



## Environment & Sustainability Experts Panel Minutes

**February 26, 2021**

**1:30 p.m.**

**Virtual**

**Present:**

Kieran Hanley, MBA - Sustainable Economic Growth, Chair  
Edmundo Fausto, Sustainability Coordinator  
Joel Finnis, PhD - Climate Science & Resilience  
Dennis Knight, MSc, MCIP - Sustainable Urban Planning & Economic Growth  
Pablo Navarro - Socio-cultural & Quality of Life  
Joseph Daraio, PhD, PEng - Sustainable Urban Planning & Resilience  
Michel Wawrzkow, PEng, PGeo - Natural Environment & Resilience  
Shanna Fitzgerald, Legislative Assistant

**Regrets:**

Brian Head, Manager - Parks & Open Spaces  
Krista Langthorne, BA, SEBT - Resilience & Natural Resources

**Others:**

Roy Brooke of Municipal Natural Asset Initiative (MNAI)  
Scott Winsor, Director of Engineering  
Greg Sheppard, Senior Engineer for CBCL

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

**Moved By** Joel Finnis

**Seconded By** Michel Wawrzkow

That the agenda be adopted as presented.

**MOTION CARRIED**

**3. ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES**

**3.1 Adoption of Minutes - January 29, 2021**

**Moved By** Kieran Hanley

**Seconded By** Dennis Knight

That the minutes of the meeting held on January 29, 2021 be adopted as presented.

**MOTION CARRIED**

**4. PRESENTATIONS/DELEGATIONS**

**4.1 Presentation: Natural Assets and the Municipal Natural Assets Initiative**

Roy Brooke, Executive Director of Municipal Natural Asset Initiative (MNAI) was in attendance to present to the Panel.

Mr. Brooke shared the Municipal Natural Assets Initiative report for Logy Bay. The presentation covered portions of the contents of this report/initiative. The attachment was shared with members in advance via email.

Members discussed the information provided by Mr. Brooke and asked questions about the work MNAI are doing.

- Focused on the communities of Gibsons, BC, Grand Forks, BC, and Riverview, NB which have achieved varying degrees of progress in areas of policy development, legislative change, and the rebuilding of natural flood plains.
- Methodologies are expanding to incorporate pilot projects in coastal communities; focusing on connecting storm water and surface water to coastal method; developing an inventory standard to ascertain priorities.

City wetlands tie into natural asset management and wetland inventory. The importance of continued partnerships was stressed.

**5. BUSINESS ARISING**

**5.1 Rennies River Flood Mitigation Project**

The City of St. John's is proposing to construct two earthen berms and erosion control measures along the Rennies River, to reduce flooding and associated effects between Portugal Cove Road to King's Bridge Road. Construction of the berms would include clearing of vegetation, grubbing organic matter, and earthworks. Construction of the bank stabilization would include vegetation clearing and placement of the new materials required to stabilize the bank. This undertaking is expected to occur over a six-month period during spring/summer 2021. Scott Winsor, Director of Engineering and Greg Sheppard, Senior Engineer for CBCL were in attendance for this item.

City staff is bringing this forward to the ESEP for comment. During discussion the following was noted:

- 2nd recommended project in list. Scope of project was larger. Public engagement was held last fall but through discussion with residents they did not want the City to proceed with the berm and retaining walls in their backyards. Scope of work upstream of Portugal Cove Road bridge removed from the project.
- The project is moving forward with the berming and erosion control in area downstream of Portugal Cove Road bridge to Kingsbridge Road.
- Project submitted to the Province for Environmental Assessment review. Open for public comment which March 10, 2021.
- In response to the issue of esthetics, staff advised that they are looking at berms - earthen on north side. In some areas due to the slopes required and slope stability they are reviewing steeper slopes on the outside of the berm. Other option in tight areas is to go with a block similar to the precast blocks used in car dealerships. Pippy place has one on the bridge where Pippy Place crosses Leary's Brook. Will use earthen berms where possible. Erosion protection will be identical to what's already there now on the Empire Avenue side of the brook closer to PCR.
- With the original scope of work, the properties on Pringle Place would have double retaining wall and trail would be elevated - trail walkers would be looking down on residents' backyards.
- A lot of discussion focused on preference for the weir at Long Pond which is currently in the Environmental Assessment process. There is strong opposition from the Pippy Park Commission which may cause delays or cancellation of the project.

- Feedback is sought from ESEP to have broader perspective on this project and design will come back to this Panel before it has been pushed out to tender.
- It was questioned whether or not green infrastructure would be used to control run off at the source. In response, Mr. Winsor advised that the 2014 watershed study looked at local retention and detention. Mr. Sheppard advised that the topography in the watershed is challenging because it is steep and it's hard to control the flooding without lineal protection. Best option is the proposed weir and Long Pond and associated flow control structure. Long Pond would temporarily hold the stormwater and control the release downstream. The City also has a Stormwater Detention Policy which limits the post development run-off rate from a development to the pre-development run-off rate for new development.

## **5.2 Feedback on Climate Change Impacts Likelihoods**

At the meeting of the ESEP on January 29, the Panel reviewed information brought forward from the Sustainability Stakeholder Group regarding impacts from Climate Change. This included over 80 impacts that the group brought forward throughout 4 workshops in 2020.

Members were tasked to review and provide feedback on proposed impact likelihoods, and review proposed consequence definitions. Edmundo received feedback from several members of the group and has reassessed some of the proposed impact likelihoods. A brief discussion ensued, and the following was noted:

- Feedback showed duplicates and opportunity to merge impact statements for next steps. Total of 86 to 62 impact statements.
- It was agreed to schedule next workshop before March 19, 2021. "What we Heard" document will go forward to Council including impact statements.

Members were invited to suggest changes to consequence definitions particularly in areas relating to their expertise by next Friday and provide perspective on if the scale fits within the community of St. John's.

## **5.3 Feedback on Risk Assessment Consequence Definitions**

### **6. NEW BUSINESS**

### **7. OTHER BUSINESS**

**8. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting is scheduled for March 26, 2021 1:30 - 3:00 pm.

Purpose of next meeting:

1. Drive Thru Referral

**9. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:09 pm.

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CHAIRPERSON, KIERAN HANLEY