

# INFORMATION REPORT



**TO** Guelph City Council

**SERVICE AREA** Planning, Engineering and Environmental Services

**DATE** September 16, 2010

**SUBJECT** Water Conservation and Efficiency Public Advisory Committee - 2010 Annual Report

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## BACKGROUND

In July of 2009, the Guelph Water Conservation and Efficiency Public Advisory Committee (WCEPAC) was formed by Council resolution. Following a call for applications and member selection process, the Committee's membership was endorsed by Council in December of 2009.

The purpose of the WCEPAC is to provide an ongoing mechanism for feedback and advice to staff on key aspects of implementation of the 2009 Water Conservation and Efficiency Strategy, including input on:

- Issues and opportunities to be addressed during the implementation of the 2009 Water Conservation and Efficiency Strategy;
- Alternative solutions;
- Design considerations;
- Community consultation and communications plans; and
- Other relevant matters that City staff refer to the PAC for feedback.

Staff are pleased to provide the following report on activities of the WCEPAC since the time of Committee formation.

## REPORT

### 2010 WCEPAC Meetings:

In accordance with the Council approved WCEPAC Term or Reference (TOR) the Committee is required to "meet quarterly at minimum with additional meetings to be called as required by the Committee Chair." The WCEPAC has proven to be a very active advisory committee with a total of five Committee meetings held since February 2010, with a sixth Committee meeting planned for September 21, 2010.

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### **Water Conservation and Efficiency Strategy - Implementation Update:**

In May 2009, Council endorsed the Water Conservation and Efficiency Strategy update. This strategy recommended various water conservation programs, policies and resources aimed to reduce average daily water use by 8.7 million liters of water per day by 2019. To achieve these recommendations, staff have been working to implement the following new water conservation program initiatives throughout 2010: Floor Drain Retrofit Rebate Program; Home Humidifier Rebate Program; Rainwater Harvesting System Rebate; and Blue Built Home Pilot Program.

In alignment with their mandate, staff brought these new programs to the WCEPAC in advance of implementation to seek feedback regarding program logistics, associated standards and marketing/promotion directions. In all cases, the WCEPAC has provided valuable input with respect to program design and roll-out, as well as considerations for potential program growth areas.

Beyond current program implementation, the WCEPAC is providing advice on logistical models for the Water Efficiency Home Audit and Installation Program. Following the recommendations of the WCEPAC, strategic partnerships are being pursued with Guelph Hydro and Union Gas Inc. to broaden the scope of the proposed service to include both water and energy home audits, to support the goals of the City's Community Energy Initiative. Consultations relating to this potential program are ongoing with officials from each partner organization.

### **Public Education - Water Conservation Public Education Communication Strategy:**

In February 2010, staff began development of a Water Conservation Public Education Communication Strategy. This consumer-based social-marketing strategy will define the public education and outreach communications strategies, as well as customer service practices to best engage, facilitate, and support members of the community to undertake desired water conservation actions.

As part of development of this comprehensive strategy, an initial focus group was completed with the WCEPAC to shape study objectives and to identify educational and communications resources which would best facilitate further public participation in the City's Water Conservation Program. Through the development of the strategy, information obtained from both the residential focus groups and a telephone survey was shared with the WCEPAC for comment and feedback. WCEPAC comments were also solicited on the final communication strategy report.

It is planned that the WCEPAC will be consulted throughout the implementation of the Water Conservation Public Education Communication Strategy's various recommendations.

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### **Program Refinement – Water Conservation and Efficiency Awards:**

A limited number of community submissions were received in response to the City's annual Water Conservation and Efficiency Awards announcement. As a result, staff have consulted with the WCEPAC to gain input regarding potential revisions to the awards program. As a result, revisions to the awards submission requirements and awards prizes are planned for 2010, as well as the addition of a new stream of recognition awards through which community water conservation leaders could be recognized outside of the formal awards application process.

### **Next Steps:**

As specified in the WCEPAC TOR, the term of the current Committee will end concurrently with the current term of Council. Staff will work with the City Clerk's office to complete a call for applications for WCEPAC members as part of the greater call for all City Agencies/Boards/Advisory Committees in the late fall of 2010.

With implementation of programming and policy recommendations of the Water Conservation and Efficiency Strategy still ongoing, and planned initiatives of Water Conservation Public Education Strategy yet to commence, the purpose and need for the WCEPAC still remains highly relevant. To date, staff have experienced significant benefits as a result of consultation with the WCEPAC, and foresee a continued need for dialogue with these community representatives as the City continues to pursue our aggressive long-term water conservation goals.

### **CORPORATE STRATEGIC PLAN**

1. An attractive, well-functioning and sustainable city.
5. A community-focused, responsive and accountable government.
6. A leader in conservation and resource protection/enhancement.
- 6.4 Less waste per capita than any comparable Canadian city.
- 6.5 Less energy and water per capita use than any comparable Canadian city.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

N/A

### **DEPARTMENTAL CONSULTATION/CONCURRENCE**

City Clerk's Office

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**COMMUNICATIONS**

N/A

**ATTACHMENTS**

N/A

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