



Meeting held April 16, 2026

A meeting of the Environment & Climate Change Advisory Committee is held this day commencing at 5:30 o'clock p.m. in Room 140, 350 City Hall Square West, there being present the following members:

Councillor Kieran McKenzie, Chair
Frank Butler
Mike Fisher
Jennifer Nantais
Michael Schneider
Maria Boada, via Conference Phone

Regrets received from:

Councillor Angelo Marignani

Guests in attendance:

Phillippa von Zeigenweidt
Giovanni Abati

Also present are the following resource personnel:

Brana Cesljarov, Supervisor Environmental Sustainability & Climate Change
Amy Nevills, Environment & Sustainability Coordinator
Karen Kadour, Committee Coordinator

1. Call to Order

The Chair calls the meeting to order at 5:30 o'clock p.m. and the Environment & Climate Change Advisory Committee considers the Agenda being Schedule A, attached hereto, matters which are dealt with as follows:

2. Declaration of Conflict

None disclosed.

3. Minutes

Moved by Michael Fisher, seconded by Jennifer Nantais,
That the minutes of the Environment & Climate Change Advisory Committee of its meeting held February 19, 2026, **BE ADOPTED** as presented.
Carried.

Addition to the Agenda

Moved by Michael Schneider, seconded by Jennifer Nantais,
That the Procedure By-law **BE WAIVED** to add the following addition to the Agenda:

4.7 James Chacko, Transit Windsor – State of the Fleet

4. Business Items

4.1 Black Oak Heritage Park

Karen Alexander, City Naturalist and Supervisor Natural Areas advises that Black Oak Park was originally purchased by the city for conservation and from the beginning, unauthorized activities were taking place. Further details regarding this matter are as follows:

- The city reviewed each problematic activity and removed it from the park; however, the biking activity has been difficult to eradicate from the park.
- In 2023, staff detail mapped the impact of these trails. The map identified that each trail was 2 metres wide with hundreds of impacted features created to provide biking features, from ramps to creating a bike park on city property. Frank Butler indicates there are 12 kilometers of trails with scores of ramps along with 20 wheelbarrows. He adds that trees are marked with axes to identify where the trails are located.

The Chair asks if someone is doing something illegal in the park, what is the best course of action. Karen Alexander remarks her team would notify her and she would contact Bylaw or the Police.

Michael Fisher asks what makes Black Oak special and what is the impact. Karen Alexander responds Black Oak is a rare ecosystem; the city purchased the park because of the habitat, species at risk, and provincially significant wetlands. The city has been investing in restoration work to improve the prairie systems and to improve the savannah habitat. She adds the area south of the rail tracks was intended to be a quiet nature reserve for species to be at peace and there is an entire bike track across that parcel.

Michael Fisher asks what the legal implications are if someone were to be hurt on these trails. The Chair responds this is a legal question.

The Chair remarks there is an opportunity to recommend to Council to look at options to further strengthen environmental protections in those parks. He suggests approving funding for a sign campaign and to provide information for the public regarding what to do if inappropriate behavior is witnessed and also to urge people to play a role proactively in protecting the parks.

Michael Fisher asks in terms of mountain biking, have there have been direct communications with the stakeholders to determine if people can be moved to Malden Park. James Chacko advises there are people who want to continue to use Black Oak which is not suited for active cycling activities.

The Chair remarks that the Committee's hope is that the people utilize the city's resources rather than the protected areas. He suggests that conversations be held to advise folks where additional amenities can be redirected.

Mike Schneider states that as long as that infrastructure is there, people will take that as an invitation to use that ramp in the park. He suggests removing all of the infrastructure and to naturalize the park without a trail. Karen Alexander supports this, however, notes it would be very expensive to undertake this.

Jennifer Nantais agrees with a communications social media campaign and suggests that be the first tactic as the city has tried to remove and to obscure the trails. The City has spent money on signs that have been defaced and removed. Cyclists have been the most vocal and aggressive voices but so many other people have been using the park for biodiversity and other things. She suggests that the story of the park needs to change; this is a place where biodiversity needs to be protected.

Moved by Frank Butler, seconded by Michael Fisher,

THAT there is an opportunity to make a recommendation to Council to look at options to further protect and strengthen the environmental protections in those parks; and

That the broader community inclusive of cycling groups **BE ENGAGED** and other environmental organizations to see if there are options to create greater opportunities to protect the environment; and

THAT the Environment and Climate Change Committee **APPROVE** an expenditure in the amount of \$500. for a communications and outreach campaign that includes signs and other forms of communication.

THAT City Council **BE URGED** to take steps to address habitat issues in Black Oak Heritage Park, and further,

THAT the Legal Department **BE REQUESTED** to provide a brief outlining the options available to regulate use within Black Oak Heritage Park.

Carried.

4.2 National Urban Park Discussion

James Chacko advises that Council has directed Administration to complete the agreement in principle with Parks Canada. This is the next step before the final formal designation agreement that ultimately creates the National Urban Park between the City of Windsor, Parks Canada, ERCA, and various First Nations partners.

Mike Fisher asks if there is a sense of when the proposal framework might be available for the community to view and to provide feedback through the Parks Canada process.

Moved by Mike Schneider, seconded by Jennifer Nantais,

That the Environment & Climate Change Advisory Committee **ENDORSES** steps City Council has taken to move the Ojibway National Urban Park issue forward; and,

That Administration **BE URGED** to continue work with Parks Canada and other stakeholders to bring the park to fruition; and,

That City Council **BE ENCOURAGED** to promote greater public consultation in collaboration with all stakeholders; and further,

That Administration **BE REQUESTED** to continue working towards the solution that provides permanence in protecting the ecological integrity of the park.

Carried

Carried

4.3 Windsor Police – Bike Theft Policy

The Chair reports that representatives from Windsor Police are unable to attend this meeting but will attend the next meeting of ECCAC.

4.7 James Chacko, Transit Windsor – State of the Fleet

James Chacko, Executive Director, Transit Windsor advises in terms of the overall fleet, they have continued to modernize the fleet, i.e. replacing hybrid buses with hybrid buses, and continue to look at the viability of moving to electric buses or other alternative fuel source buses. Transit Windsor also persists in looking at their route modernization to ensure there is as much fuel efficiency as possible from a fuel and financial standpoint. Will be updating the Transit Master Plan in the future.

Michael Schneider remarks that the Town of Tecumseh has electric bus service which performs well. He expresses concern that the City of Windsor has 40-foot buses with only one passenger on the bus during the night at times. He suggests when ridership is low to utilize a smaller bus. He asks if Transit Windsor can provide a comparative estimate on what other municipalities do in terms of costs savings, and the use of electric buses.

Jennifer Nantais states that aside from an electrified garage, she asks if a dedicated charger is possible. She refers to municipalities that are engaging in pilot projects and asks if transit cities talk and learn from each other.

The Chair requests that James Chacko be invited to attend a meeting in the fall to provide a report regarding opportunities to further discuss the operations as a whole and approaches to make them more environmentally sustainable.

Moved by Michael Schneider, seconded by Mike Fisher,

That City Council **DIRECT** Transit Windsor to prepare a report to review Transit Windsor operations to make them more environmentally sustainable including a review of grant opportunities to support those initiatives from senior levels of government.

Carried.

Moved by Maria Boada, seconded by Michael Schneider,

That City Council **DIRECT** Transit Windsor to report back on opportunities to electrify parts of the fleet without proceeding with a full reconstruction of the Transit garage.

Carried.

4.4 Earth Day Discussion

Amy Nevills advises Earth Day will be held on Sunday, April 26, 2026, at Malden Park and adds that 60 exhibitors will be present. There will be a wide range of activities for the children, along with free giveaways. Various presentations will be available as well as live animals and birds on site.

Moved by Maria Boada, seconded by Mike Fisher,
That the update regarding the Earth Day Event **BE RECEIVED**.
Carried.

4.5 Budget Discussion

Brana Cesljarov reports that the operating budget carryover of \$4,400 from 2025 has been approved.

Moved by Jen Nantais, seconded by Mike Fisher,
That the budget update regarding the Operating Budget carryover of funds from 2025 **BE RECEIVED**.
Carried.

4.6 CIMA+ Consultancy Update for Environmental Sustainability and Climate Change Department

Brana Cesljarov advises in 2025, City Council directed Administration to engage an external consultant to the evolving domestic landscape of environmental priorities and targets to ensure the City's plans and actions remain aligned with current federal and provincial policy direction, funding programs, and emerging best practices. It also requested a review of approximately 500 action items and recommendations that are contained in the existing ESCC plans. This has been endorsed by Council in the past and they are working to develop a clear and practical roadmap to implement priority actions with available staffing and budget resources and to provide a high-level scan of approached being taken by other municipalities. It is an extensive process with a number of groups that are engaged and the consultant conducted interviews internally with staff. They also offered an opportunity to Council to provide feedback in the process. She adds the final draft is close to being complete.

The Chair advises ECCAC will be notified when this report will be going to the Environment, Transportation & Public Safety Standing Committee.

Moved by Jennifer Nantais, seconded by Mike Fisher,
That the CIMA+ Consultancy Update provided by Brana Cesljarov, Supervisor
Environmental Sustainability & Climate Change **BE RECEIVED**.
Carried.

5. Subcommittee Reports

5.1 Bird Team Subcommittee

Jennifer Nantais, Chair provides the following updates:

- World Migratory Bird Day is May 9, 2026, which will be held at Ojibway Nature Centre. Activities will be provided. She asks the members to spread the word.
- The Committee has approved stickers and window kits and adds that the team will be sourcing those.
- Mike Fisher asks if consideration is still being given to purchase t-shirts with the tufted titmouse. Jennifer Nantais responds there is no budget for t-shirts but suggests getting a design cued up when funds for t-shirts become available.

Moved by Mike Fisher, seconded by Michael Schneider,
That the update provided by the Chair of the Bird Team Subcommittee **BE RECEIVED**.
Carried.

5.2 Planning and Environment Subcommittee

No report.

5.3 Public Education and Engagement Subcommittee

Maria Boada provides the following updates:

- The second Public Engagement speed network event was held with 30-40 in attendance.
- Looking to do a climate café on May 27, 2026, at Windsor Eats
- Asking if various organizations can appear as speakers at ECCAC meetings.

Brana Cesljarov clarifies that having guest speakers is within the scope of the ECCAC mandate.

The Chair asks how much time should be allotted for the speaker to present, and who should they be. He suggests deferring the invitation to the speaker(s) until the fall 2026.

Moved Frank Butler, seconded by Jennifer Nantais,

That the update provided by the Chair, Public Education and Engagement **BE RECEIVED**.

Carried.

Moved by Mike Fisher, seconded by Jennifer Nantais,

That **APPROVAL BE GIVEN** to invite environmental organizations to attend meetings of the Environment & Climate Change Advisory Committee to be held in the fall 2026.

Carried.

Frank Butler voting nay.

5.5 Budget Committee

Frank Butler provides an overview of the items noted in the “Budget Subcommittee, ECCAC” as **attached**.

He reviews the topics outlined in his report that includes the WIFF Festival, 2025, Enbridge Right of Use, Peche Island Proposed Dredging, and Greenwashing of Earth Day, 2026.

Councillor Kieran McKenzie, Chair proposes that the matter entitled “Enbridge Free Right of Use” come back to a future meeting for debate and discussion.

Moved by Frank Butler, seconded by Michael Schneider,

That the matter entitled “Enbridge Free Right of Use” **BE DEFERRED** to the next meeting and further, that resources from the city **BE INVITED** to attend the meeting.

Carried.

Frank Butler expressed concerns regarding Enbridge’s sponsorship of the Earth Day event and suggested that future engagement with similar proponents be reviewed in light of potential greenwashing considerations. He also noted the value of involving the Environment & Climate Change Advisory Committee in the review of sponsorships and vendors prior to promotional activities, to support the integrity of Earth Day messaging.

The Chair inquired about the current criteria used for selecting sponsorships and requested that staff report back on the relevant policy.

6. New Business

None.

7. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Thursday, June 4, 2026, at 5:30 p.m. in a room to be determined.

8. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting is adjourned at 7:35 o'clock p.m.