
MINUTES

Green Advisory Committee

MONDAY, May 12, 2025 – 3:30 p.m.

Civic Square: 60 East Main Street, Welland, ON L3B 3X4

Council Ante Room

HYBRID/ZOOM:

<https://wellanda.zoom.us/j/83961993729?from=addon>

Present: Councillor Bonnie Fokkens **(CF)**, Councillor David McLeod **(CM)**, Sydney Tomaino **(ST)**, Therese DeAgazio **(TD)**, Carolyn Fast (Vice-chair) **(CF)**, Tom Liszt **(TL)**

Absent with Regrets: Grant Munday, Director of Planning and Development Services **(GM)**, Rob Repovs **(RR)**

Also Present: Nicolas Aiello, Planning Supervisor – Policy (Staff liaison) **(NA)**; Dave Steven, Manager of Parks, Forestry and Cemeteries **(DS)**, Rachael Babirad - Customer Service Clerk **(RB)**, Sarah James, Library Staff **(SJ)**, Conor Echlin, Library Staff **(CE)**

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER AT: 3:30 PM

1. LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

“Welland is situated on treaty land. This land is steeped in the rich history of the First Nations such as the Hatiwendaronk (Hat-i-wen-DA-ronk), the Haudenosaunee (Hoe-den-no-SHOW-nee), and the Anishinaabe (Ah-nish-ihNAH-bey), including the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. There are many First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people from across Turtle Island that live and work in Welland today. Welland stands with all Indigenous people, past and present, in promoting the wise stewardship of the lands on which we live.”

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mover: (TL)

That the agenda for May 12, 2025, meeting of the Green Advisory Committee be approved, as presented.

CARRIED

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

3.1 Conflict of Interest – “Having reviewed the agenda, does any committee member have a need to disclose a direct or indirect pecuniary interest with

respect to today's agenda." **There were none.**

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

4.1 April 14, 2025

Mover: (CM)

That the minutes of the April 14 meeting of the Green Advisory Committee be approved as presented.

CARRIED

5. PRESENTATIONS

5.1 Welland Seed Library

(SJ) Passed around two photos of what the seed library looks like. It is an old card catalog unit that has been repurposed. Basically, the seed library provides a variety of vegetables, herbs and flower seeds to the public at no cost. There is no formal check out system. You simply visit the main branch library, and everyone is entitled to up to 10 seed packages.

(SJ) The goal is to take them home and plant them. Ideally once the plants have matured, we ask people to harvest the seeds from the fruit of the flowers and return them. However, this is the part that lacks the most participation. The collection was completely utilized last year as we gave out about 1,600 packages of seeds.

(SJ) This year the library has given out 1,300 packages to date. The seeds are available at the beginning of March, and they are on a first come first served basis while supplies last. The purpose of it is to encourage our community to grow their own food. It helps offset rising food costs. It inspires self-reliance, healthy eating and a culture of sharing within our community and it promotes lifeline learning as people experience and learn about the gardening process and the implication of that on our environment and ourselves.

(SJ) If she was to target something that this group could do it would be the promotion of the donation of seeds. Everything that they have gotten this year donation wise has already been utilized. She has a list of the vegetables which are mainly market vegetables (peppers, broccoli, celery, lettuce, spinach, tomatoes, basil, oregano, cilantro, mint and flowers). The main flower the library focuses on is the bee pollinators because of the impact that they have on the rest of the environment. We have had lavender, but we cannot keep it in.

(SJ) When we purchase a package of seeds, we split that package into multiple packages, and we photocopy the instructions and staple them onto the smaller package. Typically, we can get five packages from one package so we can

spread out what we are able to do.

(SJ) Although the library does not ask people to sign out the seeds, we do ask them to record what they have taken so the library knows what has been taken and whether this is their first time. There are a lot of first-time people this year.

(NA) Inquiring if you must be a library member to utilize the program.

(SJ) You do not have to be a library member to utilize this program. You do not formally borrow the seeds therefore all people are welcome to come in and use them.

(CF) Inquiring if the library does any type of teaching on how to harvest the seeds.

(CE) Responded that in the past the library has done a seed saver program, and they will probably be doing the same thing this year.

(TL) Asked if the library is taking care to separate out any invasive species that might otherwise be propagated throughout the Niagara Region.

(SJ) Responded when the seeds are donated to the library, they have staff that go through them and I put them into smaller packages. If there is anything that looks abnormal from what they are distributing out they would pull it out.

(CM) Asked what education piece the library has behind this so when the seeds go out, they have their most chance of successful growing.

(SJ) The library has material around the seeds themselves. There are links on the library web site as well. **(CE)** The library also promotes organizations such as seedsavers.org to direct patrons to reputable resources so that they can learn how to grow things properly. The library has also worked with the Welland Horticulture Society with cross promoting, and they have donated some seeds to the library. The library does try and connect people to other organizations that can help them.

(CM) Inquiring if the library is accepting cash donations to help fund the seed program.

(CE) The library is always willing to accept any financial donations.

(CM) Suggested that people like to donate to certain causes and the more tangible and the more relatable the library can make it the more likely the library will receive financial donations.

(CF) Inquiring if anyone follows up with the library as far as bringing in photos of what they have grown, or bringing anything in.

(CE) Advised that people have brought in plants that they have grown. People have brought flowers as well. **(SJ)** Advised that she has been asking people as they sign the seeds out that they could bring pictures or write out a success story

for the library.

(NA) Commented that this committee now has an engage welland page and suggested that this might be a useful link for the seed library. **(NA)** to forward **(SJ)** his email address.

(CM) Inquiring if the library would be willing to help the committee educate the public. Unsure of what that would entail.

(CE) Responded that education is the libraries business and they would be happy to help.

4.2 Parks, Recreation and Master Plan

(DS) Gave a power point presentation on the Welland Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan, mid-term check-in and update. This was presented to Council on April 15, 2025. Megan Turnock and Amanda Gebhardt were the consultants on this project, and they did the original presentation to Council.

(DS) Summarized through the power point presentation the workshop purpose, project overview, scope of work, progress update, 2019 Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan, community profile, 2024 corporate asset management plan, what's changed, revisiting the 2019 vision and goals, and the conclusion. **(NA)** to share the details with everyone as **(DS)** stated this is a long presentation to go into detail in this meeting.

(DS) Based on this presentation he wanted to hear a round-table discussion to ask: **Question 1:** What changes have you seen in the community in the last five years and what direction are the city parks, recreation and culture heading?

(CF) Answer: With the increase of development, we see our green space shrinking and being redeveloped into other things.

(CM) Answer: With density, it squeezes out all the green space on the property, so all the other properties are having to pick up the green space or the niceties that we currently like in the city. As they age people still want to enjoy the amenities, and they may have to participate differently. For example, they may like to ride their bike along the canal but can no longer do those distances so there is a movement toward power assisted bikes that allows them to do that. He have heard from some constituents that they like to fish or go out on their kayaks, however they feel like they cannot do that anymore and they are asking if there is a way we can allow electric kayaks (or something similar), on the water so they can enjoy that part of the summer. There is this trend of people wanting to do things longer as best as they can in modified ways.

(CF) Answer: Parks are becoming sparse with trees, and this is something that we have talked about previously.

(TD) Answer: She stated she would like to see more tree planting at our parks.

She would like to fill out the survey as an interest holder. She will put her remarks on the survey. The Welland dog park needs some attention. There are large gaps underneath the gate that small dogs can easily escape through. There is a lot of mud that needs to be levelled, and the dog park could do with more trees planted. Not just the dog parks, but parks in general could use more tree planting.

(CF) Answer: The parks are big spaces that the city owns, and we need to look at how we can create more biodiversity in the green spaces that we already have. The wetlands at St George parks is a brilliant initiative and so how can we do more of that in the spaces that we have. In thinking of the library and their seeds, do we partner for a pollinator garden in a corridor somewhere? We have lots of groups that are interested in these types of projects, and they want to partner with us.

(DS) Question 2: What new challenges or opportunities should be considered?

(TD) Answer: Partnerships, pollinator gardens, the library with their seeds and engaging community groups and citizens for gardens and biodiversity.

(CF) Answer: There is an opportunity to engage people to love their parks. If they love their parks, they might take more ownership over them. If you really love your park and understand the importance of those parks this naturally happens. In Welland we have these lovely places that are quite affordable if we must rent them or in fact some are free. Perhaps there are educational pieces that could be done as to why these spaces are so important and the fact that they are free and accessible to most people. This might create an attachment that might make people want to do better. Perhaps have “friends of the park” and they might become similar to an association or group that would want to help with the park. This goes into the volunteer piece as well. There are fewer opportunities for people, especially vulnerable people, to volunteer. Parks are a great place for people to volunteer who might struggle in other types of environments.

(TA) Answer: Perhaps the city could go into the schools and encourage stewardship from the schoolchildren. Possibly Park monitors or a litter monitor system or educating the children about the parks. Need educational pieces.

(DS) Question 3: What measures of success should be considered? Of all the things we discussed today, what stands out to you the most?

(TD) Perhaps take an inventory of the trees in the parks now and have an ongoing inventory. Keeping a total of the percentage of how the tree canopy has increased in the parks. Biodiversity and pollinator gardens. Exploring biodiversity ideas.

6. DISCUSSION ITEMS

6.1 50 by 30 Niagara Request

(TD) Read the letter to the committee which asked for support with respect to climate change from Niagara councillors. He is asking the mayor and council for support.

(CM) His viewpoint is if he signed the document, it would be symbolic and meaningless. From a green committee perspective, it would be important to know what the city of Welland is doing to reduce its climate emissions from now until 2030. Let's see if they have some type of goal or some initiatives relative to that. From that understanding we could then make some recommendations. If we understand what is happening in our municipality and then potentially, we could make other recommendations on how the city of Welland could reduce their climate emissions further.

(ST) Asking how did this group come up with 50% reduction by 2030. Is there some research behind those numbers and are they achievable? Did they collect data from municipalities asking what their current reductions targets are, even if they have them in place. How did they come up with these reduction targets without formal support and data from regions? How legitimate is this?

(CM) Believes that these statistics are consistent with standards in France with some world leaders. He believes this is what this mirrors.

(CM) If we felt as a committee that we would like to understand how the city of Welland is reducing its climate emissions, we could ask.

(NA) The city is initiating a climate action plan so that is how this will get answered. Also, the sort of things the city is doing and what it is aspiring to do to reduce its carbon footprint will be answered.

(TD) Suggested city staff look at the five points mentioned in the letter to see if there is anything that the city of Welland is doing that could be applied against these five points. If we are, perhaps we could sign onto it as we are already doing it.

(CM) This might be a way of suggesting to council that they should consider a climate change coordinator as well. Part of their role would be trying to get this started by tracking and making suggestions in terms of both of how the public and how the city can do their part in changing its footprint as well as providing education for the private sector.

(CM) Stated his opinion is asking for an understanding of what the cities climate

emission reduction plan is for the short term, near term and long term and then see what we get back.

7. MOTIONS

7.1 That the Green Advisory Committee requests an understanding of the municipality's climate emission reduction plan in the short term, near term and long term.

Mover: (TM)

CARRIED

8. OTHER BUSINESS

(CM) He thinks the Green Advisory Committee should have a donation button on the web site so people can specify that 100% of the funds go toward the trees. Not digging the hole and not the actual planting.

(TD) Suggested that this be a topic for the next agenda.

(NA) Will address memorial trees through an email to the committee members. If the committee then feels the need to put it onto the agenda it will be.

9. CORRESPONDENCE

(CM) Received an e-mail of support and a question at the same time. The resident was asking what the plan is for the old Atlas site at Woodlawn. In conjunction with that, it looks like they might have some connections that might be helpful.

(NA) Previously there was a concept made for the Atlas landfill with the understanding that the soil does have to settle for three years. The feasibility still must be verified by staff. There will be further review to re-naturalize it like the conservation area in St. Davids, which was a former landfill site just off the 406.

(DS) There will be a report on this site shortly. This report will introduce current challenges and introduce where we need to go with this project. In looking at the site, the naturalized part would be the ideal location with trails and trees.

(CM) Will respond back to the resident and let her know that the plan is still to naturalize the Woodlawn area and if she felt that there was something she could offer as assistance perhaps she could provide that for him.

10. ADJOURNMENT

Mover: (CM)

That there being no further business, the meeting be adjourned at 4:33 p.m.

CARRIED