

ST. JOHN'S

Environment & Sustainability Experts Panel Minutes

May 6, 2020

2:00 p.m.

Present: Joel Finnis, PhD - Climate Science & Resilience
Dennis Knight, MSc, MCIP - Sustainable Urban Planning & Economic Growth
Kieran Hanley, MBA - Sustainable Economic Growth
Krista Langthorne, BA, SEBT - Resilience & Natural Resources
Pablo Navarro - Socio-cultural & Quality of Life
Joseph Daraio, PhD, PEng - Sustainable Urban Planning & Resilience
Michel Wawrzkow, PEng, PGeo - Natural Environment & Resilience

Regrets: Councillor Ian Froude, Council Representative

Staff: Edmundo Fausto, Sustainability Coordinator
Brian Head, Manager - Parks & Open Spaces
Shanna Fitzgerald, Legislative Assistant
Karen Chafe, Supervisor - Office of the City Clerk

1. **CALL TO ORDER**
2. **APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**
3. **ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES**
4. **NEW BUSINESS**
 - 4.1 **Welcome & Introductions**

The Sustainability Coordinator welcomed the Panel to the first meeting of the Environment & Sustainability Experts Panel and members were invited to introduce themselves.

4.2 Review of ESEP Role and Terms of Reference

The Sustainability Coordinator presented a quick review of the ESEP Terms of Reference and Membership.

The Committee will:

- Provide expert opinion on environment and sustainability matters to Council via the Committee of the Whole to advance the strategic direction of a sustainable City of St. John's.
- Review environmental requirements for new development or re-development within the City when referred by Council or through the development review process.
- Support the development and implementation of the City of St. John's Sustainability Plan.
- Provide recommendations and evidence on best practices enabling Evidence Based Decision Making to support the environmental and sustainability goals and objectives of the City of St. John's.

Other Deliverables and Considerations:

- Advising on ways to further public awareness and understanding of environmental and sustainability matters as they relate to the City of St. John's.
- Liaising with and facilitating ongoing dialogue among stakeholders (e.g., sectoral groups, City Council, the Provincial Government, and the Federal Government) on matters relevant to the environment.
- The Committee may be consulted on any City public engagement process where obtaining the perspective of the environmental sector is identified.

4.3 Background on Sustainability Plan

- St. John's Energy and GHG Inventory - Link
- http://stjohns.ca/sites/default/files/files/publication/StjohnsCorpCommGHGinventory-Final_0.pdf

- St. John's Climate Profile - Attached

The Sustainability Coordinator provided background of the City's sustainable planning process to date. The intention of this process is to become a City that is sustainable today and for future generations; economically, environmentally and financially.

A Sustainable City Demonstrates:

- Robust economic growth, prosperity, competitiveness
- Protection and conservation of natural resources
- Fostering overall city resilience, while reducing greenhouse gas emissions
- Inclusiveness and livability

The Sustainability Plan Framework was displayed with information surrounding the multi-faced approach of

- Initiation
- Assessment
- Community Conversations
- Planning: Objective and Target Setting
- Adoption and Implementation

The Assessment Phase is already underway to create a baseline and to better understand the climate changes that are coming. The next stage will be to assess St. John's vulnerability and risk to climate change. Public engagement is underway with contingency plans for engaging people during the COVID 19 pandemic.

The Energy and Greenhouse Gas Inventory for the City of St. John's (2018) was outlined for the members. This information can be found in the St. John's Energy and GHG Inventory linked above.

- In 2018, St. John's consumed approximately 14.4 million gigajoules (GJ) of energy, which emitted 667,113 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalents (tCO₂e).
- Corporately in 2018, City operations and services consumed 365,625 GJ of energy, which emitted 12,457 tCO₂e (or about 2% of the community inventory).

In the Community, electricity consumes about 44%, Gasoline and Diesel 41%, and Heating Oil 15%. This was also broken down by sectors to outline greenhouse gas emissions.

- The Residential sector consumed 28% of the total energy and emitted 15% of the GHGs.
- Transportation consumed approximately 41% of the energy use (gasoline and diesel) and emitted 59% of the community's GHGs.
- The Institutional/Commercial/Industrial sector consumed 31% of the energy and emitted 23% of the GHG emissions.
- Waste (solid and wastewater) contributed 3% of the community's GHG emissions.

Corporately the largest amount of emissions comes from transportation and heating, which is similar to most other places. Electricity is a large portion of energy both in the Community and Corporate sector, and after consultation with the Province it was noted that once Muskrat Falls comes online the electric grid will be considered to be virtually clean. In this regard, climate change funding programs may be more difficult to access if efforts are not diversified to tackle other areas.

Projections to 2030 show a reduction overall in emissions of about 15.3% across the entire Community and about 5.7% across Corporate only due to the provincial switch to hydroelectric energy. In the full report Community is inclusive of Corporate but Corporate is not inclusive of Community. The Panel was invited to send an email to Edmundo with any questions or for further discussion.

The assessment of St. John's vulnerability and risk to climate change is complex. This has been conceptually divided into three steps for adaptation planning: identifying climate changes, engaging a Multi-Stakeholder Group and Adaptation Group, and the vulnerability and risk assessment.

A City of St. John's Climate Profile was created to better characterize the climate in the region, and to communicate what the data shows, along with the estimated future climatic changes. After review through the Expert Panel, this report will be made publicly available. The observed changes were outlined for the Panel:

- Temperature Increases

- Changes in Precipitation Frequency and Intensity of Some Storms
- Sea Level Rise
- Increase in Wave Heights (generally in the North Atlantic)
- Increased Length of Frost-Free Periods
- Decrease in Snow and Snow Cover
- Ocean Temperature Increases

The next step will be to engage and review this information with Multi-Stakeholder Group (Mitigation & Adaptation teams) and hold workshops to identify vulnerabilities & risks. The thresholds of impacts will be reviewed as part of the vulnerability and risk assessment workshops. This is consistent with the Province and neighboring municipalities who have also started this process.

A member questioned if the numbers for greenhouse gas emissions have been compared to other municipalities of similar population and footprint. Comparison is difficult across Canada because communities are quite different. There is a section in the full report that examines the energy intensity and attempts to standardize a comparison across several communities.

The Panel concurred with the presentation of the next steps.

4.4 Multi Stakeholder Sustainability Team

The Multi-stakeholder Working Group will explore energy, greenhouse gases, and risks from climate change. It will be structured into two teams. It is important that stakeholders are engaged and heard. The mandate is as follows: The Multi-Stakeholder Sustainability Team will aim to provide local perspective and advice to the Community Energy & GHG Mitigation and Adaptation components of the Sustainability Planning Framework.

City staff will be invited into the different conversations as relevant. The proposed membership was provided to the Panel and members were invited to review and provide their comments to Edmundo via email.

5. OTHER BUSINESS

5.1 Chair Selection Process

- Request for self-nomination

ESEP - May 6, 2020

The Panel was invited to self-nominate for the Chair position. This self-nomination should be sent by email to Shanna Fitzgerald, Legislative Assistant. The deadline for this self-nomination is May 15, 2020.

6. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Proposed date of May 28, 2020

Purpose of next meeting:

1. Selection of chair
2. Finalize recommendation of Multi-stakeholder Sustainability Team membership

7. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:04 pm.

CHAIRPERSON