

Council Meeting
November 20, 2023

Comments Received Regarding Item 10.2

Community Energy Partnerships

Letter from Hart Jansson: Halton Action for Climate Emergency Now

Oakville Council delegation Nov 20, 2023

OBSERVATIONS:

Oakville residents may be uninformed or confused by the current state of climate action in Oakville. The most recent report received by Council in July seems to indicate that a previous initiative to help establish a commercial enterprise that would implement home-energy retrofits may have been abandoned. As this was one of the key projects defined in the Community Energy Strategy (CES), the status of this initiative is critical.

A number of other key climate action projects mentioned in the CES, that were to have been overseen by the Future Energy Oakville (FEO), are not mentioned in the July Climate Action Report.

The FEO Centre is currently operating on a skeleton budget, with less than one FTE. The original plan called for the FEO to have about 7 FTEs in 2023, with a budget in excess of \$1M. There has been no news following the fundraising study that FEO commissioned, that was to have been complete at the end of September.

The hoped-for unanimity on community climate action at Halton Region has failed to materialize, and there is no forecast date for the presentation of a Halton Community Climate Action Plan at Regional Council.

QUESTIONS:

The agenda of this Council meeting regarding Community Energy Partnerships indicates that Council is ceasing its involvement with the OETF. What is the status of the OETF, that developed the original CES?

The CES was referenced in the annual Climate Action Report (CAR) received by Council in July – will FEO be responsible for revising/maintaining the CES?

As a number of key projects detailed in the CES are not being tracked or implemented, what climate action plan are we following in Oakville? As the Halton Region strategic plan for climate action specifies that the Region will:

“Support the work of the Local Municipalities and community partners to develop a Community Climate Action Plan” it is important that we continue to have an ambitious plan in Oakville that will achieve substantial GHG emissions reduction: what is the plan?

The KPIs identified in the July Climate Action Report are inadequate to measure the most important progress indicator which is: community emissions reduction in Oakville. This could be used as a motivator for the public to ‘do their bit’ to reduce emissions. Does Council agree that this is an important objective?

RECOMMENDATIONS:

HACEN/GASP recommend that Council and the public would benefit greatly from identification and measurement of more meaningful direct and indirect performance indicators, for the achievement of objectives stated in the CES. Unless this will be done as part of the Halton Community Climate Action Plan (CAP), we recommend that the FEO be tasked with developing a plan to define the performance indicators that will be tracked.

Given that Council is choosing to be more reliant on FEO to achieve Climate Action objectives, we recommend that Oakville contribute \$200,000 to the FEO budget in 2024 and make efforts to find / encourage other sources of additional funding for the FEO for 2024 and beyond.

Given that the Halton Community CAP is vital to achieving Climate Action goals in Oakville and in Halton, we recommend that the Mayor and Regional Councillors do whatever is possible to help achieve the necessary consensus among municipalities in Halton to enable the Halton CCAP to be initiated and to be successful.

We hope that Mayor Burton's attendance at COP28 in Doha provides inspiration for the leadership we need to agree on and implement a climate action plan in Oakville and Halton.
