

Concept Brief: The Establishment of an Environment and Sustainability Committee

April 2024

Premise:

The Municipality of North Middlesex is investigating the establishment of an Environment and Sustainability Committee.

Given that environmental issues do not terminate at municipal boundaries we are also exploring the possibility of a committee that encompasses neighboring communities which may have similar issues. Neighbouring communities that are predominately rural in nature with modest settlement areas (villages or small towns) would be ideal candidates for a multi-municipal committee of this nature. To date the municipalities of Adelaide-Medcalfe and Lucan-Biddulph have expressed interest in discussing this proposal further. Our plan is to also invite Bluewater, South Huron, Middlesex Centre and Lambton Shores to an inaugural information meeting.

In addition, community stakeholder groups will be invited to participate. The Middlesex Federation of Agriculture has already stated their interest.

Potential Objective of the Committee:

A common objective will be developed by all interested parties. Below are some sample objectives that could be considered when crafting a common purpose:

1. The main objective of the Environment and Sustainability Committee meetings will be to provide a forum for dialogue, discussion and reflection among public institutions and civil society responsible for environmental management.
2. The Environment and Sustainability Committee is responsible for providing advice and recommendations to member Councils on policy, programs, projects, strategies and service delivery in relation to Environmental Services as referred to it.
3. The Committee has a mandate to review existing municipal environmental stewardship programs, assess their effectiveness and recommend changes where appropriate. The Committee will also develop achievable recommendations for new municipal environmental initiatives. These initiatives will help the member municipalities provide appropriate stewardship for the natural assets and resources in its care.

Possible Duties and Responsibilities:

Below are samples of possible duties and responsibilities of this committee. These have not been agreed upon and are presented to help facilitate conversation of possible duties.

1. Identify activities which support broadened awareness regarding environment and sustainability practices within the member municipalities.

2. Draw on the knowledge of members of the community regarding environment and sustainability issues, provide advice and information to Councils and municipal staff.
3. To initiate and/or receive submissions and/or delegations from other organizations regarding any other specific environmental concerns and advise member Councils.
4. The identification and implementation of new or existing programs, approaches or policies relating to the protection, sustainability and enhancement of natural resources and systems within the member Municipalities.
5. The identification and implementation of community outreach activities which support the growth of environmental awareness and appreciation in the member Municipalities. This includes providing assistance with and support for the implementation of education programs and for special events relating to environmental matters.

Other considerations:

The following other considerations are for discussion by the inaugural membership.

1. As a multi-jurisdictional entity this committee may act as a submission agent to seek funds from senior levels of government and others to further related projects in common.
2. A review of the effectiveness of this committee will take place after five years reviewing its ongoing relevance.
3. Committee meetings will be held quarterly.
4. Committee membership will be a mixture of council members, municipal staff and community representatives.