

Date: December 16, 2024  
Time: 10:00a.m. – 11:30a.m.  
Location: Council Chambers – Meeting Room

Attendance: Wayne Olson, Ward One Councillor  
Jackie Oblak, Committee Chair  
Mike Jones, Committee Member  
Jordan Wilton, Committee Member  
Gimuel Ledesma, Engineering Technologist  
Jason Marr, Director of Public Works  
Samantha Witkowski, Environmental Coordinator  
Mike Hoch, Committee Member  
Rebecca Holmes, Grant Specialist  
Ryan Cook, Manager of Public Works  
Kerry Royer, NPCA

Regrets: Natalie Seniuk, Committee Member  
Ryan Taylor, Committee Member

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### 1. Call to Order and Declaration of Quorum

Noting that quorum was present, Chair Jackie Oblak called the meeting to order at approximately 10:01 a.m.

### 2. Land Recognition Statement

Chair Jackie Oblak recited the land recognition statement.

### 3. Approval of Agenda

**Moved by:** Mike Jones  
**Seconded by:** Mike Hoch

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT the agenda for the December 16, 2024, regular meeting of the Environmental and Climate Adaption Advisory Committee be adopted.**

**Carried**

#### **4. Approval of the November 25, 2024, Minutes**

**Moved by:** Mike Jones

**Seconded by:** Mike Hoch

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Minutes for the November 25, 2024, regular meeting of the Environmental and Climate Adaptation Advisory Committee be approved.**

**Carried**

#### **5. Declarations of Pecuniary Interest and General Nature Thereof**

There were no pecuniary interests disclosed by any of the members present.

#### **6. Accelerated Impact, Invasive Species Centre- Discussion**

Kerry Royer from the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority (NPCA) provided a detailed presentation on invasive species, emphasizing the importance of early detection and rapid response in managing their spread.

She highlighted floating aquatic plants, particularly the European water chestnut, as an example. Kerry shared that the NPCA has partnered with the Invasive Species Centre to identify and manage invasive plant species. She also presented a success story from the Chippawa Creek Conservation Area, showcasing the effectiveness of these efforts.

Kerry outlined three available grants for invasive species management, including a Phragmites Management Grant, which she suggested could be of interest to the Town. She explained the requirements and steps involved in applying for such grants.

During the discussion, committee members inquired about the classification of Norway Maple as an invasive species. Kerry provided her

perspective and recommended that the Town prioritize projects targeting the most invasive species for the greatest impact.

Councillor Wayne Olson inquired about the status of the ALUS (Alternative Land Use Services) Program. This initiative provides payments to farmers for conserving and restoring natural features such as wetlands, creeks, shorelines, native grasses, trees, and unique ecosystems like tallgrass prairie and oak savannah. The program supports the conversion of farmland into wildlife habitats.

Kerry Royer committed to researching the program's status and will provide an update at a future meeting.

## **7. Town Tree Maintenance Policy Enforcement**

Mike Hoch reported on a recent meeting with Jason Marr, Director of Public Works regarding a tree on Emmet Street that had been cut without the Town's permission. A resident had removed a branch overhanging their driveway, cutting it back to the trunk. Jason confirmed that no permits or permissions had been issued for this action. However, he clarified that, per Town policy, residents are permitted to cut branches from Town-owned trees that overhang their property, but only up to the property line.

Ryan Cook, Manager of Public Works, added that he had consulted with the Town arborist, who stated that he would have trimmed the tree in the same manner.

The committee discussed improving communication with residents about tree-cutting policies and the process for notifying the Town about issues with Town-owned trees. They highlighted the "Spot It, Share It" feature on the Town's website, which allows residents to report tree-related concerns, and proposed exploring ways to increase awareness of this tool.

Samantha Witkowski informed the committee that she is preparing a comprehensive report on all Town-owned trees, including an analysis of regional maintenance policies. This report is expected in early 2025 and will be shared with the committee for review upon completion.

## 8. Action Item Updates from Committee & Staff

Acting Clerk Sarah Leach addressed the committee's questions from the previous meeting, including the proposal to change the schedule to two meetings per month and the use of a shared Dropbox for committee members. She requested that the committee provide written reasoning for holding two meetings per month, which would then be presented to Council.

Sarah also clarified that the committee's terms of reference include provisions for emergency meetings to address time-sensitive matters. Following this, the committee decided to maintain the current schedule of one meeting per month, as outlined in the terms of reference, and to schedule additional emergency meetings as needed.

Regarding the shared Dropbox, the Clerk explained that it is not feasible due to requirements for sharing materials with the public. She recommended adding articles and other materials directly to the agenda, ensuring these resources are accessible to both committee members and the public. The committee agreed that this would be a suitable solution.

## 9. Upcoming Items

Councillor Wayne Olson provided an update on an upcoming Niagara Transit survey, which will focus on the potential expansion of service within the Town. He requested input from the committee regarding this matter.

Chair Jackie Oblak then gave an update on the committee's accomplishments to date.

## Adjournment

**Moved by:** Mike Jones

**Seconded by:** Jordan Wilton

**THAT this Regular Meeting of the Environmental and Climate  
Adaption Advisory Committee be adjourned at 11:28 a.m.**

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**Carried**

**Next meeting is scheduled for Monday, January 27, 2024.**



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**Chair, Jackie Oblak**



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**Administrative Assistant, Erin McCormick**