

# Minutes

## OXFORD COUNTY COMMUNITY SUSTAINABILITY PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE

**Monday, July 21, 2014**

The Community Sustainability Plan Steering Committee met in Room 129 in the County Administration Building, Woodstock, Ontario, on Monday, July 21, 2014 at 7:00 p.m., with the following individuals in attendance:

### **Committee Members**

- Bryan Smith
- Cher Sprague
- Chris Friesen
- Dave Steenburg
- David Gilvesy
- George Klosler
- Ian Heikoop
- Ian Stevens
- Jason Smith
- Jay Heaman
- Jeff Surridge
- Joan Morris
- Marilyn Price
- Nicole Langlois

### **Oxford County staff**

- CAO: Peter Crockett
- Director, Corporate Services: Lynn Buchner
- Director, CASPO: Gordon Hough
- Manager, SC&E: Tommasina Conte
- Planner, CASPO: Rebecca Smith

P. Crockett introduced staff in attendance and each of the Steering Committee members were asked to introduce themselves and give a brief overview of their area of interest with respect to the Community Sustainability Plan and why they chose to put their names forward to serve on the Steering Committee.

P. Crockett provided the Committee with an overview of Community Sustainability and explained the importance of balancing social, economic and environmental elements to achieve long-term goals related to the development of healthier, less costly communities that encourage effective, responsible leadership, and engaged citizens. The primary goal of this project is to develop a sustainability framework that guides and supports major decisions within the County.

Discussion turned to the Steering Committee's Terms of Reference (ToR) and the role and mandate of the Committee in the development of the Community Sustainability Plan (CSP). It was indicated that the Committee will be challenged with ensuring that the community is collectively engaged in the development of the CSP and broadly 'spreading the word' regarding sustainability. The consultant and staff will support the Committee in achieving sustainability initiatives. It was stated that it would be ideal for all stakeholders to work together collectively.

The Committee's mandate was explained and with focus on the importance of developing a CSP policy framework and decision matrix. A decision making process (i.e. matrix) needs to be developed together with the CSP to provide a tool for decision-makers to analyze and support decisions regarding matters facing the Oxford community.

A question was raised from the Committee as to whether there is a way to deliver services to the community in a more efficient and productive way. In response, it was indicated that the sustainability framework that is envisioned will speak to a range of issues which can be expanded as the Plan takes shape to include this concern.

Another question from the Committee asked if sustainability committees have been used in other places other than Oxford County. In response, it was indicated that there are examples of similar groups and it was further stated that the County's Sustainability Plan will be community driven.

Next, the key items from the 'Terms of Reference' document that was provided to the Committee members was discussed. The Committee will be tasked with developing a community sustainability plan and decision matrix to ensure decisions of the Committee influence the community in a positive way.

A consultation process will also need to be developed to ensure that the community and Area Councils are engaged in development of the plan. The consultation process may involve community dialogue and Council presentations. The Committee will need to determine how the political elements of the County will be involved in the consultation process.

The nature of CSP Steering Committee meetings was briefly explained and it was suggested that it would be advantageous for facilitating open discussion and debate among Committee members if regular meetings were not open to the public. The public will be involved during the consultation process through public meetings, focus groups and Council meetings. It was also indicated that the Committee will need to choose a Chairman at some point.

Discussion opened up regarding whether decisions by the Committee should be made on a consensus basis or by some manner of voting. Comments from the Committee indicated a preference for a consensus-based decision making process. It was stated that the decision making framework will need to align with any recommendations that the Committee makes. A comment from the Committee indicated that consensus decisions would allow for more discussion and better ideas.

The issue of how the decisions of the Committee would work with existing power and governance was raised. In response, it was explained that the sustainability plan will become a vision of sustainability and once adopted, the decision matrix will be used as a guide to inform County and Area Municipal decisions.

The Committee asked what internal processes have already been implemented within municipalities to embrace the proposed sustainability plan. In response, it was indicated that the municipalities have supported the development of the plan and once adopted, each municipality would, as they see fit, modify individual operations to implement the sustainability directives. Committee asked if the Committee will share the work and thinking of the plan with Area Municipalities and agreed that a consensus decision process would be ideal. It was further indicated that each organization adopting the plan will need to adjust existing processes in some way. The Committee will need to continuously evolve as the Plan develops.

A comment from the Committee indicated that if a consensus decision cannot be made, the elected Chairman should be able to call for a vote to determine the issue. A timeline should be included in the plan to ensure decisions are implemented in a timely fashion. A comment from the Committee suggested that the Committee does not have to get bogged down in particular decisions as they are not Council. It was indicated that the decision making process will need to be implemented to reflect Committee's decisions. The Committee agreed with this statement.

It was suggested that the Committee should look outside the County to see what has already been done with respect to sustainability. In response, it was indicated that links to examples of sustainability projects will be provided. A comment was provided indicating agreement that the Committee should look beyond the County for different examples and stated that agriculture is an important part of the Oxford community.

A question was asked as to whether money has been put aside for the Committee. In response, it was confirmed that resources have been made available by County Council.

Regarding staff and consultant resources, it was indicated that staff resources will be available to the Committee, including G. Hough from the Planning Department, L. Buchner from Corporate Services and T. Conte from the Strategic Communication & Engagement. A consulting firm will also assist the Committee with developing a Sustainability Plan. It was indicated that a Request for Proposal (RFP) has been sent out and will close on July 30, 2014. Interviews will follow the second week of August, 2014.

The draft sustainability plan is proposed to go to County Council by June, 2015. The consultants will be available to provide more technical expertise in the development of the Plan and County and Area Municipal staff will further assist where necessary.

Committee requested to read the RFP and it was asked whether the Committee will be involved in choosing the consultant. It was explained that it would be most efficient for 1 or 2 individuals from the Committee to be involved in the consultant interview process. It was further indicated that the consultants will be required to do a presentation during the interview process. Committee agreed that 2 to 3 Committee members should be involved in the interview process.

Committee questioned who would be involved in the interviews. It was suggested 3 to 4 Staff and Committee members. Committee asked who would be in direct contact with the consultant. In response, it was indicated that G. Hough would be the project manager. It was further indicated that the County has received a number of indications of interest in the RFP to date.

It is anticipated that a consultant will be chosen by the middle of August, 2014. It was agreed by the Committee that C Sprague, B. Smith and C. Friesen would take part in the interview process.

It was suggested that the Committee meet once a month although the meeting schedule would be at the direction of the Committee. The next meeting should take place after the consultant has been chosen. A meeting request will be sent out to determine the next meeting date, which is anticipated to be near the beginning of September 2014.

It was then suggested that an online form of communication for the Committee be established. It was then confirmed that the County IT Department is working on this.

A comment from the Committee suggested that the consultants should have access to the Committee members' contact information. In response, it was indicated that a conference call could be setup after the first draft ideas have come from the consultants.

Before concluding the meeting, P. Crockett identified a number of links that will provide the Committee with more information and background on sustainability. These links included:

**The Canadian Wellbeing Index**

<https://uwaterloo.ca/canadian-index-wellbeing/>

**Integrated Community Sustainability Planning (ICSP) Primer**

<http://www.thenaturalstep.org/en/integrated-community-sustainability-planning-icsp-primer>

**Community Sustainability Best Practices**

<http://www.naturalstep.org/en/canada/city-saskatoon-saskatchewan-canada>

**Sustainability Based Decision Making**

<http://www.ianrpubs.unl.edu/live/g2116/build/g2116.pdf>

**Community Sustainability Plan Example**

<http://www.huroncounty.ca/sustainablehuron/downloads/SustainabilityPlan-complete.pdf>

[http://www.huroncounty.ca/sustainablehuron/downloads/TakeActionReport\\_2010.pdf](http://www.huroncounty.ca/sustainablehuron/downloads/TakeActionReport_2010.pdf)

The meeting was concluded at approximately 8:30 p.m.