

Advisory Committee on the Environment

Report

The 4th Meeting of the Advisory Committee on the Environment
March 4, 2020
Committee Room #4

Attendance PRESENT: R. Sirois (Chair), N. Beauregard, M. Bloxam, K. May, M. Ross, J. Santarelli, D. Szoller, A. Thompson, A. Tipping and B. Vogel and J. Bunn (Committee Clerk)

ABSENT: J. Howell, M.D. Ross and R. Pate

ALSO PRESENT: T. Arnos, M. Fabro, D. Hsia and A. Rozentals

The meeting was called to order at 12:15 PM.

1. Call to Order

1.1 Disclosures of Pecuniary Interest

That it BE NOTED that no pecuniary interests were disclosed.

2. Scheduled Items

2.1 The Blue Community Project

That the following actions be taken with respect to the attached presentations from the Council of Canadians, the Blue Community Project and A. Rozentals, Division Manager, Water Engineering with respect to the City of London becoming a Blue Community:

- a) the Civic Administration BE REQUESTED to review the above-noted presentations with respect to actions required for the City of London to become a Blue Community;
- b) the above-noted presentations and the documents appended to the agenda from the Council of Canadians and the Blue Community Project, with respect to this matter, BE RECEIVED; and,
- c) the Civic Administration BE REQUESTED to look into selling reusable water bottles at public events in the city (e.g. SunFest and Rib Fest) as well as at all public facilities (e.g. concession stands at arenas) and at vendors outlets at public events.

3. Consent

3.1 3rd Report of the Advisory Committee on the Environment

That it BE NOTED that the 3rd Report of the Advisory Committee on the Environment, from its meeting held on February 5, 2020, was received.

3.2 2nd Report of the Environmental and Ecological Planning Advisory Committee

That it BE NOTED that the 2nd Report of the Environmental and Ecological Planning Advisory Committee, from its meeting held on February 20, 2020, was received.

3.3 Municipal Council Resolution - Appointments to the Advisory Committee on the Environment

That it BE NOTED that the Municipal Council resolution, from its meeting held on February 11, 2020, with respect to Appointments to the Advisory Committee on the Environment, was received.

4. Sub-Committees and Working Groups

None.

5. Items for Discussion

5.1 Bird Friendly London Policy Update

That it BE NOTED that a verbal update on the Bird-Friendly London Policy lead by D. Szoller was received.

5.2 ACE Promotion

That it BE NOTED that the Advisory Committee on the Environment (ACE) held a general discussion with respect to ACE promotion at events.

5.3 W12A Landfill Open House

That the following actions be taken with respect to the W12A Landfill:

a) the verbal update on the W12A Landfill Open House event from R. Sirois, BE RECEIVED; and,

b) monitoring of the W12A Landfill expansion project BE REFERRED to the Waste Sub-Committee.

5.4 City of London Budget - ACE Comments

That the following actions be taken with respect to the Advisory Committee on the Environment (ACE) comments on the City of London Multi-Year Budget:

a) the document, as appended to the agenda, outlining the comments made on behalf of the ACE at the Strategic Priorities and Policy Committee Public Participation Meeting for the City of London Multi-Year Budget, held on February 13, 2020, BE RECEIVED; and,

b) A. Dunbar, Manager III, Financial Planning and Policy BE INVITED to attend a future ACE meeting and give an update on the City of London Multi-Year Budget.

5.5 ACE 2020 Work Plan and Budget

That it BE NOTED that the Advisory Committee on the Environment (ACE) held a general discussion with respect to the ACE 2020 Work Plan and committee budget.

6. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 1:50 PM.

Make London a Blue Community



Blue Communities co-founder Maude Barlow will be Brescia's Chancellor



LOCAL NEWS

Author, activist Maude Barlow named Brescia University College chancellor

Award-winning author and activist Maude Barlow has been named the next chancellor at Brescia University College at Western University.

Barlow, who has received 14 honorary doctorates, is also the honorary chairperson of the Council of Canadians and co-founder of the Blue Project, a global clean-water initiative.

London Free Press, January 7, 2020

The Council of Canadians, the Blue Planet Project and the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) initiated the Blue Communities Project in 2009.

Blue Communities Philosophy

Enshrine water as a common resource, essential to life, for safe keeping and accessibility – a public trust, with public interests having priority over private for-profit interests.

57 municipalities and 16 communities world-wide have become Blue Communities, with more to come.

A Blue Community resolves:

- That water and sanitation are human rights
- That bottled water in municipal facilities and events will be phased out or banned
- To promote public ownership and operation of water and waste water services

The Blue Community London proposal was presented to ACE in 2018, and referred to staff for consideration.

City staff reported to the Civic Works Committee in March 2019. The Committee voted not to proceed with a feasibility study. The project was referred back to ACE.

We are here today to respond to the concerns that were raised by staff and the Civic Works Committee.

London is very close to qualifying as a Blue Community.

Bottled water in municipal facilities and events will be phased out or banned:

London has already banned bottled water in municipal facilities.

Fountains and bottle refill stations have been installed in public places.

[Thirstmobiles and Thirststations](#) provide drinking fountains and water bottle refill stations at outdoor events during the summer.

Public ownership and management of water and waste water services will be promoted:

London's systems are publicly owned, so London is already meeting this standard. (See the Municipal Act and the Safe Drinking Water Act)

We have provided a report on the dangers of privatization in other municipalities:



Municipalities are under constant pressure to sell our valuable municipal services (e.g. the new federal Infrastructure Bank encourages P3s).

The resolution would be a statement of intent to keep London's water systems in public hands.

Regarding **water as a human right**, staff referred to a possible feasibility study re: costs to the city

- No municipality has lost the Blue Communities designation due to water shut-offs.
- No municipality has reported an increase in unpaid bills after becoming a Blue Community.
- London has a Customer Assistance Program, paid for by rate-payers, that helps customers who struggle with paying their water and hydro bills.
- Other municipalities (e.g. Vancouver) add unpaid water bills to property taxes.
- We ask that staff undertake the feasibility study, and possibly consult with Nanaimo, who have already done so and became a Blue Community.

London can join with Canadian Blue Communities such as

Bayfield (2014)

The Sisters of St. Joseph (2017)

Niagara Falls (2012),

St. Catharines (2012)

Trois Rivières (2019)

Montreal (2019)

... in all, 42 Canadian municipalities and communities to date

And globally, Berlin, Paris, Bern, Los Angeles etc.

List of Blue Communities



Document

London becoming a Blue Community is doable and virtually cost free.

We're almost there! Two out of the three requirements are already in place due to Council and staff's forward thinking.

Becoming a Blue Community aligns with London's stated intents and values:

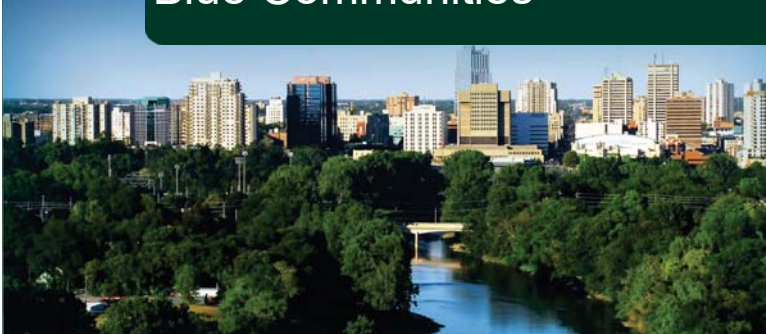
- London recognizes the climate emergency
- London recognizes housing as human right
- London already bans bottled water in city facilities and events
- London already has public ownership of water services

"Blue Community" designates a municipality that enshrines water as a human right. As the Sisters of St. Joseph say, "water is the first medicine" and as First Nations neighbours say, "water is life".

Please protect our water!



Blue Communities



Aaron Rozentals, P.Eng., GDPA
Division Manager, Water Engineering



Overview

Three steps to become a Blue Community

Council must pass resolutions to:

1. Declare water/sanitary a human right
2. Ban or phase out bottled water sales
3. Support public water and wastewater system



Resolutions

Three sample resolutions available

- Some components are philosophical/political

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that [name of municipality] will call on the federal and provincial governments to enshrine the human rights to water and sanitation in federal and provincial law.

- Some components effect management of the water system

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that [name of municipality] will refrain from shutting off water and wastewater services in any residence where residents have an inability to pay their bills, and furthermore that [name of municipality] will make every effort to work with the resident to remediate the debt.



Water as a Human Right

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that [name of municipality] will refrain from shutting off water and wastewater services in any residence where residents have an inability to pay their bills, and furthermore that [name of municipality] will make every effort to work with the resident to remediate the debt.

- Resolution is specific to “where residents have inability to pay their bills”



- Salvation Army Crisis Support
- City funded support program for water bills
- Payment Plans

Staff position that this will not change system management



Water Bottle Ban

London was an early adopter on this:

[August 2008 City of London Water Bottle Ban](#)

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT a) single-use bottled water will no longer be sold in the City Hall cafeteria, from City-owned or City administered concessions and vending machines in public facilities where easy access to municipal tap water exists; b) single-use bottled water will no longer be purchased and provided at meetings where easy access municipal tap water exists; c) the availability of water jugs with municipal tap water will be increased, where required; d) a City staff and public awareness campaign be developed to support the rationale for these important changes including the need for Londoners to do their part; and e) the following implementation schedule be followed subject to an assessment that tap water is readily accessible at these locations:



Public System

- The water and wastewater system under Council control is publically financed, owned, operated, and managed
- No effect on the management of our water/wastewater system
- May want tweaks to wording due to complex public governance of Regional System



Next Steps

- Staff willing to work with Council of Canadians to confirm interpretation, wording
- Council of Canadians can bring resolutions to Civic Works Committee as a delegation
- Staff will present on the impacts on the management of the water/wastewater system



Blue Communities

Questions?