



**REGIONAL WATERSHEDS ADVISORY BOARD
MINUTES
February 29, 2024**

PRESENT: David Foster, Chair
Sue Belford, Vice Chair
Ceo Gaudet
Martin Willison
Mimi O’Handley

OTHERS PRESENT: Councillor Tony Mancini
Councillor Pam Lovelace
Councillor Sam Austin

REGRETS: Stu Campana
Ahmad Allamah

STAFF: Emma Wattie, Manager, Environment
Elizabeth Montgomery, Environmental Professional
Elizabeth Macdonald, Legislative Assistant

The following does not represent a verbatim record of the proceedings of this meeting.

The agenda, reports, supporting documents, and information items circulated are online at halifax.ca.

Minutes administratively approved

The meeting was called to order at 5:03 p.m., the Board adjourned at 6:48 p.m.

1. CALL TO ORDER AND LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Chair called the meeting to order at 5:03 p.m. and acknowledged that the meeting took place in the traditional and ancestral territory of the Mi'kmaq people, and that we are all treaty people.

MOVED by Ceo Gaudet, seconded by Martin Willison

THAT the Regional Watersheds Advisory Committee, in accordance with section 129 of Administrative Order One, agree to allow permit Councillors Tony Mancini, Pam Lovelace and Sam Austin to participate in the February 29, 2024 Regional Watersheds Advisory Board meeting.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – December 14, 2023

The following was before the Board:

- September 12, 2019 Regional Watersheds Advisory Board minutes

Iain MacLean, Municipal Clerk responded to questions of clarification from the Board regarding the Municipal Clerk's Office minutes preparation procedure and options for the Board to communicate with the Environment & Sustainability Standing Committee (ESSC) including provision of an annual report to the ESSC and the possibility of assigning a Councillor to the Board. MacLean further noted minutes were action based and the record keeping practices of the Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) had undergone significant modernization and change since 2019.

Councillors Lovelace, Austin and Mancini responded to questions of clarification from the Board.

MOVED by Ceo Gaudet, seconded by Martin Willison

THAT the minutes of December 14, 2023 be approved as circulated.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

3. APPROVAL OF THE ORDER OF BUSINESS AND APPROVAL OF ADDITIONS AND DELETIONS

Additions: None

Deletions: None

MOVED by Ceo Gaudet, seconded by Martin Willison

THAT the agenda be approved as presented.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

4. BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES – NONE

5. CALL FOR DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTERESTS – NONE

6. CONSIDERATION OF DEFERRED BUSINESS – NONE

7. CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS & DELEGATIONS

7.1 Correspondence – None

7.2 Petitions – None

7.3 Presentation – None

9. REPORTS/DISCUSSION

9.1 STAFF

9.1.1 Discussion re: Board Mandate

The following was before the Board:

- Handout dated February 29, 2024

Elizabeth Montgomery, Environmental Professional and Emma Wattie, Manager, Environment responded to questions of clarification from the Board and Councillors regarding the development agreements between HRM and West Bedford Holdings Ltd, HRM and Cresco Ltd. and the impact of development agreement reports brought before the Board.

Iain MacLean, Municipal Clerk spoke to the ongoing Municipal governance review set to go before Halifax Regional Council in the spring and the option for the Clerk's Office to work with individual members and Environment staff when motions were crafted. MacLean responded to questions of clarification from the Board regarding the Board's Terms of Reference (ToR) and mandate and the possibility of the assignment of a Councillor to the Board.

The Board noted concerns regarding water quality in HRM, inadequate data collection and analysis, policies and procedures regarding water quality monitoring practices, watershed mapping and the lack of opportunity for the Board to perform an advisory role. The Board expressed a desire to make recommendations regarding water and lake assessments. The Board discussed the possibility of working in collaboration with the Atlantic Water Network, Centre for Water Resources and similar groups in the future, and amendments to the *Halifax Regional Municipality Charter* through Bill 329.

Councillors Lovelace, Austin and Mancini spoke to the Montreal Pledge on Biodiversity, existing Halifax Water policies regarding quality control and assurance, the Clerk's Office work with Planning & Development and Environment staff to establish a clear direction for the Board and the importance of developing a working relationship with the Province of Nova Scotia.

Leah Perrin, Manager, Regional Planning responded to questions of clarification from the Board regarding the impacts of Bill 329, the need for further clarity in the Board's Terms of Reference, Halifax Green Network Plan, Strategic Priorities Plan and the work currently undertaken by HRM in environment and climate change.

Elizabeth Montgomery, Environmental Professional spoke to the need for a clearer process in staff engagement with the Board and responded to questions of clarification from the Board and Councillors regarding storm water management and agenda setting.

The Board noted past discussions regarding concerns the Board was not properly utilized, the recent loss of members and creation of a work plan for 2024 with the guidance of Environment staff.

MacLean suggested a draft work plan could be crafted by members in an informal working session with staff involvement and the Clerk's Office could assist in polling members to schedule this session with the goal for a draft 2024 Regional Watersheds Advisory Board Work Plan to come before the Board for review at the April meeting. MacLean responded to questions of clarification from the Board.

Councillor Mancini spoke to plans to meet with staff from Environment, Planning & Development and the Clerk's Office to discuss the purpose and future of the Board and responded to questions of clarification from the Board.

Elizabeth Macdonald, Legislative Assistant responded to questions of clarification from the Board.

Councillors Mancini and Lovelace spoke to the possibility of attending future Board meetings.

10. ADDED ITEMS – NONE

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING – April 11, 2024

12. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 6:48 p.m.

Elizabeth Macdonald
Legislative Assistant