

Taggart Urges Climate Action Plan Development

By Maurice Rees

Prior to the CoVid-19 pandemic, the federal government's focus starting in 2020 was several initiatives to provide funding for municipalities for implementing climate action plans. Councillor Tom Taggart, who sits on the FCM board, said climate action plans were the highlight of discussions in an early March meeting in Quebec.

He forecasted based on the federal plan concepts, at that time, there would be plenty of money available for municipalities. He made the comments in support of Joanna Burris' presentation. He urged members of council and staff to work hard to develop a municipal climate action plan as soon as possible.

As part of her detailed outline of a template for a Colchester Climate Action Plan Joanna Burris' template stated municipalities across Canada have been leading the charge on climate action and as the level of government closest to the people, municipalities have a significant amount of influence over the day-to-day activities of citizens and industries.

Colchester began its climate change mitigation journey in 2016 when it committed to the Federation of

Municipalities' and ICLEI's Partners for Climate Protection program; its next step is to establish emissions-reduction targets and a local action plan.

Describing the work ahead, even in spite of the CoVid-19 hindrances, Burris said the Community Energy and Emissions Plan (CEEP) will set priorities for long-term energy conservation and emissions reduction in Colchester is to be completed by December 2020.

She said local governments are the closest to the people and can develop partnerships with local stakeholders and organizations to deliver programs and build capacity, such as renewable

energy generation projects, building retrofits, or public transit.

Funding is one of the biggest constraints for local governments in establishing and implementing emissions reductions. As a small- to medium-sized municipality, Colchester does not have unlimited funds. As a result a detailed economic or cost-benefit analysis of proposed initiatives is important, along with a solid strategic plan to back up funding applications.

During her presentation, Councillor Tom Taggart, who also sits on the Federal Of Canadian Municipalities board as one of four members from Nova Scotia stated that during a March board meeting, prior to CoVid-19 pandemic, the focus of the Federal government was to launch several programs to provide funding to combat climate change.

Burris said her presentation would highlight only a few short-term, corporate initiatives and developing a complete emissions reduction strategy with appropriate short-, medium-, and long-term actions will require qualitative and quantitative modeling, target-setting, economic analysis, and other steps. These will take place during the development of the Community Energy and Emissions Plan with the assistance of a consulting firm with energy planning experience.

She described the Community Energy and Emissions Plan will be a comprehensive planning document that establishes community priorities around energy, aiming to cut emissions, improve efficiency, increase energy security, reduce energy poverty, and drive local economic development. The Plan will also address non energy-related emissions sources such as solid waste. The Plan will include corporate and community emissions reduction targets and actions, an implementation plan and schedule, and strate-

gies for monitoring and measuring success. The CEEP will integrate community and corporate (municipal operations) emissions in one document in order to allow for the Municipality to demonstrate leadership on climate mitigation and to facilitate comprehensive community engagement and joint Municipality-stakeholder initiatives. Some projects cannot be separated neatly into either corporate or community and will require collaboration.

Quantitative modelling will be required to set

emissions reduction targets and develop a list of actions that will help the Municipality meet those targets. The modelling allows different emissions reduction scenarios to be compared to determine which scenario best meets the Municipality's desired outcomes and reduction targets. The Municipality does not currently have the capacity to do this modelling in-house, so the modelling will be completed by the consulting firm hired to complete the CEEP.

Burris Tallies Emissions From Solid Waste

By Joanna Burris

(In her report to council on April 30th, Joanna Burris intentionally separated the solid waste facility in Kempton emissions details from other sectors as presented below).

The presentation stated while emissions from buildings, fleet, streetlights, and water & sewage originate from energy consumption and fossil fuel combustion, emissions from solid waste are caused by decomposition of organic matter. Organic waste, such as food, paper, and fibres, that ends up in the landfill undergoes aerobic and anaerobic digestion, emitting methane (CH₄) and carbon dioxide (CO₂), both greenhouse gases.

All these emissions can be avoided if all organics are diverted to compost, an aerobic

decomposition process which results in negligible emissions.

Waste at the Balefill comes from both Truro and Colchester, and the Municipality does not have as much control over waste as other corporate emissions, since waste separation is ultimately the responsibility of the consumer.

Even though Colchester has above-average rates of waste separation and comprehensive waste separation programs and educational campaigns, about 22% of the waste going into the landfill is still organic, as of 2017, according to Divert Nova Scotia reporting in 2018.

In 2009, emissions from the Colchester Balefill Facility were 30,968 tCO₂e (tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent). This number is slightly higher than the value for 2009 reported in the Greenhouse Gas

Inventory and Forecast (2017), as the calculations have been updated with a more accurate Global Warming Potential value for methane (25). Methane gas is the main emission from solid waste; because of the high Global Warming Potential of methane (25 times more potent than carbon dioxide), emissions from solid waste in Canada are typically around 1.6056 tCO₂e per tonne of waste, according to Caitlin Rodger, ICLEI, 2020. Colchester's ratio in 2009 was 1.2543 tCO₂e per tonne of waste - considerably lower, likely due to Colchester's above-average waste separation.

Emissions by Sector (including Solid Waste): Buildings (6%); Fleet (1%); Streetlights (1%); Water & Sewage (14%) and Solid Waste (78%)

Lesson 1: Burris' Template for Climate Action Plan Development

By Joanna Burris

(The following information was extracted from Joanna Burris' presentation to Colchester Council on April 30th when she outlined the template of existing conditions and what will be required to develop a climate action plan unique to Colchester).

The world's climate is changing. The United Nations has identified Climate Change as the defining issue of our time, and we are at the defining moment. Costs from climate impacts in Canada could exceed \$5 billion in 2020 and grow to more than \$21 billion by 2050. The costs of climate change to the Municipality of Colchester are significant and will continue to increase. These include: flood mitigation & adaptation; infrastructure repair after flood events & major weather events; road repair due to flooding.

There are some basic well-established scientific links: The concentration of GHGs in the earth's atmosphere is directly linked to the average global temperature on Earth; The

concentration has been rising steadily, and mean global temperatures along with it, since the time of the Industrial Revolution; The most abundant GHG, accounting for about two-thirds of GHGs, carbon dioxide (CO₂), is largely the product of burning fossil fuels.

Global Warming Of 1.5°C:

The average global temperature has increased by 1.0°C since the beginning of the industrial revolution, and we are witnessing the impacts of this warming across the globe through increased frequency and severity of extreme weather events; more frequent and longer-enduring droughts and wildfires; sea level rise; extreme rainfall and flooding; loss of biodiversity and species geographic range; melting of ice sheets, sea ice, glaciers, and arctic permafrost; and many other significant impacts. As the world warms, the climate changes and weather events become less predictable.

According to the SR15 Global Warming of 1.5°C report: limiting global warming to 1.5°C would require "rapid

and far-reaching" transitions in land, energy, industry, buildings, transport, and cities. Global net human-caused emissions of carbon dioxide (CO₂) would need to fall by about 45 percent from 2010 levels by 2030, reaching 'net zero' around 2050. This means that any remaining emissions would need to be balanced by removing CO₂ from the air." (IPCC, 2019) When Colchester sets emissions reduction targets, they should be in line with the IPCC recommendation of keeping warming below 1.5°C above industrial levels, if possible. It will be useful to pay attention to what other levels of government may do as well and how their actions may support Colchester.

Mitigation Vs. Adaptation:

This Interim Corporate Climate Action Plan is a climate change mitigation strategy; it aims to reduce the Municipality's contribution to climate change so that the impacts experienced are lessened. The impacts of climate change can only be mitigated or minimized if all governments around the globe make a sin-

cere effort to curb emissions. This document is the first part of Colchester's contribution to this effort. The second part will be an upcoming Community Energy and Emissions Plan (CEEP) to cut community emissions and establish longer-term targets for corporate emissions.

This Plan is not an adaptation plan. Climate adaptation means to adapt a community to be more resilient and reduce its vulnerability to the impacts of climate change - including sea level rise, flooding, severe weather events, droughts, wildfires, and more. The Municipality partnered with the Town of Truro in 2013 to develop a comprehensive regional adaptation plan called the Regional Plan for

Climate Resilience for the County of Colchester & Town of Truro, which is still relevant and being implemented. The plan identifies and ranks the region's vulnerability to a variety of hazard risks, then provides priorities for adaptation.

Colchester's Corporate Greenhouse Gas Emissions:

Colchester completed a greenhouse gas emissions inventory for municipal operations as part of Milestone 1 for the Partners for Climate Protection program. The inventory used 2009 as the baseline year. Municipal operations have been divided into sectors according to the recommendations of the PCP program - Buildings, Fleet, Streetlights, Water & Sewage, and Solid Waste.

Emissions From Energy Consumption:

The following is a summary of Colchester's total emissions from energy-related municipal operations. The summary includes the mechanical operation and equipment at the solid waste facility; however, it does not include emissions from the actual landfill. For the purposes of this Action Plan, solid waste is being addressed separately from other sectors; this is because solid waste emissions made up over 75% of Colchester's total corporate emissions in 2009.

When included with other sectors, solid waste makes emissions from buildings, fleet, streetlights, and water & sewage seem negligible, when they are not.



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NOTICE

THE OFFICE WILL REMAIN OPEN DURING THIS PERIOD OF THE CORONAVIRUS OUTBREAK. HOWEVER, CONTACT SHOULD BE MADE BY PHONE OR EMAIL ONLY UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE.

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**"Please visit our website
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Guardian

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