



Environment and Climate Change Committee

Minutes

Meeting #: 22
Date: Tuesday, February 17, 2026
Time: 9:30 am
Location: Champlain Room, 110 Laurier Avenue West, and by electronic participation

Present: Chair: Councillor Shawn Menard, Vice-chair: Councillor Marty Carr, Councillor David Brown, Councillor Cathy Curry, Councillor Sean Devine, Councillor David Hill, Councillor Laine Johnson, Councillor Theresa Kavanagh, Councillor Rawlson King, Councillor Wilson Lo, Councillor Matt Luloff, Councillor Tim Tierney

1. Notices and meeting information for meeting participants and the public

Notices and meeting information are attached to the agenda and minutes, including: availability of simultaneous interpretation and accessibility accommodations; *in camera* meeting procedures; information items not subject to discussion; personal information disclaimer for correspondents and public speakers; notices regarding minutes; and remote participation details.

Accessible formats and communication supports are available, upon request.

Except where otherwise indicated, reports requiring Council consideration will be presented to Council on February 25, 2026 in Environment and Climate Change Committee Report 22.

The deadline to register by phone to speak, or submit written comments or visual presentations is 4 pm on Friday, February 13, 2026 and the deadline to register to speak by email is 8:30 am on Tuesday, February 17, 2026.

These “Summary Minutes” indicate the disposition of items and actions taken at the meeting. This document does not include all of the text that

will be included in the full Minutes, such as the record of written and oral submissions. Recorded votes and dissents contained in the Summary Minutes are draft until the full Minutes of the meeting are confirmed by the Committee. The draft of the full Minutes (for confirmation) will be published with the agenda for the next regular Committee meeting and, once confirmed, will replace this document.

2. Declarations of Interest

No Declarations of Interest were filed.

3. Confirmation of Minutes

3.1 ECCC Minutes 21 - Monday, December 8, 2025

4. Presentations

4.1 2025 Environmental Excellence Awards

Chair Menard and City Manager Wendy Stephanson welcomed nominees, the Senior Leadership Team and extended leadership team, who were present to recognize their staff's efforts, to the 2025 Environmental Excellence Awards.

The Chair read the list of nominees for the Internal Initiatives category and announced the winner: Neil Grandy for his work on Green Fleet Strategy.

The Chair then read the list of nominees for the Community category and announced the winners; Brian Ducey, Martin Habicht, Ryan Larose, Paul Mantil, Shawn Norman, Christopher Paquette and Kerry Vernick for their work on Salt Controllers on Sidewalk Machines.

Award recipients received individual award certificates. All nominees received Certificates of Nomination following the presentation.

On behalf of City Council, the City Manager and the Senior Leadership Team, Chair Menard expressed appreciation for the nominees' work.

5. Strategic Initiatives Departments

5.1 Community Environmental Projects Grant Program Expansion

File No. ACS2026-SI-CCR-0001 – Citywide

Nichole Hoover-Bienasz, Director, Climate Change and Resiliency, Strategic Initiatives Department (SI), Rachael Jones, Program Manager, Long Term Planning, Public Works (PW), Tara Redpath, Planner III, SI and Meike Woehlert, Project Manager, Environmental Program, PW provided a

presentation. A copy of the slide presentation is filed with the Office of the City Clerk.

The following members of the public spoke before the Committee and provided comments:

- William van Geest, Executive Director, Ecology Ottawa
- Angela Keller-Herzog, Executive Director, CAFES*
- James Scott MacKillop*
- Mireille Trent, Ottawa South Eco-Action Network (OSEAN)

[* Individuals / groups marked with an asterisk above either provided comments in writing or by e-mail; all submissions and presentations are held on file with the Office of the City Clerk.]

The following also responded to questions:

- Nichole Hoover-Bienasz, Director, Climate Change and Resiliency, Strategic Initiatives Department (SI);
- Tara Redpath, Planner III, SI; and
- Meike Woehlert, Project Manager, Environmental Program, PW

Following discussion and questions of staff, the Committee carried the report as presented with a direction to staff.

Report recommendation(s)

That Environment and Climate Change Committee recommend Council approve a dedicated funding stream for waste avoidance, reduction, and reuse initiatives within the Community Environmental Projects Grant Program, effective for the 2026 application period, as outlined in this report.

Carried

Direction to Staff (Chair Menard):

That staff, as part of the next scheduled program review of the Community Environmental Projects Grant Program in 2027:

1. **Assess the feasibility and implications of expanding eligible expenses to include staff time and operational costs incurred**

by community organizations to plan and implement projects receiving grant funding; and,

- 2. Identify options to reduce administrative burden associated with post-project reporting requirements while ensuring compliance with the requirements of the City's Grants and Contributions Policy and Procedures.**

6. In Camera Items

There were no *in camera* items.

7. Information Previously Distributed

7.1 Annual Drinking Water Source Protection Status Update - 2025

File No. ACS2026-ISW-AM-0004

8. Notices of Motions (For Consideration at Subsequent Meeting)

8.1 Tree Protection By-Law – Amendments – Tree Removals

Moved by W. Lo

WHEREAS the Tree Protection By-law (No. 2020-340), came into effect on January 1, 2021; and

WHEREAS it is critical that the City of Ottawa assist private property owners in protecting their homes from property damage caused by trees on municipal property; and

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Tree Protection By-law (No. 2020-340) be amended to allow any property owner to remove branches, trim or alter any tree or to remove a tree, trunk, or roots of any tree on their private property; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the General Manager shall approve the removal from municipal property by the City, of any tree, at its cost, upon the request of any adjacent private property owner, where an arborist or engineer states in a letter that the tree is causing or has the potential to cause damage to the private property.

8.2 Ward 24 Barrhaven East – Gospel Oak Fairlop Neighbourhood – Tree Protection By-Law – Removal of Municipal Trees

Moved by W. Lo

WHEREAS the Tree Protection By-law (No. 2020-340), came into effect on January 1, 2021; and

WHEREAS Section 17 (4) provides that “The General Manager may approve the removal from municipal property by the City of, [...] (4) a tree that is causing, or likely to cause in the future, serious damage to private property where other mitigation measures are unlikely to prevent future damage; and

WHEREAS it is critical that the City of Ottawa assist private property owners in protecting their homes from property damage caused by trees on municipal property; and

WHEREAS six properties throughout the Gospel Oak Fairlop neighbourhood potentially have issues with adjacent trees on municipal property; and

WHEREAS three properties throughout the Gospel Oak Fairlop neighbourhood have geotechnical reports proving serious property damage caused by adjacent trees on municipal property; and

WHEREAS these reports are evident of a larger problem within this neighbourhood; and

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the General Manager approve the removal from municipal property by the City, at the City’s expense, of any municipal tree in the neighbourhood of Gospel Oak Fairlop, at the request of any adjacent property owner, received between now and December 31, 2026.

Note: The notice of motion was subsequently withdrawn by the mover prior to the issuance of the agenda for the next meeting (21 April 2026).

9. Inquiries

9.1 Municipal Liability Exposure – Pre-construction Activities on the Kanata Lakes Golf Course lands

Submitted by Councillor C. Curry

Ground-disturbance and pre-construction activities are scheduled to commence today on lands comprising approximately 175 acres of documented mercury-impacted soil and water at the Kanata Lakes Golf Course.

My previous inquiry addressed environmental risk assessment, independence, and precaution. This inquiry is distinct and focuses specifically on municipal liability exposure arising from these activities.

Subject: Municipal Liability Exposure – Pre-Construction and Soil Disturbance Activities on the Kanata Lakes Golf Course lands

1. Has the City obtained a formal legal or risk management assessment regarding potential municipal liability exposure if mercury contamination were to migrate during pre-construction or soil disturbance activities that are municipally permitted, conditioned, or otherwise authorized?
2. While the Ontario Land Tribunal conditions permit the proponent to undertake certain testing activities, has the City conducted a separate municipal liability analysis, or is the City's position that compliance with OLT-imposed conditions fully insulates the municipality from liability arising from contaminated soil disturbance?
3. If a municipal liability assessment has been undertaken:
 - a. Which branch (e.g., Legal Services, Risk Management) conducted it?
 - b. Has that assessment been documented?
4. What environmental impairment insurance coverage, financial securities, or indemnification mechanisms are currently in place to protect the City and taxpayers if contamination migrates or remediation costs escalate during this phase of work?
5. Has the City assessed whether reliance on technical assurances provided by proponent-retained consultants, in the context of known contamination, could increase municipal liability exposure if those assurances later prove incomplete or incorrect?
6. Given that mercury contamination across the site has been documented through prior proceedings, does the City acknowledge that it has formal notice of potential environmental risk, and if so,

how has that notice been incorporated into the City's liability analysis for permitting pre-construction activities?

7. What documented protocol exists to immediately suspend work if monitoring or site conditions indicate contaminant migration or increased risk, and who has authority to activate that suspension notwithstanding OLT conditions permitting testing?

10. Other Business

10.1 Motion - Councillor R. King - Bird Friendly Ottawa's application to Nature Canada

Councillor R. King introduced and read in his Motion.

The following also responded to questions:

- Nichole Hoover-Bienasz, Director, Climate Change and Resiliency, Strategic Initiatives Department (SI);
- Louisa Coates, Bird Friendly Ottawa

Following discussion and questions of staff, the Committee carried the motion as presented.

Motion No. ECCC ECCC-22-01

Moved by R. King

That the rules of procedure be waived to consider the matter below at the February 17, 2026 meeting of Environment and Climate Change Committee due to the application deadline.

WHEREAS Bird Friendly Ottawa is a volunteer-based, non-profit organization whose mission is to advance bird-friendly actions in Ottawa to create safer environments for birds;

WHEREAS Bird Friendly Ottawa advances this mission by addressing and mitigating key threats to birds, protecting and restoring natural habitat, strengthening climate resilience, and conducting community outreach and education, guided by principles of shared responsibility, inclusive and accessible decision-making, proactive and innovative action, and strong partnerships;

WHEREAS Bird Friendly Ottawa engages residents across the city to support personal and collective action that balances nature, wildlife, and people, and has hosted more than 100 public events since 2022;

WHEREAS Ottawa lies on the Atlantic Flyway, one of North America's major migratory bird routes, nearly half of Canada's bird species are found in the Ottawa region, and the Ottawa River is designated an Important Bird and Biodiversity Area;

WHEREAS Bird Friendly City certification is a national designation administered by Nature Canada that formally recognizes municipal leadership in bird conservation, biodiversity protection, climate resilience, and community engagement, with certification valid for three years,

WHEREAS There are 36 Canadian municipalities currently certified, and the next application intake closes on February 23, 2026;

WHEREAS Ottawa meets the criteria for entry-level certification and scores at entry or intermediate levels across all program categories, based on Bird Friendly Ottawa's assessment;

WHEREAS Bird Friendly Ottawa has requested a letter of support from the City of Ottawa to accompany its application to Nature Canada, and an application for entry-level certification is currently under review by City Natural Systems staff prior for submission;

WHEREAS Entry-level Bird Friendly City certification primarily recognizes existing municipal work and community partnerships, does not require new funding, new programs, or policy changes during the certification period, and does not create any obligation to pursue higher levels of certification;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Committee recommend Council endorse Bird Friendly Ottawa's application to Nature Canada to have the City of Ottawa recognized as a certified Bird Friendly City;

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Committee recommend Council authorize the Chair of the Environment and Climate Change Committee to provide a letter of support, on behalf of Council, to accompany the application.

Carried

11. Adjournment

Next Meeting

Tuesday, 21 April 2026

The meeting adjourned at 11:21 am.

Original signed by M.Aston,
Committee Coordinator

Original signed by Councillor S.
Menard, Chair