

Meeting Minutes



Middle Musquodoboit Watershed Advisory Committee

November 18, 2021

Natural Resources Education Centre and
Virtually via Microsoft Teams

Meeting Time:
6:30 pm

Adjourned:
9:00 pm

Member name and position		Agency/Representation
Attendees	Mike Allen (MA), Watershed Planner,	NS Environment and Climate Change (NSECC)
	Barry Geddes (BG), (Acting Chair), Watershed Manager	Halifax Water
	Andrew Faulkner (AF), Planning and Development,	Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM)
	Anna McCarron (AM), (Secretary), Source Water Planner,	Halifax Water
	Matthew McFetridge (MM), District Forest Technician,	NS Department of Natural Resources and Renewables
	Hugh Parker (HP), Representative,	Musquodoboit River Watershed Society (MRWS)
	Mark Sutherland (MS), Representative,	Agriculture Sector
	Kerry-Anne Taylor (KT), Representative,	Community Landowner
Guest	Councillor Cathy Deagle Gammon,	District 1 Halifax Regional Municipality
Regrets	Rob Kay (RK), Representative,	Middle Musquodoboit Community Landowner/Customer
	Dave Taylor (DT), Representative,	Forestry/Woodlot Owner

1. Attendance / Introductions

Meeting called to order by Chair, BG.

Notes:	Regrets conveyed (see above). Quorum noted. Minutes prepared from hand-written notes, not electronically recorded due to technical difficulties.
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2. Review and Approval

a. November 18, 2021 Meeting Agenda

Discussion:	Additions to New Business section of the presented Agenda are as follows:
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	i. New members needed for forestry sector, private landowner, and customer; ii. Terms of Reference review – confidentiality clause; iii. Presentation about sustainable farming practices that are good for water; and iv. Adopt-a-Stream Program has 1 billion trees to plant.	
Decision	All in favour to approve Agenda with additions.	
Motion to approve November 18, 2021 Agenda		KT; seconded by AF
b. March 16, 2021 Meeting Notes (no quorum at this meeting)		
Discussion:	Correction: Change “Association” to “Society” under 3.b.iv.	
Decision	All in favour to approve Notes with Correction.	
Motion to approve Notes		KT; seconded by AF

3. Old Business		
a. Education and Awareness/Community Outreach Strategies:		
i. Signage update: <i>The sites of the seven (7) existing watershed signs were displayed on Google Earth and projected to the members.</i>		
Discussion:	The Dean community in the northeast section of the watershed is lacking signage indicating the watershed area. There may be a sign in storage that could be erected in this area. First we need to explore potential sign sites. Otherwise, the existing signs are noticeable and no concerns or comments have been expressed about them to the members.	
Decision	Explore adding a sign for the upper portion of the watershed area.	
Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline
Create a simple points map showing the locations of all the signs to present at the next meeting.	AM	Complete
Install a sign in the upper portion of the Middle Musquodoboit watershed area.	AM	Spring 2022
ii. Letter of Request asking that the Committee present to the Department of Agriculture (DoA) Minister’s Conference		
Discussion:	BG contacted the Agriculture Minister’s office about speaking at the 2022 Agriculture Minister’s Conference , to be held February 1-2. Paula Putnam of NSDoA encouraged BG to prepare a presentation. Water is one of the topics on this year’s Conference agenda. There is no need to write a letter to DoA now since conference organizers are in communication via email with BG. BG described the background to CDG of a business relationship between Halifax Water and a local farmer to reduce the levels of nitrogen being taken up through the water	

	<p>supply intake, which is situated at the edge of the farmer’s field. One acre of the partner farmer’s land was involved in the transaction.</p> <p>CDG suggested that this business relationship be described in a white paper.</p> <p>MS added that he worked with a soil nutrient planner to help determine how to alleviate the nutrient load in the raw water being drawn into the Middle Musquodoboit Water Supply Plant (WSP).</p> <p>BG asked MS to participate at the Conference to shed light on his role in the memorandum of understanding between his farm business and Halifax Water.</p> <p>Another topic of concern that should be expressed at the conference is the continued practice of allowing cattle to access watercourses. Discuss alternatives to this practice and how Halifax Water and the agricultural community may find joint solutions.</p>	
Decision:	<p>Continue communicating with the organizers of the Minister’s Conference about presenting at the next live conference (pending Covid-19 restrictions).</p> <p>The Committee’s best tool is education, not limited to the following:</p> <p>Get signs up, publish newsletter ASAP and explore ability to present at the Minister of Agriculture conference with assistance from MS regarding agricultural BMPs, especially regarding keeping cattle out of watercourses. (see Action Item #2 below).</p>	
Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline
1. Ask the Department of Agriculture whether Halifax Water may present at future Minister’s Conferences regarding water quality protection efforts with respect to agriculture.	BG	Complete
2. Present at Agricultural Minister’s Conference [live conference postponed to November 3 rd and 4 th 2022. Webinar series conducted February 16 – April 6, 2022.]	BG/MS	Pending invitation.
iii. Newsletter/Outreach		
1. Newsletter topics based on questions raised at the 2019 Halifax Exhibition Booth		
a. Sod farming presentation to discuss practices and BMPs		
Discussion:	BG spoke to a local sod farmer about his business and about presenting at a meeting.	
Decision	The sod farmer is receptive to presenting, perhaps at our next meeting, to discuss the sustainability and sod farming best management practices within the scope of the Committee’s mandate.	
Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline
Approach sod farming community about mitigating impacts to water quality.	BG	Complete

A sod farming community representative is to present about industry practices at a future meeting and discuss whether their practices coincide with Agricultural BMPs.	BG/Sod farmer	Future meeting TBD
b. Golf course (River Oaks impact on watershed area?)		
Discussion:	At the March 2021 Committee meeting, another industry perceived to pose potential risks to the watershed area was the Meagher’s Grant (River Oaks) golf course. This golf course is outside the watershed area and beyond the Committee’s scope.	
Decision	Remove from Agenda	
c. Explain watershed area restrictions within the watershed area		
Discussion:	No discussion.	
Decision:	Explain restrictions in a future issue of the newsletter.	
d. Municipal water supply protection opportunities through municipal bylaw		
Discussion:	<p>AF updated the Committee on the status of the HRM planning development department efforts. The Centre Plan process is ending, which will free up planners to work on the next primary focus, i.e., homogenizing the land use bylaws. As the Regional Plan is being reviewed – a 4-5-year process – that will provide opportunity for public input, which could also allow an opportunity to create a new municipal bylaw zone for the Musquodoboit Valley/Dutch Settlement Plan Area Land Use By-law.</p> <p>Changes have been adopted such as setbacks from watercourses and in consideration of the Statement of Provincial Interest Regarding Agricultural Land (outcome of Action Item #3 below).</p>	
Decision	Explore options about where HRM’s authority lies in the LUB and in the HRM Charter for adopting bylaws for protecting municipal drinking water supply watercourses (Action Item #2 below).	
e. Municipal water supply protection opportunities through municipal bylaw		
f. Municipal water supply protection opportunities through municipal bylaw		
g. Municipal water supply protection opportunities through municipal bylaw		
h. Municipal water supply protection opportunities through municipal bylaw		
i. Municipal water supply protection opportunities through municipal bylaw		
j. Municipal water supply protection opportunities through municipal bylaw		
k. Municipal water supply protection opportunities through municipal bylaw		
l. Municipal water supply protection opportunities through municipal bylaw		
m. Municipal water supply protection opportunities through municipal bylaw		
n. Municipal water supply protection opportunities through municipal bylaw		
o. Municipal water supply protection opportunities through municipal bylaw		

<p>3. Investigate what farm setback bylaws other municipalities have applied, per section 2.2 of the Guide to Agricultural BMPs (e.g., municipal land-use bylaws specifically designed to protect water quality) and how they were able to do this. Was it through the MGA or HRM Charter?</p>	<p>AF/MA/BG/AM</p>	<p>Complete</p>
<p>4. What other avenues are there to keep cattle out of watercourses. It is a potential watercourse and agriculture problem and a potential future project that could be avoided if mitigations were applied.</p>	<p>MS</p>	<p>Complete</p>
<p>Discussion:</p>	<p>Generally, the Committee’s best outreach tool is education.</p>	
<p>Decision:</p>	<p>Take action on educating the community, not limited to the following: Get signs up, publish newsletter ASAP and explore ability to present at the Minister of Agriculture conference with assistance from MS regarding agricultural BMPs, especially regarding keeping cattle out of watercourses.</p>	
<p>Action Items</p>		
<p>Halifax Water to publish a newsletter ASAP based on the questions from the Halifax Exhibition Booth outlined above and the subsequent meetings discussions; and showcase examples of what the agriculture industry is doing to mitigate impacts and improvements to water quality in cooperation with Halifax Water.</p>	<p>AM</p>	<p>Third or fourth newsletter</p>
<p>Highlight AaS project in the next issue of the newsletter. (see project details under Agenda item 3.b. below).</p>	<p>AM</p>	<p>Next (2nd) newsletter issue.</p>
<p>b. NSSA Adopt-a-Stream (AaS) Southern Uplands Project</p>		
<p>i. Halifax Water support for project</p>		
<p>Discussion:</p>	<p>Halifax Water provided funding support for this project.</p>	
<p>Decision:</p>	<p>Remove from agenda</p>	
<p>Action Items</p>		
<p>Remove from Agenda</p>	<p>AM</p>	<p>Complete</p>
<p>ii. Halifax Water’s logo on the project’s interpretive sign.</p>		
<p>Discussion:</p>	<p>The members felt the sign was too small for people to notice without stopping at the project site. However, the sign content and all the logos were well presented.</p>	
<p>Decision:</p>	<p>Remove from agenda</p>	
<p>Action Items</p>		
	<p>Person Responsible</p>	<p>Deadline</p>

Halifax Water will provide its logo for placement on AaS interpretive sign to recognize Halifax Water's support for the project.	BG	Complete
Remove from Agenda	AM	Complete
iii. MRWS Presentation of AaS Project to Committee		
Discussion:	<p>BG suggested Amy Weston (Coordinator of AaS Program) present to the Committee about the Adopt-a-Stream project led by the Musquodoboit River Watershed Society (MRWS) this past summer.</p> <p>It is MRWS' responsibility to present to the Committee, perhaps with help from the AaS staff closest to the project.</p> <p>HP will need technical assistance to pull the presentation together.</p> <p>Ditch Brook is still on the radar as a potential future project and is under investigation by the MRWS.</p>	
Decision:	<p>HP will send AM pictures to include in the newsletter featuring the project.</p> <p>The Committee will provide some assistance, eg. PowerPoint expertise if given the content.</p>	
Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline
HP will send AM pictures to include in the newsletter featuring the project.	HP	ASAP
Prepare a presentation that could also be used at the next Halifax County Exhibition and other opportunities such as the Agricultural Conference (including picture series that BG presented at March 2021 meeting).	HP/AaS/AM/BG	In time for presentation opportunities
iv. Musquodoboit River Watershed Society (MRWS) future projects		
Discussion:	<p>The AaS Program has 1 billion trees to plant and is asking affiliate community groups like the MRWS to contemplate planting locations for these trees. If anyone knows an area that could use some trees inside the watershed area let HP know (Action Item #1 below). A field near Higgins Brook was suggested.</p> <p>The MRWS has 15 project ideas that they have submitted for consideration for a future Adopt-a-Stream project in the vicinity of the watershed area.</p> <p>Only projects inside the watershed area are eligible for funding/in-kind support from Halifax Water.</p>	
Decision:	<p>HP to send a list of the projects under consideration to AM/BG to determine whether any of them fall within the watershed area and eligibility for Halifax Water funding (Action Item #2 below).</p>	
Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline
1. If anyone knows an area that could use some trees inside the watershed area let HP know	All	ASAP

2. Send Halifax Water the list of potential AaS projects to be reviewed for funding eligibility (i.e., are they inside the watershed area).	HP	As needed in time for project approval
c. Tour of Middle Musquodoboit Water Supply Plant		
Discussion:	Schedule WSP tour after Covid-19 restrictions have been lifted. April is best time for members.	
Decision:	KT will discuss timing and details and discuss who will conduct the tour with the Small Systems Lead Operator. AM will arrange tour with members pending Covid restrictions.	
Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline
Arrange MM WSP tour via Doodle poll for a time in April and consider holding next meeting prior to/after the tour if a meeting is required at the time.	AM/KT	April 2022
d. Outcome from NS Department of Agriculture Presentation by Michael Kittilsen		
i. Funding opportunities for Halifax water to provide		
ii. Education of farmers regarding funding opportunities and priorities		
Discussion:	These items have been addressed or will be through other efforts such as through the Agriculture Minister’s Conference (described earlier), which will provide an important venue to educate the farming community.	
Decision:	Remove items d., d.i and d.ii from the Agenda	
Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline
Remove items d., d.i and d.ii from the Agenda	AM	Complete
1. NSECC provision of PWA map data at request of Dept. of Agriculture (MA)		
Discussion:	An ongoing partnership data exercise between the NS Department of Agriculture (NSDoA) and NSECC (Nova Scotia Environment and Climate Change) is proceeding. NSECC’s GIS person has sorted out what files can be provided and where they will reside online. Only protected water areas (PWA), not the natural water supply areas (NWSA) will be posted online because many utilities do not want NWSA in the public purview. For example, the Middle Musquodoboit watershed area would not be posted online since it is not a PWA and does not have any provincial regulations attached to it; however, it would be included within an internal watershed management layer within government. It also looks as though the PWA layers may be included in Viewpoint (a real estate website) as well.	
Decision:	Work is ongoing.	
Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline

Keep on agenda	MA	Ongoing
e. Eastern Habitat Joint Venture (EHJV)		
Discussion:	MA is working on determining who is the new coordinator of this program.	
Decision:	Continue to investigate	
Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline
Continue to investigate whether the EHJV program is still active and provides program support that alleviates pressure on riparian areas.	MA	Ongoing
f. Potential pollution in local pond		
Discussion:	The pond is located just past the high school with a green growth floating on top, which members believe to be duck weed. To determine whether it is a risk to the water supply, it needs to be examined more closely.	
Decision:	BG will investigate more closely whether there could be an impact to the river.	
Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline
Investigate the water flow from this pond to determine if there is anything the Committee/Halifax Water should be concerned that the pond presents a risk to the river.	BG	When weather conditions allow.

4. New Business		
a. Membership positions required for Forestry Sector, Private Landowner and Customer-Landowner		
i. Forestry Sector Committee Representative		
Discussion:	Dave Taylor, who represented the forestry sector on the Committee has regrettably stepped aside from the Committee. The Committee thanks Dave very much for his time and participation on the Committee and wishes him well.	
Decision:	Committee members suggested Conform (Consolidated Forest Owners Resource Management) Limited as a replacement for this vacancy.	
Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline
Approach Conform manager about volunteering on the Committee.	BG	Before next meeting
ii. Private Landowner		
Discussion:	KT can no longer represent the private landowner position on the Committee. It is suggested that the sod farmer BG was talking to be approached to fill this vacancy.	
Decision:	Approach the sod farmer to fill the private landowner representative position on the Committee.	

Action Items		Person Responsible	Deadline
Approach the sod farmer to consider representing the private landowner position on the Committee.		BG	Before next meeting
iii. Customer Landowner			
Discussion:	<p>Rob Kay, who represented the customer-landowner position on the Committee has stepped aside, regrettably. However, Rob said that he would help the Committee behind the scenes whenever possible. The Committee thanks Rob very much for his time and participation on the Committee and wishes him well.</p> <p>KT offered to fill the customer-landowner vacancy.</p>		
Decision:	The Committee accepted KT's offer with thanks and appreciation.		
Action Items		Person Responsible	Deadline
No further action is required.		KT	Complete
b. Terms of Reference (ToR) review – confidentiality clause			
Discussion:	<p>BG advised that this Committee has an advisory, not an advocacy role. Any documents provided to the Committee must remain confidential until they are released into the public domain.</p>		
Decision:	The ToR will add a confidentiality clause and will be worded such that it protects the integrity of everyone's position on the Committee.		
Action Items		Person Responsible	Deadline
Update the ToR to include a confidentiality clause and circulate to the Committee for their review and approval.		All	Next meeting
c. Create awareness through a presentation about sustainable farming practices that mitigate impacts on water			
Discussion:	<p>HP expressed desire for the Committee to create a presentation about what is good for water with respect to farming practices. Create a template presentation to engage farmers in a positive way; i.e., display photos of sustainable local farming practices and compare those with pictures (from outside the community) of harmful practices to elicit discussions about how sustainable farming practices may be supported and how to overcome the real or perceived challenges to sustainable farming practices that protect water quality; e.g., show benefits and solutions to landowners keeping cattle out of the water. The product could be used at various education opportunities.</p> <p>Also show available funding opportunities that facilitate sustainable farming practices. Include excerpts from a white paper, highlighting sustainable farming practices, including the positive relationships between Halifax Water and a local farmer working together to support a healthy water supply. This could also be circulated in the Newsletter and other resources.</p>		

Decision:	These are good ideas that may be incorporated into the education and awareness activities that the Committee engages in over time.	
Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline
Incorporate the ideas expressed above into the education and awareness activities that the Committee engages in as opportunities arise.	All	As opportunities arise

5. Landowner Questions

Discussion:	Nothing to report
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6. Municipal Updates

Discussion:	Nothing to report besides what AF expressed under Item 3.a.iii.1.d.
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7. Election of Officers

Discussion:	The ToR state that election of officers should occur at the meeting closest to April, every two years and that the Chair be a community member of the Committee.	
Decision:	Circulate the ToR for the members' review. Members to consider putting their name forward for the Chair position before the next meeting.	
Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline
Circulate the Terms of Reference for consideration of the Chair position and with regard to Agenda Item 4.c.	AM	As opportunities arise

Next Meeting: Wednesday, February 23, 2022 at 6:30 at Natural Resources Education Centre and virtually via Microsoft Teams.

Minutes Recorded by:

Anna McCarron, Secretary of Middle Musquodoboit Watershed Advisory Committee