

MINUTES
ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING
BOARDROOM, SERVICE AND RESOURCE CENTRE,
411 DUNSMUIR STREET, NANAIMO, BC
WEDNESDAY, 2022-JUL-27, AT 5:02 P.M.

Present: Councillor B. Geselbracht (Chair)
Councillor D. Bonner
H. DesRoches, At Large Member
L. Frey, At Large Member
J. Lesemann, At Large Member
W. Wells, At Large Member (joined electronically 5:11 p.m.)

Absent: E. Boulanger, At Large Member
D. Chen, At Large Member
L. McCunn, At Large Member

Staff: L. Bhopalsingh, Director, Community Development
J. Holm, Director, Development Approvals
J. McAskill, Manager, Sustainability
D. Stewart, Environmental Planner
S. Snelgrove, Deputy Corporate Officer
A. Mac Coll, Recording Secretary

1. CALL THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING TO ORDER:

The Environment Meeting was called to order at 5:02 p.m.

2. ADOPTION OF AGENDA:

It was moved and seconded that the Agenda be adopted. The motion carried unanimously.

3. ADOPTION OF MINUTES:

It was moved and seconded that the minutes of the Environment Committee meeting held in the Boardroom, Service and Resource Centre, 411 Dunsmuir Street, Nanaimo, BC, Wednesday, 2022-MAY-25, at 5:05 p.m. be adopted as circulated. The motion carried unanimously.

4. PRESENTATIONS:

(a) Corporate Green Building and Energy Management Policies

Introduced by Lisa Bhopalsingh, Director, Community Development.

Jennifer McAskill, Manager, Facility Asset Planning, provided the Environment Committee (the Committee) with a PowerPoint presentation. Highlights included:

- The Corporate Green Building and Energy Management Council policies are for corporate infrastructure only and are separate from community based initiatives
- Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) building standards apply to new buildings and existing buildings that are renovated

Committee discussion took place. Highlights included:

- The LEED exemption provided for the Fire Station caused additional paperwork and administrative costs
- To be verified with a LEED certification, it requires paperwork and is administrative heavy
- Auditing projects with the LEED standards holds the project accountable using a proprietary process
- The LEED system can cause changes in the design when trying to receive enough points to be certified
- A LEED certification has to be maintained through the life of the building

W. Wells, At Large Member, joined the meeting electronically at 5:11 p.m.

Jennifer McAskill, Manager, Facility Asset Planning, continued the presentation:

- The City of Nanaimo (the City) has more than 100 existing facilities that have infrastructure in need of renewals on a cyclical basis
- Reduction in energy use is the intent of the Energy Management and Conservation policy for existing buildings, materials, vehicles, and behavioural considerations
- The payback timeframe used when installing upgraded electrical systems and equipment is 8 years and more complex upgrades are allowed to be payed back over a longer time span
- The City's carbon emission reduction goals are to reduce carbon emissions by 50% by 2030 and 100% by 2050
- New City buildings created with low or neutral carbon emissions will show the community the City's investment to meet its 2030 and 2050 emission reduction goals
- The City has the ability to build carbon neutral facilities while the policies are being updated
- Retrofitting existing buildings to reduce carbon emissions requires upgrades that may not be feasible with the power grid, which will add costs when BC Hydro has to pull a new service line to the building

Committee and Staff discussion took place. Highlights included:

- Elimination of natural gas in City facilities will meet the 2030 goal of a 50% reduction in carbon emissions
- The strategy needs to be clear for Staff on how to implement electric systems in City facilities
- Asset management plans map which buildings and equipment are at the end of their life cycle which will create good strategies on which systems to upgrade first

- Previous budgeting was done for replacements of equipment and systems that were similar to what was in place before, rather than for upgrades to electrical systems to reduce carbon emissions
- Completing a gap analysis will show the cost of converting 18,000 mega watts of energy from natural gas to electricity
- All priorities across the City departments need to be considered when making decisions in the policies to ensure lost opportunities do not happen
- The asset management update is currently creating a portfolio with 30 year projections to show where opportunities may be present in facilities to upgrade at their natural renewal cycle
- Budget shortfalls will be seen in the asset management portfolio making it easier to project and plan which assets can be changed from natural gas to electricity
- Drafted policy updates will be completed in quarter 4, 2023 for stakeholders to provide feedback, and the final draft will be coming to the Committee for feedback in quarter 2, 2024
- Natural gas equipment has been replaced with the same natural gas system in the City, instead of electricity, due to low usage or no budget available
- Staff will investigate if the City can remove the natural gas equipment with low to no usage and not replace it until there is budget available or a good return on the investment
- Eleven facilities are connected to a utility monitoring system with the Nanaimo Aquatic Centre being the highest consumer and Beban Pool being the second highest
- Limiting the pools' hours of operation would not reduce the City's carbon footprint as the pools still have to remain heated whether patrons and Staff are using the facility or not
- The Nanaimo Operations Centre and the South End Community Wellness Centre could be captured under the updated Corporate Green Building Policy and the Energy Management Policy depending on the timeline of the projects
- The policies are the baseline that must be completed in a build, but more can be done over and above the policy
- The two policies could be decoupled and do not have to be updated at the same time
- Cost escalations could pull back decisions on sustainable infrastructure
- Constructing buildings that aren't carbon neutral from the start will add to the problem when trying to reduce emissions in every facility

5. REPORTS:

(a) BC Step Code Low Carbon Energy System Implementation

Introduced by Lisa Bhopalsingh, Director, Community Development.

Presentation:

1. Dave Stewart, Environmental Planner, provided a PowerPoint presentation. Highlights included:

- The BC Energy Step Code was introduced to municipalities in 2017 by the Province of BC (the Province)
- The City currently uses Schedule D to give density bonuses to developers when buildings exceed the Step Code requirements
- The Step Code Rezoning Policy was introduced by the City in 2021 to enforce developers to meet a higher standard of carbon emission reduction when building homes
- Greenhouse gas intensity (GHGI) represents the average amount of GHG emissions per square metre in a building
- A net zero building could still produce carbon if the main heat source is changed to natural gas by the buyer
- Other communities may not have the same capacity to implement low energy carbon systems as they are in northern BC and require a larger heat source
- When Staff receive clarity from the Province in early 2023, a building amendment will be brought to Council for approval
- Consultations with the business community will build on previous consultations held in 2017 regarding the Step Code
- The GHGI requirements will be something new the developers have not experienced before when building
- Houses can emit GHG after build due to owners having poor energy behaviours
- Implementing certified carbon neutral stickers when a home is being considered for purchase to motivate real estate and homeowners to change over to electrical systems
- If builders cannot meet the maximum GHGI cap then they must meet a GHGI target or meet the prescriptive path set out by the Province

Committee and Staff discussion took place. Highlights included:

- If the City was able to dictate that new builds are not able to be built with natural gas for heating, hot water, and appliances, then the City would meet the highest requirements from the Province for BC's Energy Step Code
- The Province's requirements in the Step Code have to reflect all communities in BC which includes communities in the North who rely heavily on natural gas heating and who may not have the capacity to change to electrification
- The Province will deliver more information regarding the BC Energy Step Code in 2023, and the City will be able to start consultations with builders
- The City plans to work with the Regional District of Nanaimo and other municipalities on the consultation process with the developers
- Targets that developers have to meet were estimated numbers created by the Province using a modeling system
- Where the City does not have the powers to require with a bylaw regarding GHG emissions, it can incentivize using Schedule D (amenity requirements for additional density)

It was moved and seconded that the Environment Committee recommend that Council direct Staff to begin preparation for industry consultation on the implementation of the upper steps of the BC Energy Step Code and greenhouse gas emissions targets for new buildings. The motion carried unanimously.

(b) Feedback re: Future Committee Operations

Councillor Bonner and Councillor Geselbracht introduced a discussion with Staff and Committee members regarding feedback on the Committee operations. Highlights included:

- Feedback is needed from the Committee regarding Committee structure and what could be improved
- The Committee was productive and completed goals in the work plan that were established at the beginning of its term
- The meetings were hard to follow for some members as higher level technical reports were beyond some members' participation level
- Providing level participation for all members is important
- Receiving notes ahead of time was helpful for Committee members to participate
- Challenges were had regarding electronic meetings and the ability to participate
- Committee members prefer less PowerPoints during meetings and that presenters do not read off the slides while presenting
- Goals not completed by the Committee were to create opportunities to collect data and measure data for the City, and base Committee decisions on the data
- Key discussions will need to happen between different Committees through the doughnut economic model when the City Plan is interconnected
- Action plans and policy development could be created in the Committees to take to Council to approve
- The current Committee structure helped Staff during the REIMAGINE Nanaimo process
- Staff are working on making all information accessible to all audiences and to have meetings be rewarding for participants
- There is overlap and impact with the work being completed by all the Committees
- More dialogue is needed between Staff and Committee members

6. QUESTION PERIOD:

There were no members of the public in attendance to ask questions.

7. ADJOURNMENT:

It was moved and seconded at 6:58 p.m. that the meeting adjourn. The motion carried unanimously.

CERTIFIED CORRECT:

CHAIR

DEPUTY CORPORATE OFFICER