



– MARCH, 2011 –

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Earth Hour 2011

The Windsor Essex County Environment Committee and the City of Windsor teamed up with Enwin Utilities to promote Earth Hour 2011 at Devonshire mall. Our banner and brochures were on display and an art demonstration was used to encourage kids to communicate their plans for Earth Hour. The event was a great success and may have contributed to Windsor residents decreasing hydro consumption by 3% during the hour.

ONGOING INITIATIVES

1. Windsor Essex Parkway

Members of the PSW sub-committee attended the Windsor Essex Parkway open house on March 9th put on by the Ministry of Transportation (MTO) and Infrastructure Ontario (IO). The public event was very informative and gave us the chance to speak with representatives about compensation property and strategies to meet the criteria laid out in the environmental assessment.

Although pursuing environmental issues with MTO and IO is necessary, the PSW sub-committee agrees that focusing our efforts on working with the Windsor Essex Mobility Group (constructing the parkway) may be a more productive way to ensure ecological design in the Parkway.

Members from the PSW sub-committee have begun to have relations with the Windsor Essex Mobility Group and we will continue to work with them on this project.

2. Black Oak Video

A meeting was held between the Coordinator and Axxess Design on March 30th to discuss the Black Oak video that will be produced to highlight damage to City owned property due to ATV's and garbage dumping.

Axxess Design would like any pictures we have showing damage to the area. They would also like a representative from WECEC to show them the area where they will be filming. This will be to point out damage done by ATV's as well as pointing out native plant species found in the area.

Filming will commence shortly after this introduction to the area. A storyboard will be written and shared with WECEC for approval. Editing will occur and the video should be completed sometime in the summer.

3. Improve relationships with Essex County

As outlined in the Strategic Plan, meeting with each county municipality yearly is mandated. It is important to present WECEC as a dedicated committee dealing with a range of issues. This way, county municipalities are more likely to bring issues to WECEC.

I have requested meetings with a representative from each county municipality. To date, I have had one meeting and found it to be very successful. The representative I met from Kingsville was unaware of the broad range of issues covered by WECEC and has assured me that she will bring forward any relevant issues in the future.

4. Food Advisory Working Group

On March 10, 2011, the Food Advisory Working Group (FAWG) facilitated an open Forum to consider the development of a Food Charter for the Windsor-Essex County region.

Participants shared the extensive accomplishments in the community on food-related issues in Windsor-Essex County. There has been considerable success in integrating food issues into social assistance and poverty frameworks. There have also been important food achievements for neighbourhoods and for the community/region as a whole.

Workshop participants also shared strategies for “moving forward”. FAWG has grouped the various suggestions into three broad categories: Educate, Organize, and Take Action.

The strategy of *educating* reflects the limited knowledge in the community about food alternatives, including the lack of experience with growing, preserving, and cooking healthy food. This was identified as an important barrier to moving forward, and many participants identified educating the public and raising public awareness about food issues as a key strategy.

The strategy of *organizing* refers both to effecting greater collaboration across the different “silos” of food-related activities in Windsor-Essex County, and to undertaking more extensive outreach to groups in Windsor-Essex County which, to date, are not participating in food initiatives.

The *taking action* category suggests specific, concrete suggestions for future work. One such suggestion speaks to the strategy of both *educating* and *organizing*: hold a Spring Fair, open to the community, with information about having a more localized, sustainable, and affordable food system; plant and soil demonstrations; food made by vendors committed to local and healthy food, etc.

We note that discussion did not favour developing a food charter at this time. There was no opposition to a food charter, but participants argued that more concrete organizing and educational steps, including more of the community and institutional allies, must take place first.

IMPORTANT UPDATES AND INFORMATION

1. Recommendations to Windsor City Council and Essex County Council

1) Windsor City Council, March 7th: Report No. 52

WECEC submits the following recommendation:

That City Council be encouraged to increase Transit Windsor budget to include the hiring of an additional mechanic, and that the budget be amended to reinstate the practice of purchasing six hybrid buses per year, and further that Transit Windsor be adequately funded and the budget be revised to reflect that increase.

This recommendation was noted and filed.

2) Windsor City Council, March 29th: Report No. 50

WECEC submits the following recommendation:

- i) That the City of Windsor request the Government of Ontario to direct Ontario Power Generation to put its coal plants on standby reserve immediately and operate them only if there is a power emergency.*
- ii) That the City of Windsor request that the Government of Ontario stop the import of coal-fired power from the United States an import coal-fired power only if there is no other option to keep the lights on in Ontario.*

This recommendation was approved.

3) Windsor City Council, March 29th: Report No. 51

WECEC submits the following recommendation:

That County of Essex and Corporation of the City of Windsor Councils requested to reconsider the development of Regional Transit system and initiate the dialogue and preliminary work that can be done at the time and further that the concept be reintroduced next year or in subsequent years.

This recommendation was approved.

4) Windsor City Council, March 29th: Item No. 13

The City of Windsor submits the following recommendation:

That Council approve the addition of an Education/Outreach Coordinator for the new Ojibway Nature Centre as a temporary position for one full operating year and;

That this position be funded from the new incremental revenue from the Ojibway Nature Centre and;

That Council approve a revision in the 2011 User Fee rates for the New Ojibway Centre as follows;

Ojibway User Fees	
Hourly rental rate for new Woodland Room	\$22.00
Hourly rental rate for new Savanna Room	\$30.00
New rate for entire centre	\$78.00

This recommendation was approved.

2. Government of Ontario Policy Proposals (www.ebr.gov.on.ca)

- a. *Development of government response statements in relation to 9 recovery strategies published on September 10, 2010 in accordance with the Endangered Species Act, 2007*

The purpose of this proposal is to inform the public that 9 recovery strategies have been prepared by the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) for the following species:

- Aurora Trout
- Bent Spike-rush
- Common Five-lined Skink (Carolinian and Southern populations)
- Cucumber Tree
- Eastern Foxsnake (Carolinian and Georgian Bay populations)
- Gray Ratsnake (Carolinian and Frontenac Axis populations)
- Round Hickorynut and Kidneyshell
- Northern Riffleshell, Snuffbox, Round Pigtoe, Mudpuppy, Mussel and Rayed Bean
- Rapids Clubtail

The proposed government response statements will be made available to the public on the MRN Species at Risk website (<http://www.mnr.gov.on.ca/en/Business/Species/2ColumnSubPage/287123.html>). The public is invited to review and comment.

This document is available for public comment until May 5th. To view the policy proposal, visit www.ebr.gov.on.ca. The EBR # is 011-1101.

3. Newspaper articles

- a. Windsor Star – March 14th: *Windsorites are ‘water hogs’*

Canadians are among the top users of water in the world and even though Windsorites are conserving more, we're water guzzlers too.

Still Windsor's average household consumption at 240 cubic metres a year is the second highest when compared to other cities in Ontario. We rate behind the Peel Region's average of 260 cubic metres per household per year and just above Toronto's 230 cubic metre household average. We use more water than some spots in Ontario because it's warmer here.

WUC, which has already seen a 21 per cent consumption drop over six years, has set a goal along with other cities along the Great Lakes to reduce water consumption by 15 per cent by 2022.

b. Toronto Star – March 16th: *Is that fish safe to eat? Website will have the answer*

Ever find yourself staring at a fresh fish pulled out of one of Ontario's lakes and wondering if it is safe to eat or full of poison?

Starting Wednesday, you'll be able to click on the Ministry of the Environment's website from your laptop or smart phone and download the Guide to Eating Ontario Sport Fish. Anglers or foodies can search by lake, river, fish species or GPS coordinates to find out if or how polluted an Ontario fish truly is.

It may come as a surprise to many that Ontario's fish are generally safe to eat in moderation, said Environment Minister John Wilkinson. "You can enjoy the fish in Ontario," he said. "The guide just says how much is too much of a good thing."

"By moving to phase out the use of dirty coal plants ... we are actually reducing the amount of mercury that is released into the natural environment, which over time has found its way into our water and fish," he said.

c. Windsor Star – March 20th: *Green jobs begin to sprout in Windsor and Essex County*

In the past year, there have been plans announced for wind and solar manufacturing that could bring over 1,000 new jobs to the region. So far, about 300 of those jobs have materialized.

Two previously announced factories -a solar panel maker and a wind tower manufacturer -are to go into production and a German photovoltaic module maker is expected to open its doors by the end of the summer.

Spanish-owned solar panel maker Siliken has retrofitted a former mould shop in an industrial park north of Windsor Airport. It is in the process of hiring and expects to start production in April.

Wind tower manufacturer CS Wind is in the midst of refurbishing and moving equipment into the former Valiant Corporation plant in the Twin Oaks Industrial Park WEEDC will be assisting the South Korean company to hire unemployed and underemployed area residents who are enrolled with Employment Ontario and the city-run social assistance program, Naidu said. Most will be trained on the job.

Another major project, a thin-film solar module plant slated for Windsor Airport lands, is currently on hold. Ontario-based Solar Source Corporation and its Indian partner, HHV, were among the first to announce they planned to open a large-scale factory in the region that would employ about 150 people.

The pay scale for wind and solar manufacturing jobs ranges from \$10-\$12 an hour for general labourers to \$25 an hour for skilled trades and engineering positions, said the development corporation's Naidu.

d. The Environment Report – April 1st: *New debate over Detroit's incinerator*

For a brief time last year, anti-incinerator forces got a boost when the facility's former owners, Covanta Energy, got out. They hoped the city would stop sending its trash there, and move to a more recycling-

intensive municipal waste system. But another, newly-formed company quickly bought the facility. Detroit Renewable Energy is now seeking about four million dollars in brownfield redevelopment tax credits. Those are state incentives that encourage businesses to redevelop contaminated property. The tax credits will help the company upgrade the facility and make it cleaner.

A representative from Detroit Renewable Energy says the incinerator does more than just burn trash—it creates energy. And that’s true. The trash burned there creates an underground “steam loop” that powers many homes and businesses around it. The facility can continue providing relatively cheap, reliable power to business in one of Detroit’s few growing areas.

But those who have fought the incinerator for years think these arguments are flawed. Ann Arbor-based Ecology Center says the incinerator itself simply isn’t viable without continued public subsidies. And the company’s proposal for the tax credits is frustratingly vague.

The Detroit City Council Public Hearing on Atlas Holdings Brownfield Redevelopment Tax Credit will take place at 10am on Thursday April 28, 2011 at the Coleman A. Young Municipal Center.

TASKS FOR NEXT MONTH

1. Black Oak video

I will continue to work with Axxess Design to produce an educational video regarding the improper use of Black Oak Park. Axxess Design will be shown where and what to film, and I will work with them to produce a video script that WECEC approves of.

2. Improve relationships with Essex County

Meetings have been set-up with several County municipal planners to remind them of WECEC and all we have to offer. They will be encouraged to bring forward issues that are relevant to the committee.

3. Transportation sub-committee WECAER initiative

Coordination between multiple stakeholders will continue to happen to ensure information about WECAER is presented and commented on. The motion passed by WECEC regarding WECAER will hopefully be presented to both City and County Council in the near future.

4. Earth Day

Upon approval from the committee, I will register WECEC for a booth at Earth Day. I am also on the Earth Day committee and will attend meetings to discuss the event.