

Planning For Action – Meeting #2 May 7th, 2009

Retrofitting your home for Energy Efficiency: Sara Mathew

Ms. Mathew explained the provincial and federal rebates that are currently available for improving the energy efficiency of your home. The Provincial government has committed to match the Federal government's maximum rebate of \$5000 plus the Ontario Power Association offers another rebate as well. To qualify for these rebates, you need to have 2 energy audits done (one pre and one post retrofits). The audits need to be performed by someone certified by Natural Resources Canada (NRCan) and the retrofits need to be completed within 18 months of the first audit. The rebate amounts and the energy ratings required for the retrofits are constantly changing so it is very important to stay current on the qualifications for the rebates throughout the time you have to complete the retrofits.

Breakdown of Energy Usage in a typical Ontario Home

Space Heating	57% - 62%
Water Heating	20% - 21%
Appliances	12% - 13%
Lighting	4% - 5%
Cooling	0 - 7%

Ms. Mathew shared the tricks and tips she learned through having an energy audit done on her home and the retrofits she had installed. A very informative talk!

Planning for Action meeting

Review of the last Planning for Action meeting (Jan 27-09)

Issues that were raised for discussion and required-action from last meeting were:

- *Water*- drinking water supply, excess of waste water due to development, protection of lakes and waterways
- *Land Protection*- Dunlap Observatory, Heritage and Greenbelt protection, farm protection for local food supply
- *Sustainable Development*- change in legislation and bldg codes to require energy efficient construction, incentives for renewable energy and conservation, bldg code needs quicker response to new green products
- *Education* – Better education in schools so students can teach their parents to live more sustainably
- *Regional Funding Mechanism* - Municipalities outside of York Region often have funding mechanisms in place for addressing local environmental issues. However within York Region, no such funding exists.

Goals for this meeting:

1. Discuss the smaller issues within each of the above issues
2. Identify one project that could address the main issue
3. Create a plan of action framework (preferably regional) for each project identified

Break Out Sessions

(Attendees chose to participate in the issue that concerned them most. Since many of the attendees were not present last meeting, Education and Water were not selected for discussion this time.)

Sustainable Development

Issues:

1. Grandfather clause to permit development on the ORM
 - Incorporate into current review
2. Support intensification
 - Through maximizing green space (Increase Planning Act 5% parkland contribution)
 - Strengthen land use policies in Official plans to protect and enhance natural heritage areas

3. Environmental Coordinators Group may be able to help identify what issues other municipalities across the GTA are having problems/successes with.

Possible Projects:

1. Eco-Industrial Parks
2. Waste Disposal for Industrial & Commercial users to encourage waste reduction through packaging, etc.
3. Compostable/biodegradable garbage bags for green bin and for packaging of produce, etc.

Goal:

To reduce and/or limit waste within industrial and commercial businesses as well as households

Strategy/Steps

- Lobby municipalities/ YR to regulate commercial/industrial waste disposal
- Lobby plastic/Styrofoam producers and governments to manufacture biodegradable compostable storage bags.

Land Protection

Issues:

- Greenbelt Act lacks teeth – how do we protect forests, wetlands, farmland?
- Provincial Policy Statement (public input opportunities) - Shift Ontario (sub-group of Smart Growth Network)
- How can public find out when green spaces are being considered for development? – local paper, town website, EBR
- How do we know whether land has already been spoken for or not?
- Private vs. Public (see land registry)
- Find species at risk – environmentally sensitive areas?
- What's been protected so far? – York Region Heritage Plan ...who are the watchdogs?
- Has land that's been "protected" on paper stayed "protected"?
- How can we help protect it?
- Lake Simcoe protection Act – no more than 15% paved was recommended

Goal: Self Educate

- Need transparency around land protectedness status (i.e. clickable map)
- Does Region have such a map?
- Create "hand book" re: land protection
- Consult STORM, Land Trust and MNR Land Use Maps as they have many of these things in place already

Regional Funding Mechanism

Issues:

1. What funding exists now?
 - CA's – Region and Towns provide \$\$\$
 - Environment gets smallest % tax \$\$\$
 - No current grass roots funding for education, implementation
2. Toronto Model
 - "Community Contribution" development funding – component for the environment
 - "Growth Pays for Growth" – definition needs clarity
3. Current Partnerships – CA's, Nature Conservancy
4. Outside funding \$\$\$ - need to attract
5. Recognize env. features to attract \$\$\$

Goal: To develop YR environmental fund

- Provide funding of env. project – partial, full, priority areas
- Partnerships in York Region
- Gov't involvement and commitment for some funding opportunities

Tasks:

1. Inventory of existing funding
2. Understanding environmental priorities of gov't and ENGO
 - Support through official plans (i.e. sustainability strategy)
3. Identify funding opportunities

Next Steps for YREA

- **Create a line of communication:** circulate contact info between participants of each break-out group via email
- **Review plans of action:** continue to work with volunteers and concerned citizens on completing a plan of action framework for each topic, suggest improvements/refinements, eventually implementing the plans of action once complete
- **Assist and coordinate where/when we can** to further the progress of each action plan

YREA will continue to:

- **Develop partnerships** with environmental organisations across the region to share information and expertise
- **Seek volunteers** to become active in their communities and help implement the projects we've outlined this evening
- **Seek volunteers** to become municipal liaisons through attendance at council meetings and Environmental Advisory Committee meetings to strengthen a coordinated response about community/regional concerns

Obviously, more work still needs to be done refining the plans of action and another meeting will be scheduled soon. The date will be posted on our website (www.yrea.org) so keep checking back.