



Essex Climate Adaptation Team Meeting Minutes

Thursday, May 21, 2020

Zoom Virtual Meeting

1. Roll Call

Present: Councillor Kim Verbeek

Amandeep Hans

Andrea Descargar

Dan Metcalfe

Gina Pannunzio

Maddie Peters

Matthew Child

Megan Balsillie

Also Present: Niharika Bandaru, Climate Change Analyst

Claire Sanders, Climate Change Specialist, ERCA

Jeff Watson, Planner, Planning Services

Corinne Chiasson, Assistant Planner, Planning Services

Sarah Aubin, Planning Assistant, Recording Secretary

Rita Jabbour, Manager, Planning Services

Lori Chadwick, Director, Development Services

Regrets: Kelsey Amlin

William Baker

Tyler Oglan

Brandi Bechard

Brian Hyland

Brian Lennie

2. Declarations of Conflict of Interest

None

3. Adoption of Published Agenda

Moved by: Councillor Kim Verbeek

Seconded by: Gina Pannunzio

(ECAT 2020-05-03) That the May 21, 2020 Essex Climate Adaptation Team Agenda be adopted as presented.

“Carried”

4. Adoption of Minutes

Moved by: Megan Balsillie

Seconded by: Maddie Peters

(ECAT 2020-05-04) That the March 5th, 2020 Essex Climate Adaptation Team minutes be adopted as presented.

“Carried”

5. New Discussions

a) Impact Statement Summary

Chair, Niharika Bandaru welcomes the members to the Essex Climate Adaptation Team Meeting.

She provides a presentation to the members with regards to the Climate Impact Summary. She advises that there are 14 themes derived from Impact Identification assessments conducted at the March 5th 2020 meeting, internal Town discussions, as well as research.

Impacts include but not limited to, extreme weather in spring and summer that result in decrease use of outdoor recreation areas and facilities.

Milder winter temperatures leading to more ice and freezing rain and less snow.

Extreme hot days >30C and increase in humidity, less confidence in historical weather patterns, harvesting and planting schedules.

She advises that severe rainstorms leading to rising lake levels will cause shoreline erosion and impact water quality.

Matthew Child, states that we are currently experiencing high lake levels due to the recent wet years. He states that when reviewing models he has seen around climate, they are stating higher rapid loss of lake levels.

He advises there could be years with low lake levels and suggest we should look at high lake and low lake levels and prepare for both instances.

She states that increased annual temperatures will lead to pests, respiratory viruses and waterborne illnesses.

b) Vulnerability Assessment Discussion

Chair, Niharika Bandaru explains what vulnerabilities are.

She advises that there are two categories such as Sensitivity and Adaptive Capacity.

She advises that Sensitivity gives in idea on how stressed the current system is.

She advises that the Adaptive Capacity describes the ability of built, natural and human systems to accommodate changes in climate with the minimum disruption or additional cost.

She states there are several key determinants. Economic resources, technology, information and skills, social capital, institutions and equity.

She advises that there are differences in adaptive capacity for urban centres and rural communities.

She states that urban centres have greater access to financial resources, and access to technology.

She states that one of the limitations for urban centres is higher cost of living.

She states that rural communities have a greater sense of community and traditional ways and local knowledge. However a limitation would be economic resources in the rural community.

At this time the members discuss the Strengths and Limitations of urban centres and rural communities within the Town of Essex.

c) Vulnerability / Risk Assessment Discussion

Chair, Niharika Bandaru advises that the activity that the members will be participating in is Climate Vulnerability in Essex. She states that now that the adaptive capacities have been discussed, this activity would allow the members to look at the effects on a residential level. She states that the biographies the members will be reviewing are generalized. She states that this will help analyze and understand how climate change impacts each individual lifestyle differently.

The members discuss the vulnerabilities to all 5 profiles that were created with regards to generalized residence within the Town of Essex.

They determined that rural communities and farmers / growers have a large vulnerability when it comes to extreme weather occurrences such as colder winters, wetter months.

It was also determined that economics does also have an impact, those with fixed incomes may not have the resources accessible to them or the services available to them to either prepare for events or to adapt to climate change.

d) Adaptation Plan Discussion

Chair, Niharika Bandaru speaks about COVID-19 and the impacts that it has had on different sectors thus far. She states that the current discussion is that everyone will be facing a “new normal”. She poses three questions to the members via a poll questionnaire.

1. How has the COVID-19 pandemic impacted your industry or service sector?
Answer: 89% significantly affected
2. How do you think the COVID-19 pandemic will affect Climate Adaptation for the Town of Essex

Answer: 67% somewhat affect | 22% significantly affect

3. Have you experienced any of the climate impacts identified in the meeting today during the course of the COVID-19 pandemic?

Answer: 56% somewhat affected | 33% significantly affected | 11% not at all

The members discuss what they have specifically seen or been affected by during the COVID-19 pandemic and what they have learned during the adaptation period.

The discussion determined that the immediate impacts of COVID-19 saw closures of natural areas, outdoor activities, and community education activities. It also showed that the community turned to natural environment activities such as walking and biking.

Global labour market has been affected during COVID-19, farmers unable to secure immigrant workers during the pandemic.

COVID-19 has determined that there are Emergency Impacts in the community, should flooding occur, resources and spaces for those displaced may not be available due to capacity and distance requirements.

Plastic production increasing due to COVID-19, as reusable bags pose a health risk.

e) Questions and Comments

None

6. Delegations

None

7. Future Meetings

Next meeting Wednesday, July 14th 2020

8. Adjournment

Moved by: Megan Balsillie

Seconded by: Dan Metcalfe

(ECAT 2020-05-05) That the meeting be adjourned at 7:16 p.m.

Chair

Recording Secretary