

Pockwock Watershed Management Committee

Meeting Minutes



Pockwock Watershed Management Committee		
Date: February 29, 2024		Meeting Time: 10:00 am
Location: Virtual meeting via Teams		Adjourned Time: 11:53 am
Member name and position:		Agency/Representation:
Attendees	Michael Allen (MA), Watershed Planner	Nova Scotia Environment and Climate Change (NSECC)
	Jeff Brown (Jeff), Forestry Technician	Department of Natural Resources and Renewables (DNRR)
	Jillanna Brown (Jillanna), P. Eng., Reg. Engineer	NSECC
	Barry Geddes (BG), (<i>Secretary</i>) Watershed Manager	Halifax Water
	Rachel Gilbert (RG), Manager of Planning	Municipality of East Hants (MEH)
	Patrick Lynch (PL), Regional Forester, Central Region	DNRR
	Anna McCarron (Anna), (<i>Vice Chair</i>) Source Water Planner	Halifax Water
	Alana Murray (Alana), Manager, Water Supply Plants	Halifax Water
	Michael Perry (MP), (<i>Chair</i>) Community Representative	Mount Uniacke
	Jolene Laverty (JL), Regional Biologist, Central Region	DNRR
	Colin Waddell (Colin), Senior Manager, Water Services	Halifax Water
Regrets	Greg Cummings (GC), Watershed Planner	NSECC
	Neil Morehouse (NM), Manager Protected Areas & Ecosystems	NSECC
	Sally Steele (SS), Protected Areas Coordinator, Western Region	NSECC
Guest	Debbie Uloth (DU), Community Planner II	MEH

1. Attendance / Introductions

Meeting called to order by Chair, MP.

Discussion	Attendance/ Introductions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attendance noted above; quorum noted; regrets conveyed (noted above); and
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This meeting was held virtually because 2 Park Avenue boardroom was unavailable. Plan to return to the agreed to format for the next meeting – hybrid with in-person at 2 Park Avenue. <p>Anna reminded the Committee that the meeting is being recorded via Teams for minute taking purposes. Once the minutes are approved, it is standard practice to delete the recordings.</p>				
Decision					
Action Items	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Person Responsible</th> <th>Deadline</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Person Responsible	Deadline		
Person Responsible	Deadline				

2. Review and Approval

February 29, 2024, Meeting Agenda

Discussion	Approved as presented.
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Decision	Approved as presented.
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Motion to approve October 12, 2023, Meeting Agenda	Moved by BG, seconded by RG. All in favour
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October 12, 2023, DRAFT Meeting Minutes

Discussion	Approved as presented.
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Decision	Approved as presented.
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Motion to approve October 12, 2023, Meeting Minutes	Moved by BG, seconded by RG. All in favour
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3. Old Business

a. Pockwock Water Storage and Withdrawal Permit Application – Update

Discussion	<p><i>(March 9, 2023)</i> Trish Isnor, Halifax Water Guest, reported that Halifax Water received the water withdrawal approval from NSECC for the same average daily withdrawal rate as in the previous approval (110 million litres per day (MLD)). This is not a standard 10-year approval – it expires November 1st, 2027. Further discussions with NSECC and Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) are required regarding downstream ecological maintenance flow and dam requirements.</p> <p><i>(October 12, 2023)</i> BG reported that there is nothing new since the March 9, 2023 meeting. Information continues to be gathered relating to downstream maintenance.</p> <p><i>(February 29, 2024)</i> BG indicated no changes since the last meeting. The downstream maintenance flow measurements for the dam are ongoing, but no further updates were provided. Alana mentioned that they are a bit further ahead, having resolved the equipment selection for measuring the flow, indicating progress in the project.</p>
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Decision	Information only. Standing agenda item.		
Action Items		Person Responsible	Deadline
b. Resource Management Updates			
i. Forestry			
Discussion	<i>(February 29, 2024)</i> BG advised there is nothing to report since the last meeting.		
Decision	Information only. Standing agenda item.		
Action Items		Person Responsible	Deadline
Update as necessary.		BG/DNRR	Ongoing
ii. Water Quality			
a) Geosmin update:			
Discussion	<i>(February 29, 2024)</i> Alana shared the latest updates on water quality, specifically the non-detection of Geosmin in recent samples. There's an ongoing effort to monitor and maintain water quality. Colin noted samples could not be collected during winter months due to the unsafe ice conditions and snow cover on Pockwock Lake (Feb, Mar). There have been no customer complaints regarding water quality, indicating that the water supply remains within acceptable quality levels despite the inability to collect samples during this period.		
Decision	Information only. Standing agenda item.		
Action Items		Person Responsible	Deadline
Update as necessary.		BG/Colin	Ongoing
b) Lake Recovery Research:			
Discussion	<i>(February 29, 2024)</i> The status remains unchanged from the last meeting, with ongoing discussions about the lake recovery research project.		
Decision	Information only. Standing agenda item.		
Action Items		Person Responsible	Deadline
Update as necessary.		BG/Colin	Ongoing
c. forWater Research Network			
Discussion	<i>(October 12, 2023)</i> BG reported that the forWater Research Network was awarded an extension (end of 2024) due to Covid-19 restrictions, to allow researchers time to complete the data compilation and to finalize reporting requirements. Once reports are completed, they will be shared with the Committee.		

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	<i>(February 29, 2024)</i> BG reported the network is in the last year of a two-year extension due to COVID-19, with reports being finalized. A seven-year extension for the network has been accepted, although the specific areas of focus for the next seven years are still being determined.		
Decision	Links to David Foster research to be provided.		
Action Items		Person Responsible	Deadline
Provide links to reports from David Foster to ALL		BG	Next meeting
d. Lake Trout Study			
Discussion	<p><i>(October 12, 2023)</i> BG reported that the Lake Trout Study continues. Acadia University has added eDNA sampling – a form of DNA sampling where water samples are collected and assessed for signature Lake Trout DNA from body fluids released into the water column – to monitor for the presence/absence of Lake Trout. The results will be shared once available.</p> <p>To date, no Lake Trout has been caught in Pockwock Lake through the study. Research permits remain in place.</p> <p><i>(February 29, 2024)</i> BG reported an update from the Acadia eDNA analysis which did not detect Lake trout in the basin they sampled. It was successful in detecting them in another lake outside of the watershed, confirming the method's effectiveness.</p> <p>The absence of detection in the sampled basin does not conclusively mean lake trout are not present; they might not have been in that specific area at the time of sampling.</p> <p>Further sampling is planned for other deep catchment basins [Pockwock Lake] this summer [2024].</p>		
Decision	Information only. Standing agenda item.		
Action Items		Person Responsible	Deadline
Update as necessary.		BG	Ongoing
e. Source Water Protection (SWP) Annual Report			
Discussion	<i>(February 29, 2024)</i> The draft of the 2023 SWP Annual Report is complete and under review with the director [Regulatory Services]. It is expected to be shared with the board members by next week, allowing two weeks for review and comments before a mid-March submission deadline to NSECC.		
Decision	Update as required		
Action Items		Person Responsible	Deadline
BG will share with ALL for review/comments and return mid-March		BG	Every spring meeting
f. Water Supply Enhancement Project			

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Discussion	<p><i>(October 12, 2023)</i> BG reported that the Water Supply Enhancement Project is part of a long-term (25 year plus) capital project to upgrade the JD Kline Water Supply Plant (WSP). Jillanna confirmed that NSECC initiated discussions with Halifax Water regarding the long-term upgrade. Halifax Water is considering options to improve water treatment with respect to changes in climate and water quality. The Committee will be updated as needed.</p> <p>MP inquired about the recent growth in population that caused the upgrade to come sooner. BG reported that the upgrades were planned prior to the increase in population.</p> <p><i>(February 29, 2024)</i> Colin provided an update; the program is currently in the design stage for the clarifier project at JD Kline and other projects. They are considering alternatives to the addition of a clarifier, influenced by population growth projections and development targets. The project includes pre-ground works at the facility and plans to move the communications tower. The financial regulator's position and the rebalancing of demand numbers are being addressed, which impacts design decisions.</p>		
Decision	Update the Committee as needed		
Action Items		Person Responsible	Deadline
Keep on agenda		BG	As required

4. New Business

a. Uniacke Secondary Planning Strategy

Discussion	<p><i>(February 29, 2024)</i> A presentation on the Uniacke Secondary Planning Strategy was provided by DU, covering several key points:</p> <p>Study Area and Population: The study area encompasses 830 hectares with a population of about 4200 as of 2024. The area is expected to see continued population growth.</p> <p>Land Use Analysis: Identified areas include the Pockwock water supply area, Sackville Rivers watershed, and lands owned by Halifax Water and the province. The study aims to identify underutilized lands for increased densification and establish a mix of new land uses. DU mentioned that additional commercial land is being considered around the interchange with Hwy. 101, currently zoned as a combination of regional commercial, business park, and rural use. The plan may extend the regional commercial zone to include some land currently zoned for rural use. This is part of the broader effort to identify underutilized lands for increased densification and establish a mix of new land uses.</p> <p>Hydrogeological Study: A study is planned to ensure there's enough quality and quantity of water for densification, focusing on well water for individual properties.</p> <p>Wastewater and Municipal Services: The strategy will explore septic system options and may recommend studying the logistics and costs of supplying municipal services to a portion of the Uniacke area.</p>
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	<p>Community Engagement: A community survey received 471 responses, and open houses are planned for further public consultation.</p> <p>Timeline: A draft document is expected by fall-early winter with regulations to follow based on council endorsement.</p>		
Decision:	Information only.		
Action Items		Person Responsible	Deadline
DU to email presentation to ALL		DU	Next Meeting

5. Landowner Q & A			
a. Crown			
Discussion	<i>(February 29, 2024)</i> Nothing to report beyond what was already reported above.		
Decision	Standing agenda item.		
Action Items		Person Responsible	Deadline
b. Pockwock Wilderness Area			
Discussion	Halifax Water License-to-Operate within the newly approved Sackville River Wilderness Area . <i>(February 29, 2024)</i> No representatives to speak on behalf of NSECC Protected Areas Branch. BG mentioned he was aware that the language for the license to operate was being reviewed by NSECC legal team.		
Decision	Keep on agenda		
Action Items		Person Responsible	Deadline
Provide update on License-to-Operate		BG/NM/SS	Pending
c. Mount Uniacke Community			
i. Uniacke Trails Association (Trail development) and PWMC Letter of Support			
Discussion	<i>(February 29, 2024)</i> MP added to DU's presentation, emphasizing the need for diversification of housing in the area. This necessity is one of the primary reasons for initiating this effort. The rapid increase in assessments has made it difficult for many residents to be able to afford to live in the community. Therefore, exploring alternative housing options is crucial to help the community remain cohesive and continue to grow.		
Decision	Information only		
Action Items		Person Responsible	Deadline

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d. Municipality of East Hants			
i. Mount Uniacke Business Park			
Discussion	<p><i>(February 29, 2024)</i> RG mentioned that there were no significant updates on the Mount Uniacke Business Park itself. However, she noted that a private parcel of land, adjacent to the business park, is being developed, and this development is being monitored for its potential impact on the watershed. Efforts are being made to minimize any negative effects.</p> <p><i>Nova Scotia Department of Public Works (DPW) winter maintenance program</i></p> <p>BG reported that the supervisor had been contacted for information; however, the supervisor's group does not provide the information directly and it must go higher up. The supervisor is also retiring soon, and there was no further update provided on the program.</p>		
Decision	BG waiting for update from DPW		
Action Items		Person Responsible	Deadline
	Follow up with DPW to set up a presentation on a winter maintenance program for the Mount Uniacke Area	BG	Special meeting
	Inquire about any development applications for the private parcel being monitored for development adjacent to the Mount Uniacke business park and distribute the information to Anna & BG for them to circulate to the rest of the committee.	RG	Next meeting

6. Education / Awareness			
a. Pending Corporate Communications Strategy (on hold)			
Discussion	<p><i>(October 12, 2023)</i> BG reported that Halifax Water is currently rethinking its Corporate Communication Strategy, which will include source water protection.</p> <p>BG inquired whether MEH provides information on the Pockwock watershed to new landowners who purchase land within the Pockwock watershed area of the Uniacke Business Park. RG indicated that MEH is not actively providing information other than what is already available through the zoning bylaws. MP indicated that such information is available during time of purchase.</p> <p>RG advised that any education relative to the watershed area, beyond the MEH bylaws, should be funneled through the Committee.</p> <p><i>(February 29, 2024)</i> BG no further information on communications strategy.</p>		
Decision	Provide update on Communications Strategy as it becomes available.		
Action Items		Person Responsible	Deadline
	Update when necessary.	BG	Ongoing

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b. Tours of Watershed Area			
i. Helicopter Tour			
Discussion	<i>(October 12, 2023)</i> The Committee advised leaving this as a standing agenda item for when the time is right. Tours of the Watershed area was discussed – BG mentioned the idea of conducting tours of the watershed area. It was suggested that these tours could be a good opportunity. However, it was also mentioned that due to it being an election year, it might be better to hold off on these tours until 2025.		
Decision	Hold off on tours until 2025		
ii. Educational Ground Tour of Harvest Areas – VIPs			
Discussion	<p><i>(March 9, 2023)</i> Initially planned for summer 2023, this educational ground tour is part of a larger ongoing Halifax Water outreach initiative to increase knowledge of source water protection amongst community leaders, including first responders and politicians.</p> <p><i>(October 12, 2023)</i> BG reported that Halifax Water is currently rethinking its Corporate Communication strategy, which will include such initiatives. Therefore, the tour is on hold until the strategy has been defined. Also, this summer’s weather conditions (extreme hot dry to record rain falls) were not ideal for guided tours. Keep on agenda.</p> <p>MP advised that the best time to schedule a tour that includes local first responders and councillors would be 2025, following municipal elections.</p>		
Decision	Standing agenda item until complete		
Action Items		Person Responsible	Deadline
Plan a tour for the watershed area targeted at a small group consisting of councilors, community leaders, first responders, East Hants directors and PWM Committee members.		BG/MP/RG/AM	Summer 2025

- 7. Election of Officers – Fall 2024**
- 8. Next meeting – Thursday, October 3rd, 2024 @ 10 am, Virtually via Microsoft Teams and in-person at 2 Park Avenue.**
- 9. Adjournment – 11:53am – motion moved by MP, seconded by BG**

Minutes Respectfully Submitted by Ashley Ward – Admin. Assist. /Barry Geddes – Secretary