, and most materials are highly recyclable. Also, there are emerging markets able to produce hydrogen through steam methane, which is not completely emissions free, but significantly reduces the environmental footprint of hydrogen generation.

Responding to questions from members of the Standing Committee, Kelly Denty, stated that staff anticipates returning to the Standing Committee in September with a staff report on the feasibility of implementing hydrogen renewable energy systems as part of the municipal clean energy framework. Several Councillors requested that staff ensure all future reports addressing renewable energy systems

for transit uses, be they hydrogen or electric systems, also be circulated to the Transportation Standing Committee.

The Chair thanked TJ Lawy for the presentation.

11. INFORMATION ITEMS BROUGHT FORWARD - NONE

12. REPORTS

12.1 STAFF

12.1.1 Penalties for Illegal Dumping

The following was before the Standing Committee:

- A staff recommendation report dated January 29, 2020

MOVED by Councillor Mancini, seconded by Deputy Mayor Blackburn

THAT the Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee recommend that Halifax Regional Council direct the CAO to:

- 1. Prepare amendments to the Solid Waste By-Law (S-600) for Council's consideration to address illegal dumping and litter abatement; and**
- 2. Assess staffing requirements to support the implementation of the proposed by-law amendments.**

Andrew Philopoulos, Manager of Solid Waste, answered questions for Councillors regarding the role of police enforcement in mitigating illegal dumping. Andrew Philopoulos stated that staff is proposing the addition of two diversion planning officers and minimum fines of \$697 in consistency with minimum fines outlined in the Environment Act. Halifax Regional Police and RCMP officers will play a complementary role to bylaw enforcement in supporting investigations, safety considerations, and prevention. Regarding enforcement mechanisms, Andrew Philopoulos explained that staff recommends the use of two enforcement tools, these being fines through a summary offense ticket and recovering costs to remedy illegal dumping from the polluter. Staff stated that staff generally plans to select one enforcement mechanism for a given violation but may consider applying both if the situation is appropriate. Responding to questions from Councillors regarding community organizing including the Great Nova Scotia Pick-Me-Up, Andrew Philopoulos stated that staff's role is to provide community groups with materials to assist volunteers and to coordinate collections where possible. Regarding Motor Vehicle Act littering offenses, Andrew Philopoulos stated that staff has not incorporated charges as a part of staff's current recommendation however staff will return to the Standing Committee with a recommendation following staff's assessment of staffing needs after implementation of the revised bylaw. Regarding the instances of illegal dumping of industrial versus residential waste, Andrew Philopoulos stated that staff cannot provide specific information about the source of recorded illegal dumping incidents, however staff proposed to provide this information to members of the Standing Committee. Several Councillors asked if staff had considered discussions with Provincial counterparts regarding potentially requiring small vehicles with open beds to tarp or otherwise enclose contents to prevent them from blowing away while traveling. Andrew Philopoulos stated that staff will take this away as an action item.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

12.2 MEMBERS OF STANDING COMMITTEE – NONE

12.3 BOARDS AND COMMITTEES – NONE

13. MOTIONS – NONE

14. IN CAMERA (IN PRIVATE)

MOVED by Councillor Mancini, seconded by Deputy Mayor Blackburn

THAT the Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee recess to convene into In Camera (In Private).

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

14.1 Personnel Matter – Private and Confidential Report

This matter was dealt with In Camera (In Private) and ratified in public as follows:

MOVED by Councillor Mancini, seconded by Councillor Zurawski

THAT the Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee:

- 1. Approve the direction provided during the In Camera (In Private) meeting; and**
- 2. Not release the private and confidential staff report dated February 26, 2020 to the public.**

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

15. ADDED ITEMS - NONE

16. NOTICES OF MOTION - NONE

17. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Chair invited member of the public wishing to come forward to address the Standing Committee to do so.

Richard Vinson, speaking on behalf of the board of Friends of Blue Mountain Birth Cove Lakes spoke in support of Nature Trust's proposal for parkland acquisition. Richard Vinson stated that the land acquisition price is competitive and appropriate based on the expected value the parkland will provide on a long-term basis. Richard Vinson stated that Friends of Blue Mountain Birth Cove Lakes are fortunate to have access to the acreage currently held by HRM but expressed concern that the current land will effectively service future demand for parklands. Richard Vinson stated that they are aware of at least two active developments near the southern edge of the Blue Mountain Birth Cove Lakes area and they expressed concerns that these will test the resilience of landscape buffers. Richard Vinson stated that they are hopeful that Blue Mountain Birth Cove Lakes lands will become a place-defining park space in HRM. Richard Vinson stated that they are aware of only one trail with limited access to the park currently being used by off-road vehicles. Responding to questions from Councillors, Richard Vinson stated that it is their belief that the main issues affecting the future of the proposed park are a lack of coordination among planning and government bodies.

The Chair called three (3) times for any member of the public wishing to come forward to address the Standing Committee. There being none, Public Participation was closed.

18. DATE OF NEXT MEETING – April 2, 2020

19. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 2:45 p.m.

Simon Ross-Siegel
Legislative Assistant