

York Region Environmental Alliance

Minutes - Planning for Action Meeting

January 27-09

Opening Remarks

Karen Buckle - Communication and Community Outreach Coordinator, YREA

- Reasoning behind the new Planning for Action meetings: Environmental action is being taken across York Region by pockets of individuals, small groups of concerned citizens and environmental organizations within each municipality. But seldom do they get together to share their tactics, successes and challenges with one another in order to improve the environment across the Region as a whole. These new Planning for Action meetings will hopefully enable those individuals and small groups to come together, share their ideas, and create Regional action plans to become more effective both individually and from a regional perspective.
- Meetings will be held every 2-3 months and upcoming dates will be posted on YREA's website, www.yrea.org.
- Meetings are free and open to anyone.

Speaker Segment - Home Energy Conservation and Applications

1st Speaker

Jen Slykhuis – Member and Client Services, Windfall Ecology Centre

Energy Audits

For more information on Windfall's Home energy audits, please visit

http://www.windfallcentre.ca/index.php?s=Energy_Audits&p=Overview&

2nd Speaker

Todd Kirkpatrick – President, Your Solar Home

Residential Solar Applications

For more information on Your Solar Home's solar technology, please visit www.yoursolarhome.com

3rd Speaker

Brent Kopperson – Executive Director, Windfall Ecology Centre

Wind Applications and the Green Energy Act

For more information on the Green Energy Act, please visit www.greenenergyact.ca

YREA Update

Leslie Atkinson, Executive Director YREA

- YREA's future plans involve:
 - Capacity building
 - Developing YREA's website to include an E-Directory, a library of environmentally based documents accessible to anyone wanting to learn about the latest on certain issues
 - Developing YREA's website to include an events calendar highlighting relevant meetings, seminars, symposiums etc.
 - Planning for Action meetings (every 2-3 months) to help identify issues of concern and to aid in creating a plan of action towards certain issues
 - Expanded public education in the form of developing 2 new workshops in addition to our highly successful Organic Lawn Care workshops.

Planning for Action Segment

- Attendees were split into 3 groups to list the local environmental issues that were most important to them.
- Groups were then asked to prioritize their lists to determine the greatest need for action. (See prioritized lists below).
- Red issues are High Priority, Yellow issues, Medium Priority and Green Issues are low priority.

GROUP 1

- **Land Protection**
 - Dunlop Observatory
 - Greenbelt protection
 - Farm protection to ensure local food supply
- **Energy Efficiency**
 - Change legislation /bldg. codes to require efficiency and green energy use for residential, commercial and municipal use
- **Transportation**
 - Public transit improvement
 - Electric cars
- **Recycling and organics**
 - Finding alternatives to pelletization when profits are low
 - Elimination of Styrofoam and plastic bags
- **Pesticides and Eco-gardens**
 - Natural pest resistance
 - Native plants
 - Drought resistance
 - Ban on sale of pesticides as well as use
 - Commercial ban for use of pesticides

GROUP 2

- **Sustainable Development**
 - Rain barrels
 - Permeable paving instead of storm water reservoirs
 - Energy conservation incentive
 - Renewable energy incentive
- **Water**
 - Diminishing water supply from devo.
 - Excess of waste water
 - Protect lakes and watershed
 - Quality of YR's water supply
- **Funding**
 - Regional funding mechanism for community projects (i.e. TAF)
- **Rewrite packaging laws**
 - Ban plastic bags
- **Land Protection**
 - protect farmland
 - Support farmers
 - Green corridors and walking trails for humans and wildlife
- **Transportation**
 - Connect to Toronto better
 - More carpooling methods
- **Animal Rights**
 - food/pets/research in the wild

GROUP 3

- **Land Protection**
 - Significant woodlot study
 - Adoption of woodlots
 - Preserve farmlands
 - Heritage/green space
- **Education in Schools**
 - 3 R's
- **Quality of Water**
- **Site Clean-ups**
 - Enforcement of by MOE
 - Government reporting
- **Energy Efficiency**
 - Building code needs quicker response to enviro/green products
- **Community Gardens**

Summary

High – Medium Priorities:

- *Land Protection and Sustainable & Energy Efficient Development* (noted in all 3 groups)
- *Water Supply and Management* (noted in 2 of 3 groups)
- *Regional Funding Mechanism* (from 1 group)
- *Education in Schools* about the 3R's. (from 1 group)

Medium – Low Priorities:

- Waste issues involving *Recycling and Organics, Packaging Laws and Site Cleanups* (from all 3 groups)
- *Transportation* (from 2 groups)
- Non-commercial Gardening involving *Community Gardens, Pesticides and Eco-Gardens* (from 2 groups)
- *Animal Rights* (from 1 group)

It should be noted that during the meeting, it was made clear that the low priority (green) issues were not necessarily less important than the high and medium ones, but that there were pre-existing action plans in place for those particular issues and that our efforts might best be focussed on issues without action plans currently.

Between now and the next Planning for Action meeting (Thursday May 7, 2009), YREA will be taking the following measures to further its goal to create an action plan to address these high – medium priorities from a regional perspective.

- Seeking to develop partnerships with environmental organizations across the Region to share information and expertise
- Seeking volunteers to become municipal liaisons through attendance at council meetings and Environmental Advisory Committee meetings to strengthen a coordinated response about community/regional concerns
- Seeking volunteers to become virtual researchers on the issues of concern, helping to determine key factors, key players and most importantly key responses to the issues.

If you or your organization would like to become involved, please let us know.