

ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES

Wednesday, May 18, 2022
Electronic and in Meeting Room G
Lower Level, City Hall

PRESENT

Councillor Nadine Nakagawa*	Chair
Nazli Azimikor	Community Member
Ryan Bardini	Community Member
Danison Buan*	Representative, Local Business Association
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

Farbod Behshad	Community Member
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STAFF PRESENT

Renee Chadwick	Manager, Special Projects and Community Partnerships
Nayel Halim	Community Energy and Emissions Specialist
Matthew Pilfold	Arborist Technician
Lynn Roxburgh	Acting Supervisor, Land Use Planning and Climate Action
Meredith Seeton	Policy Planner
Serena Trachta	Manager, Inspections
Katie Stobbart	Committee Clerk

*Denotes electronic attendance

1. CALL TO ORDER AND LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Councillor Nakagawa opened the meeting at 5:02 p.m. and recognized with respect that New Westminster is on the unceded and unsurrendered land of the Halkomelem speaking peoples. She acknowledged that colonialism has made invisible their histories and connections to the land. She recognized that, as a City, we are learning and building relationships with the people whose lands we are on.

2. INTRODUCTIONS AND ICEBREAKERS

Committee members and staff responded in turn to the icebreaker question, “What is your favourite holiday?”

3. CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

There were no changes to the agenda.

4. ADOPTION OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

4.1 Minutes of March 16, 2022

Due to a clerical error, the adoption of the minutes was postponed to the next meeting of the Committee.

5. REPORTS AND PRESENTATIONS

5.1 EnCAC Representative on the Community Livability and Social Equity Grants Committee

Renee Chadwick, Manager, Special Projects and Community Partnerships, provided an overview of the Community Livability and Social Equity Grants portfolio and the grants program, including the time commitment.

MOVED and SECONDED

THAT Nazli Azimikor be appointed as the Environment and Climate Advisory Committee representative on the Community Livability and Social Equity Grants Committee for the 2022-23 term.

Carried.

All members present voted in favour of the motion.

5.2 eMobility Strategy

Meredith Seeton provided a presentation entitled, “eMobility Strategy Update” which noted some of the key changes and updates that have been made to the eMobility Strategy and community feedback on the draft. Ms. Seeton noted that following addressing any comments from this committee, the strategy will be brought before Council.

In response to questions from the committee, Ms. Seeton advised:

- The section of the strategy that addresses charging at home focuses on the challenge of retrofitting parkades in multi-unit residential buildings, but it can be made clearer what the implications are for people who do not live in multi-unit buildings;
- One revision that may be made involves addressing embodied carbon, and being conscious of the life cycle emissions associated with vehicles even if they are electric;
- Shared vehicle services are addressed in the section that discusses rolling out public charging stations and collaborating on infrastructure with taxis and other shared vehicle services; and
- One action area is to monitor eScooter pilot programs and develop an e-micromobility lens for planning and bylaws.

The Committee had the following comments arising from discussion:

- Electrifying transit will make a big difference for New Westminster’s emissions profile, and this should be included in the strategy document;
- Other cities have initiated eMobility strategies and using those examples may help with buy-in;

- Would like to emphasize how important the regionally consistent framework will be before people will have the confidence to try these modes, and to allow people who are not motorized to have the confidence to share space with micro eMobility vehicles; and
- Recommend enhancing the language around the regionally consistent framework.

MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the Environment and Climate Advisory Committee supports the eMobility Strategy being brought to Council for consideration.

Carried.

All members present voted in favour of the motion.

5.3 Urban Forest Update - Reforestation and Planting Projects

Matthew Pilfold provided a presentation entitled “City of New Westminster’s Urban Forest: URBEI & Tree Canada National Greening Program.”

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

- Two of the requirements from the funding body are to have a registered professional forester sign off on the planting plans, and to have us perform an audit of plant survival at the five year mark, with a 60% survivorship at year five;
- The Parks department has taken on a new watering truck, so the City now has two, and a watering program will be undertaken that will include the tree planting in Queen’s Park;
- The urban environment is hotter and dryer than the temperate rainforest in which we technically reside, but we have selected conifers we think will do well here and tolerate the drought-like conditions we have been getting in the summer over the past decade;
- The bulk of our tree canopy cover loss has been loss from private rather than public land. The tree protection bylaw is the mechanism we have to retain some of our existing trees on private property as well as account for the loss that is occurring mostly due to change of land use, and continue to plant trees on private property for the future;

- We do not know what our current canopy coverage is as we need to run a survey again. Would suggest that when talking about trees and benefit, we must play the long game: everything we are planting today, we will see the benefit decades from now;
- The Urban Forest Management Strategy does not include language about the benefits of other plants. However it is important to note that trees do not grow in isolation, and we do not ignore the role of other plants in the creation and maintenance of ecosystems in the community;
- We do not work with other municipalities on joint projects specific to urban forests; informally there is knowledge sharing among various communities in Metro Vancouver; and
- The biodiversity strategy was recently adopted by Mayor and Council, which has a lot of focus on creating natural hubs and corridors throughout the City.

The Committee noted that recent research shows that conifers are much better than broadleaf trees at keeping temperatures cool beneath their canopy.

Procedural Note: Colleen Gillespie left the meeting at 6:15 p.m.

6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

6.1 New Homes and Renewable Energy

With discussion of Energy Step Code - Nayel Halim

Karen Crosby, Community Member, prefaced the conversation by highlighting the slide: The Case for Electrifying from the Energy Step Code presentation that was sent ahead to the committee. She noted the following:

- Electric heating without gas is much better than any step code level at reducing greenhouse gas emissions;
- There are tradeoffs in any policy decision, and some level of energy efficiency will be lost with this proposal, but emissions would be lower overall, which must be our focus if we are to effectively solve the climate crisis;
- The energy step code seems to be designed to reduce energy demand in buildings, not necessarily change from fossil fuels to

renewable energy, but the climate crisis demands that we make that change;

- If we continue to build with gas infrastructure, we will lock ourselves into another 20 to 100 years of burning gas in these buildings depending on how long the buildings last and how much (expensive) retrofitting happens; and
- To solve the climate crisis we need to realize there are large forces at play, and we need to be the strongest, most collective voice we can be to change the status quo away from burning gas as quickly as possible.

The Committee noted that one of the big challenges with electric heating is proper insulation, as older home technology is outdated; there are many homes in which it is very expensive to run electric heating.

Nayel Halim, Community Energy and Emissions Specialist, and Lynn Roxburgh, Acting Supervisor, Land Use Planning and Climate Action, provided a presentation entitled “Energy Step Code: An Overview” which included a summary of the committee’s discussion from March 16, and a brief summary of the Climate Action Work Plan and next steps that would be taken following the potential approval of this motion, as well as a high-level overview of Step Code.

In response to questions from the Committee, Mr. Halim and Ms. Roxburgh noted:

- Net Zero Energy Ready is defined in the Step Code, just categorized as “future-proofed” to be able to transition to net zero. It does not explicitly state that Step Code would achieve net zero; and
- Currently where the industry is at, steps four and five feels out of reach to the industry, and our our current requirement is step three, which is the right step to offer for the incentive to be meaningful. The Committee noted that one concern with mandating this is affordability, particularly for single-family homes. Serena Trachta, Manager, Inspections, advised that there is no good done by building a building that is not energy efficient.

Procedural Note: Teresa Morton left the meeting at 6:50 p.m.

MOVED and SECONDED

THAT EnCAC encourage New Westminster City Council to adopt a CEEP which includes a plan to create regulations by 2023 in New Westminster

for new construction of single family dwellings that require builders to achieve level 5 of the Step code, the highest standard for building energy efficiency, or if the builder uses a low-carbon (usually electric) system for heat and hot water, the Step Code is relaxed to level 3.

Carried.

All members present voted in favour of the motion.

7. STANDING REPORTS AND UPDATES

7.1 General Updates

Lynn Roxburgh, Acting Supervisor, Land Use Planning and Climate Action, provided a general update, noting that the biodiversity strategy has now gone to Council and been adopted, which will guide the City's future work and give direction for updating design guidelines and how we work with applicants.

8. NEW BUSINESS

8.1 High-performance Buildings - Identifying Gaps

Nazli Azimikor introduced the item, noting the following:

- We need to think about the climate issue in a systemic way, and there are many forces at play which need to balance out; and
- Balancing our strategies and the things we mandate with tools and items to empower and enable the industry and the single-family home owner that is interested in doing this but doesn't have the information. Need to figure out how we might aggregate and centralize the information that is out there.

This item will be brought forward to the next meeting as unfinished business.

9. END OF MEETING

The meeting ended at 6:56 p.m.

10. UPCOMING MEETINGS

Remaining scheduled meetings, which take place at 5:00 p.m. unless otherwise noted:

- July 20
- November 16

Original Signed _____
Councillor Nadine Nakagawa
Chair

Original Signed _____
Katie Stobbart
Committee Clerk