

Ottawa Council of Stakeholders for Sustainability
Meeting #2 – 22 November 2019
REPORT V2

Sharing Experience – Building Relationships
Identifying Opportunities – Creating Projects for Sustainability

MEETING REPORT

WELCOME

Kristina Inrig welcomed participants to this meeting of the National Capital Environmental Non-profit Network (NCENN) at 2203 Alta Vista Drive. The NCENN shares information, tools and resources among local environmental groups in Eastern Ontario and Western Quebec. She reviewed some of the services it provides, then turned the meeting over to the Ottawa Biosphere Eco-City (OBEC) to lead the second meeting of the Ottawa Council of Stakeholders for Sustainability.

INTRODUCTION

Nasha Choudhury explained the purpose of this meeting. It would follow-up on projects proposed at the first meeting of the Council of Stakeholders (24 May 2019), consider a new project proposal, and briefly talk about the name and governance of the council.

ORIGIN AND EXPLANATION OF COUNCIL

Jim Birtch spoke about the origin of the Council of Stakeholders. Ten years ago, OBEC formed to do two things: a) engage people in sustainability, and b) promote stakeholder cooperation on sustainability. OBEC's motto is: We achieve sustainability together. One of the tools of a Biosphere Eco-City is a Council of Stakeholders for Sustainability. Jim noted that OBEC was created by a number of organizations, who called themselves the OBEC Council. Several of those organizations, however, did not stay past the first year and the Council evolved into a members group for OBEC. The OBEC Council created very good projects, but was focused internally. It no longer coordinated stakeholders across the whole Ottawa community. Therefore, OBEC closed the OBEC Council at the end of 2018 to make way for this new council.

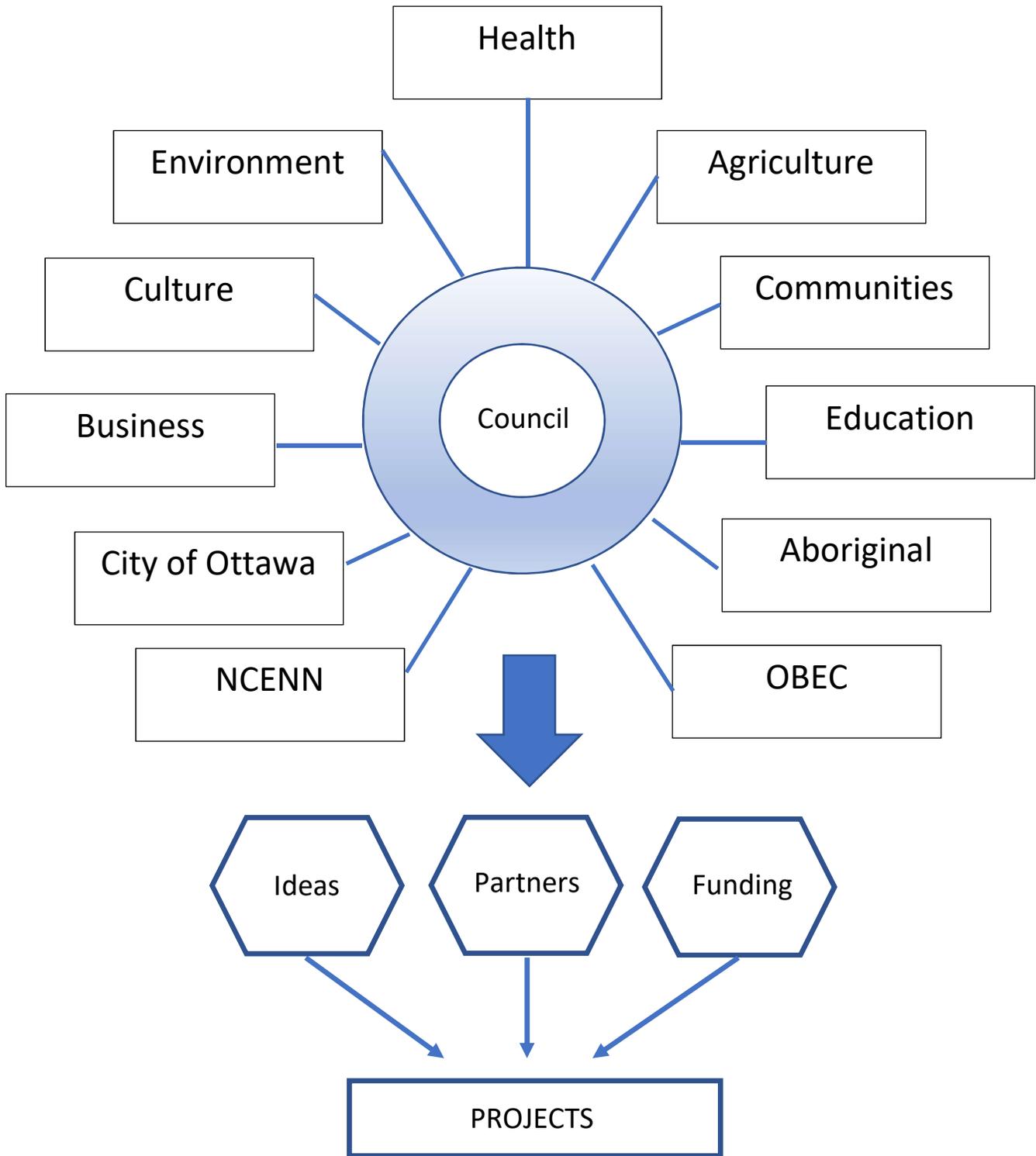
The Ottawa Council of Stakeholders for Sustainability shares ideas and experience, identifies issues and opportunities of sustainability, and is open to all interested organizations. Through its meetings and networking, it builds relationships and initiates activities for sustainability. One of its tangible outcomes is projects, and this is shown schematically in Figure 1, below.

Projects proposed and discussed in Meeting #1 (224 May 2019) were suggested according to Biosphere Eco-City Themes of Sustainability. They are:

Transportation, Energy, Design, Habitat, Food, Natural Capital, Waste, Health, Recreation, and Sense of Place.

For more information on these Themes visit the OBEC website (obec-evbo.ca)

Figure 1
PROJECT DEVELOPMENT BY STAKEHOLDER COUNCIL



FOLLOW-UP ON PROJECTS FROM MEETING #1

PROJECT #1

Theme of **Food**

Title of Project – Captain Food Waste Program

Aim of Project – to reduce food waste

Summary from Meeting #1:

How:

1. Find where the most waste is from to show our community opportunities to reduce food waste, save money, and save the planet
 2. Waste transportation
 - a. Weight – Korean example
 - b. Compost system
 3. Awareness campaign, green bins for schools
 4. Waste packaging
 5. Creating waste out of convenience
 6. Grocery stores – biggest opportunity
 7. Meal planning
 8. Checking stock – using oldest first

Pre-implementation ground-work:

1. Awareness through school campaigns and promoting better choices over convenience
2. Joint effort to spread the word by collaborating with EcoSchool, Ottawa Community Housing, EducAction, Parkdale Food Centre, JustFood, Ottawa Waste Department, Hidden Harvest Ottawa
3. Funding from uOttawa, Ottawa Sustainability Fund (EnviroCentre), FCM (Federation of Canadian Municipalities)

Presentation of New Ideas (Justin Cullen)

Justin talked about a small scale food waste reduction program on Bowen Island in British Columbia. He also discussed Frugal Farms, which use human food waste to feed animals, and community gardens, which are coordinated by Just Food in Ottawa.

Discussion (led by Justin)

There were several ideas for using food that was near its best-by date. Could food from bakeries go to the food bank? One participant was at an international conference in Nantes, France, where a group used donated near best-by date food to provide a free social lunch for conference participants and many local people. It was suggested that the Deep Roots Food Hub in West Carleton might like to do something like this. **Action:** Rudi will ask the Food Hub.

A participant spoke about Montreal's \$50 million Smart City Infrastructure Program, in which everything from food production and gardening to compost and greenhouse gas monitoring is coordinated. Interested persons may check Biopolis.ca

There was a discussion of Ottawa's food composting program. It is running at only 50% of capacity at a higher cost. The lack of green boxes in apartment buildings has created this shortfall. A participant observed that Minto Corporation manages almost 9,000 apartments as well as condominiums. When the City struck a deal with Minto et al on Lansdowne Park redevelopment, it should have asked for a quid pro quo of green bin use in all Minto buildings.

We want food activities to be eco-friendly and cost-effective. How do we connect local interests to produce economies of scale? How do we restructure the "pie."

It was noted that 40% of food is wasted in the USA and it is assumed that the figure is similar for Canada. The Lowertown Community Resource Centre had classes on how to manage shopping and produce nutritious meals. It was focused on the poor. But food waste is a big problem in the suburbs, and classes of this sort are needed there. If an organization could run them, perhaps it could cross publicize that program with community gardens.

Just Food trains food businesses, and has an food end of life food. It also teaches about food preservation and how to increase nutritional value.

Another issue raised was the fact that Faith communities can't get their compost picked up by the City. They have to pay a contractor and it is expensive. A participant suggested that those communities sell the compost in the spring. Some churches sell mushroom compost.

Creating a Project

Anyone who knows of an organization that might be interested in doing this project should contact the organization and put it in touch with Nasha (coordinator.obec@gmail.com).

PROJECT #2

Theme of **Energy**

Title of Project – Collaboration, Self-audit, Incentive- Awareness for Small-Medium Businesses

Aim of Project – to equip Small-Medium Businesses with strategies to reduce energy use

Summary from Meeting #1:

How:

1. Benchmark creation tools (self) / contacts (outsourcing)
2. Compressed list of incentives in a single sheet/webpage that encourages participation
3. Comprehensive list of/links to incentives for them to further their process by themselves

4. Tools to conduct an energy self-audit
5. Platform for similar businesses and product/service providers to interact

Pre-implementation ground-work:

1. Define small-medium businesses based on:
 - a. Area of facility
 - b. Energy consumption
 - c. Annual turnover
2. Divide businesses by type & find incentives for each
3. Define thumb rules for rented/owned/leased properties and whether or not they are to be targeted by the program
4. Get Business Improvement Area (BIA), Chamber of Commerce (CoC), Carbon613 & Sustainable Enterprise Alliance (SEA) on-board to ensure their support & to avoid redundancy in strategies/programs

Presentation of New Ideas (Nasha Choudhury)

Nasha talked about the large energy uses of businesses for: utilities, transportation, material production and garbage. There are also energy costs from lack of maintenance. Businesses need to be aware of incentives to operate more efficiently.

Discussion (led by Nasha)

A participant noted that many businesses rent the buildings in which they operate. Landlords often do not invest in energy retrofits in old buildings. Many businesses are stuck with under-performing buildings and do not have the power to change that. When possible, at end-of-lease, many will move to green buildings.

Another participant noted that there is a building code, a fire code, but no preventative maintenance code. One is needed.

An Energy Savings Performance Contract is used to finance and upgrade federal buildings in the USA. In Canada the Department of Natural Resources (NRCan) provides technical expertise and advice to do this type of work without the need for upfront capital investment.

Another participant noted that with the end of the Ontario Feed in Tarif Program, OREC (Ottawa Renewable Energy Cooperative) is switching to a new initiative – Co-energy. Such a system combines heat and power generation and increases operational efficiency.

OBEC and SEA (Sustainable Enterprise Alliance) have formed a partnership to pilot Business Sustainability Planning in three businesses. This will use OBEC's 10 Themes of Sustainability to identify areas of improvement and projects. Energy is one of the Themes, but it was noted that all of the Themes (Transportation, Design, Natural Capital etc.) have a positive impact on

climate change. There will be standardized profiles of participating businesses and a forum and database for project coordination.

The Federation of Citizens Associations of Ottawa (FCA) supports Cafés in which this project could be discussed.

Creating a Project

Anyone who knows of an organization that might be interested in doing this project should contact the organization and put it in touch with Nasha (coordinator.obec@gmail.com).

PROJECT #3

Theme of **Waste**

Title of Project – Redefining Waste

Aim of Project – provide an update on the current situation for waste in Ottawa

Summary from Meeting #1: this project was proposed but not discussed in Meeting #1

Presentation of Ideas (Duncan Bury)

Duncan said that he wanted to bring the description of Waste up to date for Ottawa. As a member of Waste Watch Ottawa (WWO), he had been researching how Ottawa is doing on waste diversion. Not very well. Ottawa's diversion rate is 42% while that of York Region is 62%. Our city should be matching other leading cities. It needs to reduce quantities of waste generated and divert more. The city should also build connections with other organizations, cafés and federations, to share ideas.

In the Climate Summit with the City's Official Plan, it was identified that Ottawa's three main generators of green-house gas (GHG) were transportation, infrastructure and waste. The latter is responsible for 20%. It must be noted that garbage releases methane, which has three times the negative effect of carbon dioxide. At the summit, WWO allied with the Green Space Alliance to promote the theme of Proper GHG Analysis. The City needs a baseline inventory of what is happening, and data on the status of existing programs.

The City is starting a Waste Management Master Plan and WWO is heavily engaged. Duncan said he is cautiously optimistic. There are many things WWO would like to see in this process. One is a forensic analysis of implications of including plastic in the green bin program. WWO wants to see waste treated as a utility, and therefore it needs to be economical. Separation of plastic from food waste is labour intensive. But the City is not providing any information.

Another concern of WWO is incineration. This doesn't fit into a proper GHG strategy and has other negative effects (e.g. production of dioxin).

WVO would like to see: a user pay policy, education on waste, and residential building participation in waste recycling.

Discussion (led by Duncan)

A participant suggested promoting the use of cloth diapers (rather than disposable). Someone also wondered about compostable diapers.

It was noted that a waste workshop last weekend (15 November) discussed climate emergencies, decentralization, community-based compost programs, repurposing of waste, a circular economy, electronic waste (using robots to dismantle equipment). They noted that mentalities have to change and this is a challenging issue.

People need to provide input on policies for waste. One participant noted that in Sudbury, the City will not collect waste that is not sorted properly. Why are garbage policies weak in Ottawa?

Duncan raised another issue that led to discussion – used clothing. Currently, clothes collected in Ottawa is sent to poor countries, where poor people take what they want and burn the rest. Some communities in Ottawa, such as Manor Park, have clothing swaps.

Buy Nothing groups have operated in Ottawa since 2013 when one began in Barrhaven. There are now over 50. People can put something in a bin or take something out. Exchanges also take place on Facebook.

The City's organic compost also needs to be addressed. Currently the city is adding yard waste to food waste at the composting facility. This reduced the amount of carbon in the mix and makes it less useful for the farming community.

Creating a Project

Anyone who knows of an organization that might be interested in doing this project should contact the organization and put it in touch with Nasha (coordinator.obec@gmail.com).

PROJECT #4

Theme of **Habitat**

Title of Project – Raingardens – Biodiversity in Green Spaces

Aim of Project – Increase raingardens (particularly with native plants) in private and public areas

Summary from Meeting #1:

How:

1. Pitch to organizations (ideally the city)
2. Find public areas and communities to launch the project
3. Maybe get seeds from Tucker House or Ecology Ottawa

4. Garden master classes and events to educate on effective techniques
5. Connect with people who are already doing the above

Pre-implementation ground-work:

1. Finding ways to tackle the challenges of:
 - a. Working with the city/NCC
 - b. Finding ideal spaces for the pilot
 - c. Research in recruiting the right team
2. Collaborate with : Green Peace Ottawa, River Keeper, Rain Garden United, EnviroCentre, Ecology Ottawa, Faith + CG,

Presentation of New Ideas (Kristina Inrig)

Kristina began by mentioning a rain garden initiative at Cornerstone, an affordable supportive housing initiative for women at 373 Princeton in Westboro.

Much of Ottawa used to be wetland. A wetland will slow the flow of water, filtering it and reducing flooding. Wetlands also support many native plant species.

The project that was discussed at meeting #1 of the Council in May envisaged rain gardens on the sides and in the middle of streets. These may also be called swales. Green areas planted with native species for beauty and to reduce the presence of invasive species.

Kristina informed the Council that Kathryn Norman (who could not attend) was creating a pilot project to encourage broader use of rain gardens. Kathryn had found some potential partners and identified Britannia as an ideal site. They are waiting for funding.

Discussion (led by Kristina)

One suggestion was to plant pollinator gardens in ditches. Are there organizations that could initiate this? Related to this idea was the need to stop the City from mowing and spraying ditches in rural areas. Those are the places where native plants are likely to grow.

Participating in the Project

Anyone who knows of an organization that might be interested in participating the project that Kathryn has developed should contact the organization and put it in touch with Kathryn (programs.seo@gmail.com).

NEW PROPOSAL

PROJECT #5

Theme of **Energy**

Title of Project – Thermal Storage

Aim of Project – Store energy from hybrid air-source heat pumps in off-peak periods.

Presentation of Ideas (Justin Cullen)

OBEC had received a proposal from Ron Tolmie (who could not attend) for a thermal storage project using hybrid air-source heat pumps. The proposal noted that Canada presently needs 145,000 mega-watts of electricity, but most of that is needed for huge winter and summer peaks. Load shifting, generate in periods of low need and use in periods of high need, could possibly save up to 115,000 mega-watts.

Justin, an engineer, provided background information on hybrid air-source heat pumps. He noted that 60% of the energy use for home comfort is for heating, and most of the rest is for hot water.

A heat pump is a very simple mechanical system, much like a refrigerator. A hybrid system combines a heat pump with a natural gas or propane furnace. It uses the heat pump to provide heating or cooling, when the outside temperature and electricity rates make its use more economical. But when the outside temperature is low and electricity rates are high, it uses the furnace for heating. A thermostat will monitor those variables on an hourly basis and switch back and forth between the sources. This save energy and money.

Electric water heaters are not efficient. Integrating water heating into the hybrid system makes sense as well.

Justin showed a slide of the Enwave cooling system in Toronto that takes very cold water from the bottom of Lake Ontario, and uses it to cool hospital, government, commercial and residential buildings in the downtown core. This displaces 55 mega-watts of energy a year from the grid.

He also mentioned district heating at the Drakes Landing Solar Community in Okotoks, Alberta. The first of its kind in North America, the system uses underground storage of abundant solar energy in the summer and distributes the energy to heat homes in the winter.

Discussion (led by Justin)

A participant mentioned that the Department of Natural Resources (NRCan) with its clean energy fund supported a community-level energy fund at Colwood, British Columbia. This provided incentives to residents and businesses to install solar how water systems, heat pumps, electric vehicle charging stations and other energy upgrades.

Federal departments provide solar energy grants to low-income and rural areas, farms, schools, reservations and non-profit organizations.

Creating a Project

Anyone who knows of an organization that might be interested in doing this project should contact the organization and put it in touch with Nasha (coordinator.obec@gmail.com).

NAME OF COUNCIL

Jim led a short discussion on selecting a name for the council. There are several alternatives:

- Ottawa Council of Stakeholders for Sustainability (OCSS)
- Ottawa Sustainability Stakeholders Council (OSSC)
- Sustainability Stakeholders Council of Ottawa (SSCO)

He noted too that if Ottawa were designated a Biosphere Eco-City (BEC) the name could be BEC Council.

Participants were asked to think about a name for the Council and be prepared to discuss it in the spring 2020 meeting.

GOVERNANCE OF THE COUNCIL

Jim broached the idea of how the Council might be governed. Right now, meetings are being organized by OBEC with support of NCENN. But it should be born in mind that the Council is mean to serve all stakeholders in Ottawa. Jim speculated that it might need a board or executive with five or six member organizations, including business and the City.

Participants were asked to think about governance of the Council, do some research, and bring their ideas to the next meeting of the Council in spring 2020.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Council of Stakeholders will be on Friday 17 April 2010, from 10 AM to noon, at 2203 Alta Vista Drive. Participants were asked to spread the word and register close to the date on the Sustainable Eastern Ontario website (sustainableeasternontario.ca). Nasha, Jim and Rudi of OBEC volunteered to organize the meeting.

