

Okanagan Water Stewardship Council

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE OKANAGAN WATER STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL HELD ON SEPTEMBER 13 AT THE ECCO CENTRE IN KELOWNA, BC.

PRESENT:

Chair Tom Siddon, Okanagan Partnership
Vice Chair Ted van der Gulik, Ministry of Agriculture and Lands
Allison MacMillan, Okanagan College
Bernie Bauer, UBC Okanagan
Bob Hrasko, Director, Water Supply Association
Brian Guy, Director, BC Branch, Canadian Water Resource Association
Doug Geller, BC Ground Water Association
Bryn White, South Okanagan Similkameen Conservation Program
Denise Neilsen, Research Scientist
Gord Shandler, BC Fruit Growers Association
Grant Maddock, Urban Development Institute
Hans Buchler, BC Agriculture Council
Jillian Tamblyn, Regional District of Okanagan Similkameen
Ken Cunningham, Ministry of Environment, Water Stewardship Division
Kerry Rouck, Shuswap Okanagan Forestry Association
Lee Hesketh, BC Cattlemen's Association
Lorne Davies, OCEOLA Fish and Game Club
Mike Adams, Interior Health Authority
Daniel Miller, for Kendall Woo, Environment Canada – Pacific and Yukon Region
Peter Dill, Friends of Mission Creek
Tricia Brett, Greater Vernon Water Stewardship Committee

REGRETS:

Hillary Hettinga, Regional District of Central Okanagan
Drew Kaiser, CORD Environmental Advisory Committee
Neal Klassen, City of Kelowna Water Conservation program
Rob Smailes, Regional District of North Okanagan
Stu Wells, Regional District of North Okanagan
Representative, Okanagan Nation Alliance

STAFF:

Dr. Anna Warwick Sears, Executive Director, OBWB
Nelson Jatel, Water Stewardship Director, OBWB
Genevieve Doyle, Water Stewardship Coordinator, OBWB

OTHERS PRESENT:

Judy Steeves, Journalist, Capital News
Peter Waterman, District of Summerland
Carmen Venturi, Venturi Enterprises (recording minutes)

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Chair Siddon called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

2. INTRODUCTION OF MEMBERS AND GUESTS

Chair Tom Siddon welcomed participants. This new slate of Council members for 2007/08 was asked to introduce themselves, their affiliation and desired outcomes for the Council.

Chair Siddon outlined the origins of the Stewardship Council as a Flagship initiative of the Okanagan Partnership noting that Executive Director Jatel wrote the first draft "white paper" leading to its establishments.

Explaining that the Council's term will expire in 18 months, he expressed the need to demonstrate effectiveness with deliverable results.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Moved by Brian Guy

Seconded by Jillian Tamblyn

"That the agenda of the September 13th, 2007 meeting of the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council be approved as amended.

CARRIED.

4. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

Moved by Grant Maddock

Seconded by Denise Neilsen

"That the minutes of a meeting of the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council held on June 14th at UBC Okanagan be adopted.

CARRIED.

5. ELECTION: 2007/08 TERM

Mr. Siddon and Mr. van der Gulik let their names stand for Chair and Vice Chair. There were three calls for nominations for Chair and Vice Chair. There were no other nominees from the floor.

Mr. Siddon and Mr. van der Gulik were acclaimed as Chair and Vice Chair for the next term.

6. REPORTS FROM STAFF

6.1 OBWB – Board report

Dr. Sears reported that staff will be recommending the adoption of the Water Stewardship Council's Guiding Principles that at the Okanagan Basin Water Board's strategic planning session of October 16th.

Although all documents generated by the Council are available on the website: <http://www.obwb.ca/wsc>, staff will provide these to the new members.

Dr. Sears reported that the Sewage Grant Program has a 30 year history and is unlike any other in the Province. Staff will be conducting a review of the program, which has not occurred since 1993, and may lead to changes to the program. She explained that these might include expanding grants for storm water improvements, reusing waste water and water quality improvements through infrastructure upgrading.

Reservoir Lakes and Leased Lots

Dr. Sears reported that the last Committee meeting's discussion on reservoir lakes generated a news article and a request by the Cottage Owners Association to meet with the Board, the latter citing that the issue was unfairly characterized at the Stewardship Council June meeting.

Staff has prepared a Memorandum on the "Ramifications of Land Act Reserves". There has been no action from the Board on the issue and Dr. Sears suggested that the Council might consider what actions they might recommend to the Board.

Water Stewardship Regional Fund

Mrs. Genevieve Dunbar reported that this "small grants fund" has a budget of \$300,000 and is midway in the program. Staff is presently evaluating these projects and the results can be viewed on the website. Mrs. Dunbar recommended that the process of application and grant notification should be completed earlier, with a February application deadline and notification in April. Grants can be \$3k at minimum with a maximum of \$30K.

Dr. Guy explained that the purpose of the projects was to show short term successes for the Council and this has been accomplished. There is greater awareness, more media and visibility in the community.

7. WORKING GROUPS AND STATUS REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES

7.1. Objectives. Where are we now? Topic review.

Action Plan Portfolio - 2007/08 is circulated. Dr. Sears explained that this list was generated from recommendations made through all previous Council meetings. Mr. Jatel requested input from the Council on prioritizing projects for the next 18 months and that the worksheet was prepared as a tool towards that end.

Discussion:

Mr. van der Gulik emphasized that projects should be steps leading to the Council's goals. Mr. Hrasko referred to the absence of a policy on groundwater from the list. Mr. Cunningham proposed categorizing and whittling down the list.

Dr. Bauer suggested that Mr. Hrasko's committee has developed a framework or Sustainable Water Strategy, and that this should be a priority item to be completed. Dr. Guy stated that once the document is completed, that activities will flow from that.

7.2. Review Okanagan Sustainable Water Strategy & proposed meeting

structure with break-out working groups

The discussion centered around the best way to complete the Strategy document, given the amount of time left and the large number of people on the Council. Dr. Sears advised the Council that the work plan is missing two high priority items, groundwater and water economics/pricing.

Mr. Jatel proposed a process wherein break-out working groups are asked to review and edit a draft text. Mr. Adams stated that the whole Council must review and have input in all modules. Dr. Guy advised that that document should be completed by June of 2008, allowing for the implementation of two to three key objectives before the Committee's last 18 month term is up.

Mr. Waterman stated that although the document may be incomplete, the District of Summerland requires this information in a timely manner. It is agreed that the Strategy will be a working document, always being revised as the need arises.

Dr. Sears stated that she would like the staff to be able to provide a first draft of the document. Mr. Cunningham suggested that the modules be provided to Council members prior to the meetings and that members be prepared to comment and provide input.

There was a break for coffee at 3:05 and the meeting reconvened at 3:15

8. NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS

8.1. Discussion Notes from the Previous Meeting

8.1.1. Water Conservation Workshop

Mr. Doug Bennett, Conservation Manager for the Southern Nevada Water Authority will be presenting at the Sustainable Cities Conference of November 20th as organized by Jo-Anne De Vries.

Staff is proposing a workshop for the water conservation professionals in the Okanagan for November 19th, with Mr. Bennett making a presentation. Mr. Jatel explained that the purpose of the workshop is to gain consensus on developing a working group for water conservation professionals of the Okanagan. In addition, this group would be in a better position to share best practices with each other and help inform local governments.

8.1.1.2 Review outcomes

The Council discusses the value of conservation as a principle versus addressing more problematic issues such as flexibility in water supply, the management of water supply by additional reservoirs, separating agricultural water and domestic water (separation policy) and other more critical aspects of water supply.

Dr. Guy noted that conservation is a communications tool, agreeing that agriculture, parks and golf courses uses the majority of water in the Okanagan. He stated that education provides the mechanism by which the general public and others are receptive to other ideas.

Consensus on facilitating the workshop is reached with the Council agreeing that this event will not replace the regularly scheduled meeting.

8.1.1.3 Review proposed Water Conservation principles

The Council achieved consensus that the proposed Water Conservation principles as adopted from Southern Nevada Water Authority are not applicable to the Okanagan. These will not be disseminated at the Water Conservation workshop.

8.2 Information/Discussion/Report Items

Endocrine Disruptor in the Okanagan Basin

A Draft Proposal as prepared by Dr. P.J. Curtis of the University of British Columbia is circulated at the meeting. The proposal would compare the effluent quality of three major WWTP in the Okanagan Valley, compare the ED in receiving waters, model the priority ED degradation in receiving waters and bioassay the ED. This research would be supported through a Master's student and the eventual publication of the research.

It is agreed that a consulting company would charge significantly more, and that this is only Phase 1 of the work to be completed.

Moved by Bob Hrasko

Seconded by Hans Buchler

"That the Endocrine Disruptors Proposal be approved in principle, contingent on receiving additional due diligence on revised budget and specific analytic criteria."

CARRIED.

Dr. Bauer abstained from the vote.

8.3 Items for Action

8.3.1 Land Reserve Act

Mr. Jatel recommended writing a letter/memo with action items for the Board reinforcing the Council's position on the Land Reserve Act.

Mr. van der Gulik suggested that it would be important to gather information about what the Province is doing with regards to this issue. He provided some leads for staff to follow-up on.

Dr. Dill's position is that if government policy is to sell these lots, as he understands, then the Council should know what the lots are.

Dr. Guy proposed looking at the issue from perspective of risks, and classifying lakes on susceptibility of development.

Mr. Hrasko stated that it is incumbent on the Council to look forward within the context of global warming, underlining that there will be more moist air in basin with more run-off which will need to be managed.

Dr. Bauer's position is that this is a political decision, the principle argument being that in the interest of the public, nothing should be sold, especially in light of further changes with global warming.

The Land Reserve Act issue will be reviewed at the next meeting.

9. NEXT MEETING

9.1 October 19th Groundwater

Dr. Sears stated that groundwater is a management issue in the Okanagan Basin with regards to growth, protection, and lack of legislation from the Province.

Mr. van der Gulick suggested a presentation or overview from the city of Langley and their groundwater management initiative. Staff will make inquiries.

9.2 November 8th Meeting

10. ADJOURNMENT

"That there being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:45 p.m."

CARRIED.

Certified Correct:

Chair

Program Manager