

Environmental Sustainability Advisory Committee - Minutes

Executive Boardroom
City Hall
14245 - 56 Avenue
Surrey, B.C.
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 30, 2013
Time: 6:30 pm
File: 0540-20

Present:

Chair – Councillor Hayne
M. Alvarez
B. Campbell
G. James
D. Skaey
B. Stewart
G. Sahota
J. Stewart
A. Schulze

Regrets:

R. Grewal
J. Purewal
S. Van Keulen
(AFSAC Representative)

Staff Present:

C. Baron, Manager, Drainage & Environment
N. Aven, Manager, Urban Forestry &
Environmental Programs
Anna Mathewson, Manager, Sustainability
J. Gallinger, Legislative Services

Guests:

Communities & Coal
Paula Williams
Stephanie Smith
Dr. Frank James

A. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

It was Moved by Gopal Sahota
Seconded by Bob Campbell
That the minutes of the Environmental
Sustainability Advisory Committee meeting held on July 24, 2013 be adopted.
Carried

B. DELEGATIONS

1. Communities and Coal

Paula Williams, of Communities and Coal and Dr. Frank James of Bellingham, WA, appeared before the Committee to make a presentation on the Surrey Fraser Docks coal issue.

The following comments were made by the delegation.

- Communities and Coal is a grassroots group which was formed approximately 4 months ago to take issue with the Fraser Surrey Docks proposal and the impact this project would have on health and the environment.
- Appearances have been made around the community, on radio and television shows regarding the environmental and health impacts the coal trains and diesel particulate would have the population and the environment.
- Dr. James has over 250 Doctors (in a broad range of fields) supporting his efforts in researching concerns around coal transfer facilities, coal dust,

diesel particulate and noise pollution, delayed emergency response and safety.

- Health Impact Assessments are required to assess the full impact on health and the environment due to coal storage and transportation as well as diesel particulate and noise pollution.
- It has taken Doctor James and his colleagues approximately four months to conduct research and to review most of the data available around these concerns.
- The US equivalent to the Canadian Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process is the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) which does not encompass all the required investigations as the EIA does.
- Over 150 studies have been conducted throughout North America around the negative impact of coal dust and diesel particulate pollution with articles being published in reputable journals around the impact of noise to the health. Solid scientific data is required for the evaluation of the Fraser Surrey Dock proposal and what the impacts would be on health, safety and the environment.
- Of note is that, environmental processes are more robust in Canada and are run by port authorities where neither the general population nor the government has any say in the ports management or decisions made. Therefore, once the exportation of coal commences it is very difficult and most times impossible to stop.
- Airborne pollutants have been reported in medical journals around the world as being the major factor in lung function and disease. Impaired pulmonary development and function can also be attributed to these pollutants. Other health issues include airborne and water pollutants as well as an increase in train traffic, delays at rail crossings and safety of trains/ships and noise pollution,
- Coal trains cut through the heart of many communities, passing next to/close by the places people live, work, study and play affecting their health. Emissions, vibration and noise of the increased train traffic and the disturbances to the population such as children, elderly, diabetics, woman over 50 and workers and an increase in lung and heart disease is also seen more often near the coal train traffic.
- Coal dust is known to cause chronic bronchitis, emphysema, pulmonary fibrosis and environmental contamination through the leaching of toxic heavy metals. A typical coal train car loses approximately 500 pounds of coal during one trip.

- The train cars that come from the US are overloaded compared to Canadian standards. The coal transported from the US to Canada is inferior to that produced in Canada wherein it is softer and produces more dust. The US coal transported cannot be covered as it would cause the coal to produce friction and the friction would cause the coal to burst into flame. As Canadian coal is harder this does not occur and therefore the coal is covered.
- Coal dust also contains, lead, mercury and cadmium. If these metals get into the water supply they are toxic and will impact tremendous impact on the Pacific Ocean.
- Diesel particulate matter is 2.5 microns which will makes its way right down into the lungs and will enter the blood stream and causes the chemicals to enter the blood stream causing reduced pulmonary development in adolescents, pulmonary inflammation, increased severity in breathing and even mortality,
- Noise exposure is a growing concern especially for elders as train traffic causes sleep disturbance. Children have been found to be particularly vulnerable.
- Frequent long trains at rail crossings cause delayed emergency response times and increases accidents, traumatic injuries and deaths.
- As long as it is profitable, coal will be exported to China. In Dr James' view, there is no benefit to having the Fraser Surrey Docks proposal approved as 25 new jobs cannot replace the health and safety of the population or the environment.
- The data demands that Health Impact Assessments be performed to ensure that the environment and population remain safe and healthy.\
- A health impact assessment is required and it is concerning that the Port Metro Vancouver does not want to conduct such a study.
- CoalTrainFacts.Org is a website to be visited to find out more information.

The Committee made the following comments:

The Chair informed the Committee and delegation that a letter was received from Port Metro Vancouver informing the City that SNC Lavalin had been engaged to perform an assessment for the Fraser Surrey. Dr. James stated that SNC Lavalin would not be performing an environmental health impact assessment as prescribed in the Federal law nor will it meet international standards.

Organizations recognized by the Province as authorities in performing environmental and health impact assessments – for example our local public Health Officers - should be engaged to perform the assessment for Port Metro Vancouver, or to assess the results of a Health Impact Assessment should that be undertaken. Read the fine print and look to organizations that can be trusted is the only way to have any confidence in any assessment provided. A serious

environmental review takes two years and not one month as stated in the letter from Port Metro Vancouver. The actions already taken, towards stopping the proposal, are only the first step in this process.

It is safe to assume that your assessment is that it is not safe to have coal trains running. Is there any technology that exists to make this type of project safe? There are many negative aspects to this whole proposal. Yes, there is mitigation for some things, but no there is no mitigation for all things.

On the mitigation issue, it does not make any sense to follow shipping process as the coal is worthless and companies do not worry about lost coal. It is being sold to China at a great profit as it is very expensive to mine coal in China.

There is a movement in the US that wants the coal to be exported directly from the US and not brought into Canada to export. Once the Fraser Surrey Dock is built there is no way that coal exportation can or will be stopped.

Is diesel particulate matter being researched in the US and if so how long will the research take? There is a plan to conduct the research and it will take years to complete.

Are there any Charter implications that could be brought up through legal action? There are several lawyers working with Communities and Coal that are reviewing all implications.

C. OUTSTANDING BUSINESS

1. **Community Climate Action Strategy draft Report; the Surrey Community Energy & Emissions Plan; and the Climate Adaptation Strategy**

- The Manager, Sustainability appeared before the Committee and reviewed what steps had been taken to present these plans to Council.
- The draft Community Climate Action Strategy (which includes the Community Energy and Emissions Plan and the Climate Adaptation Strategy) was presented to Council on October 7 and has now been sent out to all stakeholders for their final review and comment. The information is available on the website and the review is proceeding. The final Strategy will be brought before Council on November 25, 2013 for approval. The Manager, Sustainability, urges Committee Members to review the materials and submit comments as soon as possible.
- Staff are exploring proposed implementation priorities, which will be reflected in the final Community Energy and Emissions Plan (CEEP).

D. NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business.

E. ITEMS REFERRED BY COUNCIL

There were no items referred by Council.

F. CORRESPONDENCE**1. Fraser Surrey Docks – Proposed Transfer Coal Facility**

File: 5650-20

- (a) Jennifer MacArthur – email dated August 15, 2013
- (b) Steven Faraher-Amidon - email dated September 3, 2013,
- (c) Port Metro Vancouver, Public Affairs, to Matthew Barth and Paula Williams of Communities and Coal - email dated September 13, 2013
- (d) Port Metro Vancouver - letter dated September 16, 2013
- (e) Alexandra Neighbourhood House - letter dated September 30, 2013,
- (f) Keith and Connie Cochrane email dated September 30, 2013
- (g) Port of Metro Vancouver – email dated October 11, 2013
- (h) Communities and Coal invitation to Coal Town Hall – email dated October 12, 2013
- (i) Julia Fitzsimmons – email dated October 19, 2013
- (j) Scott Burton – email dated October 20, 2013

The Committee received all correspondence for informational purposes.

G. INFORMATION ITEMS**1. Agriculture and Food Security Advisory Committee (AFSAC) Update from September 12, 2013 meeting:**

There was nothing to report.

2. Development Advisory Committee (DAC) Update

There was nothing to report.

H. OTHER BUSINESS**1. End of Terms**

The Committee discussed the renewal of terms and made the following comments:

It was requested that all members ensure that their wish to be re-appointed to the Committee, be submitted as soon as possible.

2. 2014 Meeting Dates

- The 2014 proposed meeting dates were accepted with changes to the October and November 2014 meetings from the 3rd to the 4th Wednesday of each month.

The exceptions to the meetings being held on the 4th Wednesday will be September and December 2014 wherein the meetings will be held on the 3rd Wednesday of those months - September 17th and December 17th.

The meeting varied

- The Chair reported that the City of Surrey had been presented with the Climate & Energy Action Award by the Community Energy Association.
- A joint meeting with School District #36 was attended and held this morning. The meeting revolved around the Costa Rica Youth Summit which presented the Mayor with the idea to host an event, based on environmental issues demonstrating what the City is working on in the environment.

Development of a curriculum based on geography and science programs is being researched as well as holding an event ie. Youth Environmental Program in the City in 2014.

ESAC has been requested to be actively involved in the planning, management and development of the program. The Chair asked for volunteers with Deborah Skaey volunteering and Bob Campbell volunteering as backup. The Manager, Sustainability and the Manager, Drainage and Environment will also sit on the Steering Committee. The primary function of the Steering Committee will be to come up with a strategy.

The first internal meeting of members of the Steering Committee will be held the week of November 4 and will determine the responsibilities of individuals. This is a wonderful opportunity for ESAC to educate youth who want to improve the environment. Speakers such as Severn Cullis-Suzuki, who could energize and educate, will be sought.

- It was reported that an environmental group performed a cleanup on the Serpentine River which was very successful.
- Electric Vehicles - an opening event is being held November 4, 2013 for the Surrey DC Fast Charge station at the Surrey Museum. The event will include Mayor Watts and the Minister of the Environment.

The City is also partnering with the City of Vancouver, Fraser Basin Council and Metro Vancouver to do outreach work to promote the existing Level 2 EV charging stations.

Although EV charging stations are an excellent idea, several problems have arisen in other cities such as Vancouver with new installations in strata developments being built. In these cases, parking stall requirements are reduced where EV charging stations are installed. However once a new strata development is handed over to the Strata Council, in some cases the charging stations are being unhooked to avoid paying for the electricity. In other cases, building residents are using extension cords to simply plug in their electric vehicles into a regular plug, causing a safety and tripping hazard.

It was suggested that if the City of Surrey wants to promote EVs installed by developers, then perhaps a credit could be offered to offset the costs of the electricity to Strata Councils.

- Fraser Surrey Docks

On October 28th, a motion by Council was made (copy on table):

That Council not support the proposed expansion of thermal coal exports at Surrey Fraser Docks until:

1. An independent third-party Health Impact Assessment has been completed; and
2. Port Metro Vancouver holds formal public hearings regarding the proposed project at Surrey Fraser Docks.

The motion was moved and carried.

On October 30th, ESAC heard a presentation from Dr. Frank James regarding the environmental and health impacts caused by transportation of coal by train. Based on this presentation:

The Environmental Sustainability Advisory Committee recommends that Mayor and Council maintain their position on demanding a full and independent Health Impact Assessment.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

Moved by Bob Campbell

Seconded by James Stewart

That the following motion be presented to Council for consideration: "The Environmental Sustainability Advisory Committee recommends that Mayor and Council maintain their position on demanding a full and independent Health Impact Assessment".

Carried

I. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Environmental Sustainability Advisory Committee will be held on **Wednesday, November 20, 2013**, at 6:30 p.m. in the Executive Boardroom.

The December 18 meeting was changed to December 11, 2013.

J. ADJOURNMENT

It was

Moved by Gopal Sahota

Seconded by Bob Campbell

That the Environmental Sustainability Advisory

Committee meeting adjourn.

Carried

The Environmental Sustainability Advisory Committee adjourned at 8:20 pm.

Jane Sullivan, City Clerk

Councillor Hayne, Chair