



ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES

Wednesday, November 16, 2022

Open to public attendance in Committee Room G

Lower Level, City Hall

Committee members may attend electronically

PRESENT

Danison Buan

Alternate Chair; Representative, Local Business Association

Nazli Azimikor*

Community Member

Ryan Bardini

Community Member

Karen Crosby*

Community Member

Colleen Gillespie*

Representative, Professional in Environment or Climate Field, Business, Government, or Non-Profit

Elsie Krebs

Representative, Professional in Environment or Climate Field, Business, Government, or Non-Profit

Alvin Kube

Representative, Indigenous Community

John Lekakis*

Representative, Local Institution

Teresa Morton*

Representative, Local Environment Organization

REGRETS

Councillor Tasha Henderson

Chair

GUESTS

Mayor Patrick Johnstone

STAFF PRESENT

Mike Anderson

Manager of Transportation

Divya Gupta

Energy and Emissions Specialist

Matthew Pilfold

Arborist Technician

Lynn Roxburgh

Supervisor of Land Use Planning

*Denotes electronic attendance

1. CALL TO ORDER AND LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Danison Buan opened the meeting at 5:05 p.m. and recognized with respect that New Westminster is on the unceded and unsurrendered land of the Halkomelem speaking peoples. He acknowledged that colonialism has made invisible their histories and connections to the land. He recognized that, as a City, we are learning and building relationships with the people whose lands we are on.

2. INTRODUCTIONS AND ICEBREAKERS

The Committee began with a round of introductions, responding to the icebreaker question, “If you had a ticket to go anywhere in the world right now, where would you go?”

3. CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

There were no changes to the agenda.

4. ADOPTION OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

4.1 July 20, 2022 Minutes

MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the minutes of the July 20, 2022 Environment and Climate Advisory Committee be adopted.

Carried.

All members present voted in favour of the motion.

5. REPORTS AND PRESENTATIONS

5.1 Introduction and Q&A Session

Mayor Johnstone provided an introduction to himself as Mayor and where the City is going in terms of the environment and climate, noting the following:

- The City is currently onboarding the Mayor and four new Councillors into their work for the coming years;

- The new Council will complete a strategic planning process soon to envision what the City will look like in four years based on our actions, which may also impact what advisory committees look like;
- Rather than a routine task for the City, like recreation or engineering, Climate is foundational and informs everything. Like reconciliation, it underlies everything we do; it is also mindset-changing work that is done by both individuals and organizations at the same time;
- This is the Council that will make decisions that determine whether our goals for 2030 are completed;
- Climate change is no longer just an environmental issue; it is an economics issue, a finance issue, an energy issue. The decisions the City makes about climate now is not whether or not we take carbon out of the atmosphere—the debate is how we will pay for what needs to be done; and
- From a corporate standpoint, New Westminster is one of the leading municipalities in this work. The City has a good plan, and just needs some work to determine how it comes together and is put into effect.

In response to questions from the Committee, Mayor Johnstone advised:

- Council may ask the Committee to advise them on subjects or endorse ideas, but the Committee also has the right to ask Council for action by putting forward resolutions via staff;
- The Committee should continue to tell Council to do more and better in terms of climate action;
- New Westminster is an urban place and always will be, so there is a question of how we network our green spaces together for greater ecological value;
- New Westminster may also need to think bigger than the boundaries of the municipality, for example building homes here so other nearby municipalities can retain their green space; and
- The City has an Official Community Plan which anticipates population growth based on demographic work done by Metro Vancouver. While the last model was accurate, it is possible we underestimate the demand there will be to live in this part of the world for a variety of reasons, and our ability to provide housing will continue to be a challenge.

The Committee had the following comments:

- As consumers, there is a need for sustained education to get everyone on board on what we can do to improve;
- It is appreciated that New Westminster's approach considers the social value of green spaces as well as maximizing their ecological value.

Procedural Note: Mayor Johnstone left the meeting at 5:52 p.m.

5.2 Active Transportation Network Plan

Mike Anderson, Manager of Transportation, provided a presentation entitled, "Active Transportation Network Plan," noting the Active Transportation Network Plan has been adopted and this presentation is for information, but staff are open to feedback on how the plan is carried out.

In response to questions from the Committee, Mr. Anderson advised:

- The interaction between wheeled and pedestrian use of space is being considered. The plan does not include many shared paths, and staff will look at separation of use in areas where there are conflicts, for example around Skytrain stations, where many people walk to the station;
- One of the learnings from Vancouver's approach has been how to address businesses while implementing infrastructure like this: businesses like to be able to plan ahead, so part of the reason for doing a plan like this is to signal that this infrastructure is coming.

The Committee applauded the quick build and encouraged staff to find ways to communicate what has been done elsewhere to educate the public.

5.3 Urban Reforestation and Biodiversity Enhancement Initiative (URBEI)

Matthew Pilfold, Arborist Technician, provided an update on the Urban Reforestation and Biodiversity Enhancement Initiative (URBEI), noting the following:

- With funding from a joint grant from the Provincial and Federal government (2021-23), staff are working to plan 2,000 caliper size trees throughout the parks and open spaces in the city, as well as

200 smaller trees and rewilding some turf grass areas when possible; and

- In 2022, the City planted 22,000 tree seedlings (12,000 in Queen's Park, 6,000 in Glenbrook Ravine, and 4,000 in Hume Park), as well as 750 caliper and container trees across fifteen City parks and open spaces.

In response to questions from the Committee, Mr. Pilfold advised:

- Though the weather has been hard for people, it was the best spring on record for ten years in terms of the leaf-out on deciduous trees;
- The trees that were planted from seedlings to caliper size trees are all doing well with a normal level of mortality that is expected in large planting situations, and there was no destruction during the heavy winds; and
- Regarding planting more trees on school grounds, the School District should contact Joe Wong, a senior-level groundsperson at the district, and ask them to contact Mr. Pilfold or Erika Mashig, Manager of Parks and Open Space Planning, Design, and Construction, to determine the School District's goals around planting and further the conversation.

Procedural Note: Nazli Azimikor left the meeting at 6:39 p.m.

6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

There were no items.

7. STANDING REPORTS AND UPDATES

7.1 Climate Action Updates

Divya Gupta, Energy and Emissions Specialist, provided an update on Climate Action, noting the following:

- It is safe to say the city is on a downward trajectory on reported emissions. 2022 will provide a better picture on where the emissions are going, and we hope to see a lower number than in 2021;

- Staff are working on an implementation plan for the Community Energy and Emissions Plan (CEEP); and
- Staff are also working toward an e-mobility implementation plan.

Procedural Note: Karen Crosby left the meeting at 6:42 p.m.

In response to questions from the Committee, Mr. Gupta advised that CEEP provides a framework for what other projects staff undertake. He noted that the detailed plan is currently on BeHeard, and staff are addressing how to integrate it with the Climate Action page in the coming weeks.

8. NEW BUSINESS

There were no items.

9. END OF MEETING

The meeting ended at 6:47 p.m.

10. UPCOMING MEETINGS

To be determined.