

ST. JOHN'S

Environment & Sustainability Experts Panel

December 11, 2020

12:30 p.m.

Virtual

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Environment & Sustainability Experts Panel Minutes

October 23, 2020

12:30 p.m.

Virtual

Present: Kieran Hanley, MBA - Sustainable Economic Growth, Chair
Edmundo Fausto, Sustainability Coordinator
Joel Finnis, PhD - Climate Science & Resilience
Krista Langthorne, BA, SEBT - Resilience & Natural Resources
Joseph Daraio, PhD, PEng - Sustainable Urban Planning & Resilience
Michel Wawrzkow, PEng, PGeo - Natural Environment & Resilience
Shanna Fitzgerald, Legislative Assistant

Regrets: Dennis Knight, MSc, MCIP - Sustainable Urban Planning & Economic Growth
Pablo Navarro - Socio-cultural & Quality of Life

Others: Ken O'Brien, Chief Municipal Planner
Ann-Marie Cashin, Planner III - Urban Design and Heritage
Mike Adam, Operations Supervisor - Parks
Marianne Alacoque, Transportation System Engineer

1. **CALL TO ORDER**
2. **APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

Moved By Joel Finnis

Seconded By Michel Wawrzkow

That the agenda be adopted with the addition of a brief discussion of engagement.

MOTION CARRIED

3. ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES

3.1 Adoption of Minutes - September 25, 2020

Moved By Kieran Hanley

Seconded By Joel Finnis

That the minutes of the meeting held on September 25, 2020 be adopted as presented.

MOTION CARRIED

4. BUSINESS ARISING

4.1 Newfoundland Power Potential Study and Other Electrification Efforts

Krista Langthorne and Steph Daley of Newfoundland Power presented to the Panel on the Electrification, Conservation and Demand Management Plan: 2021-2025. Mike Adam, Operations Supervisor of Parks, and Marianne Alacoque, Transportation System Engineer were in attendance for this presentation. The plan will be submitted to the Public Utilities Board and more information will be released in 2021 as part of a program launch. The Panel was invited to advise of funding agency recommendations for potential partnerships.

5. NEW BUSINESS

5.1 42-52 Diamond Marsh Drive - MPA2000002

Please see link to [Development Regulations](#)

At the Regular meeting of September 28, Council voted in favor of considering the rezoning of land at 42-52 Diamond Marsh Drive from the Open Space (O) Zone to the Residential Low Density (R1) Zone and to advertise the application for public review and comment. This application was referred to the Environment and Sustainability Experts Panel for review. Ken O'Brien, Chief Municipal Planner and Ann-Marie Cashin, Planner were in attendance for this portion of the meeting and presented an overview of the application to the Panel.

The Panel was advised of the development process and were provided background on the recommendation from staff. It was noted that a Municipal Plan amendment is required for this application which provides a second opportunity for the public to provide comment via a commissioners public hearing.

During the original rezoning for the Diamond Marsh subdivision, land at 42-52 Diamond Marsh Drive was zoned Open Space to retain it for a proposed playground. During the development approval stage, the land at 42-52 Diamond Marsh Drive was proposed as building lots and the subdivision was approved as such, inadvertently overlooking the zoning. Water and sewage services have been installed to the lots. This rezoning is proposed to accommodate the lots.

In return, the developer, Fairview Investments Inc., will enter into an agreement with the City to use land west of 15 Bulrush Avenue (see attached map appended to the agenda) for open space requirements for the Diamond Marsh subdivision. Details of the agreement, including a survey of the property and any other requirements, are to be determined. The land is already zoned Open Space (O). The parcel of land is wet in some areas but has room for a playground. Initial site preparation may be part of the agreement. The usable space is comparable to that of the Diamond Marsh space.

There are no development or engineering concerns with the six building lots at 42-52 Diamond Marsh Drive. The building lots at 42 and 44 Diamond Marsh Drive have back yards much deeper than the neighboring properties to prevent leaving a land-locked parcel there. A Panel member felt there is no justification to extending the parcels further than the standard size and encroaching on forest area. Members were advised that land ownership determined the size and shape of the parcels of land. Keeping part of the land zoned as Open Space can be problematic.

During discussion of the proposed new Open Space area, concern was raised about the rock line ditch to handle stormflow and how that would be remedied during development. It was agreed that stormwater management should be considered in the design.

The Panel agreed that considerations should include:

- Ensuring that the space provided in-leu accommodates an adequate and equivalent recreational space for the neighbourhood.

- Ensuring the rock line ditch in the open space that is being provided in-leu of these two lots can handle stormflow and/or ensure this is remedied during development of the playground.
- That public review and comment is sought after for the neighbourhood to ensure the space fits their needs.

The Panel was advised there is an adoption in principal on the agenda for the Regular Council meeting on October 26, 2020.

After considerable discussion, members concluded that they agree with the recommendation and requests that staff review considerations made by the committee. This matter will now be referred via PERS to Council.

5.2 Community Energy Transition Economic Analysis

At the Regular meeting of October 13, Council voted to support the development of a Community Energy Transition Model to inform the economic perspectives of the Resilient St. John's Climate Plan. The Sustainability Coordinator provided a brief overview to the Panel of the Energy Transition Economic Study for review and feedback. A request for public feedback and early engagement was released via the engagestjohns.ca page. Members will provide feedback via email.

6. OTHER BUSINESS

6.1 Clarifications of ESEP Terms of Reference

At a previous meeting of the Panel, the question was raised concerning the limits of the mandate of the Environment and Sustainability Experts Panel. After review, it was determined that the Terms of Reference establishes that the role of the ESEP is:

- To provide expert opinion to ensure Council makes informed decisions, on items referred by Council, with regards to the environment and sustainability.
- Review of development or re-development applications when referred by Council (based on environmental requirements).
- Supporting the development and later the implementation of the Sustainability Plan.

The method is through providing recommendations and evidence on best practices to enable evidence-based decision making.

Based on the Terms of Reference, the role of the ESEP is not that of Advocacy or an Audit function. It is a body that was created and reports to Council and supports Council by supporting evidence-based decision making. The role of the expert panels with regards to budget is throughout the work of supporting the development of the business cases for projects that Council considers and decides on, as the projects are referred by Council. The public is who ultimately holds Council accountable.

If members have any projects or ideas that they would like the City to undertake they can be brought forward to be reviewed for scope and cost consideration with City departments.

6.2 Engagement Update

In the interest of time this item was deferred to the next meeting.

7. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting is to be determined.

Purpose of next meeting:

1. Drive Thru Referral
2. Engagement Update

8. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 2:28 pm.

CHAIRPERSON, KIERAN HANLEY

Kelly's Brook Trail Project

The project:

Kelly's Brook Shared-Use-Path is the first catalyst project coming from the Bike St John's Master Plan. The shared-use path will extend from King's Bridge Road to Columbus Drive. It is mostly in place as a granular walking trail today, linking several neighbourhoods through an important east-west greenway that largely parallels Empire Avenue. Its goal is to provide an attractive and continuous 4.8 km active transportation route in St. John's, connecting popular destinations and amenities along the way. The shared-use path will be designed for use by people of all ages and abilities.

The shared-use path will be professionally designed by a team of consultants working closely with city staff. Part of the consultant's contract is to plan and execute public engagement on the design elements, with a focus on the environment, trail users and impacted neighbourhoods.

We're specifically looking for public feedback to inform these design elements: lighting, surface material choice, trailhead and rest area design, and wayfinding.

There's been quite a bit of public discussion about the potential environmental impacts of working on the section of trail between Portugal Cove Road and Kings Bridge Road so I'd like to spend some time discussing that. It may be helpful to know that we're still collecting data before making any final decisions about this area. The following work is underway ([more details can be found in the RFP](#)):

Throughout the design and consultation process for these trail upgrades, there will be careful attention paid to the environment, wildlife habitat, and impact on neighbourhoods. The consultant team will:

- *Investigate impacts to wildlife, habitats, nesting areas and movement patterns – considering both construction and long-term impacts.*
- *Explore alternatives and relative environmental impacts along Rennie's River of installing boardwalk, retaining walls, or shifting the preliminary route alignment.*
- *Complete a Tree Inventory, Tree Protection Plan, and Landscaping Plan. The Tree Protection Plan will identify trees to be retained and protected through the construction process. Where feasible to do so efforts will be made to preserve existing trees and natural features. In areas where removal of existing vegetation is necessary replacement planting will be required.*