



WEST HANTS REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY
Climate Action Committee (CAC) Meeting Minutes
November 12, 2025, 11:08am – 11:46am
Sanford Council Chambers / Zoom / YouTube Live

PRESENT: Deputy Mayor Debbie Francis, District 5, Chair
Councillor Bonnie Smith, District 10
Councillor Jim Ivey, District 11
Mark Phillips, Chief Administrative Officer
Kari Fougere, Acting Director of Planning & Development
Carlee Rochon, Director of Financial Services
Todd Richard, Director of Public Works
Kaleigh McCarthy, Environmental Technologist
Kathy Kehoe, Director of Community Development

STAFF: John Ogilvie, Climate Action Coordinator
Saarah Kunaseelan, Clean Foundation Community Navigator
Vanessa Lake, Meeting Secretary

PUBLIC: 1 member of the public

REGRETS: There were no regrets.

1.0 Call to Order and Introductions

Deputy Mayor Francis called the meeting to order at 11:08am. Everyone identified their designation. Todd Richard requested that Kaleigh McCarthy be appointed as the Public Works representative and he be the alternate.

2.0 Approval of Agenda

Moved by Councillor Ivey and seconded by CAO Phillips that the agenda be approved as circulated. Motion carried unanimously.

3.0 Approval of Minutes (September 10, 2025)

The minutes were approved as circulated by unanimous consent.

4.0 New Business

4.1 Information: Community Climate Capacity Program Participation (John Ogilvie)

John was happy to publicly announce that West Hants is taking part in the Community Climate Capacity program, funded by the Province and provided by the Clean Foundation. John introduced Saarah Kunaseelan, the Community Navigator from the Clean Foundation who will be working with West Hants. She will be assisting John in his climate action work. The objectives for the duration of the program as outlined in the application are covered in John's report, which was circulated with the agenda package and is available on the website.

Saarah is a recent graduate of the Masters of Resource and Environmental Management program at Dalhousie University. She has a background in environmental management with a focus on climate adaptation, biodiversity planning, and community engagement. She is passionate about community-driven climate solutions and will be an asset to the Municipality.

4.2 Information: 2 Years of Switch West Hants (John Ogilvie)

John provided an update on the Switch West Hants program, which has been running for two years as of the end of October, in partnership with SwitchPACE CIC. John noted energy savings, greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reductions, and individual cost savings, in his report.

Councillor Ivey asked about the different numbers between total participants and total agreements. John explained that the 149 total participants include everyone who has expressed interest in the program, and the 48 total agreements are those who have gone ahead with financing. The program administrators check in with participants every few months to see if they are still interested. Some people are not ready to commit at this time but are still interested.

4.3 Information: 3 Years of WHRM Level 2 EV Chargers (John Ogilvie)

As of the end of October, it has been three years since West Hants installed two (2) Level 2 EV chargers, one (1) each at the Community Centre (78 Thomas St) and the West Hants Sports Complex (16 Centennial Dr). John shared some key statistics as of October 31, 2025, provided by ChargePoint. There have been 1880 separate charging sessions, an average of 15 unique drivers daily, and 26 tonnes of GHG emissions avoided. Further information is available in John's report.

John said that there are 2-3 average charges per day. Councillor Ivey asked if this was comparable to other communities with EV chargers. John was not sure, but he can investigate. He shared that an average charging session is 1.5-2 hours long.

CAO Phillips commented that these numbers may see a change with the newly installed Level 3 charger at the Sports Complex, owned by Nova Scotia Power (NSP). Level 3 chargers are more expensive but charge a lot faster. Deputy Mayor Francis would like to see a comparison between the Level 2 and Level 3 chargers. John will reach out to NSP for more information.

4.4 Decision Request: Endorsement of PACE Program Expansion (John Ogilvie)

The Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) Program has been in place since October 2023, administered by SwitchPACE CIC, and offers financing to residential homeowners up to \$40,000 or 25% of their property value (whichever is less), over 10-15 years. Currently, this financing can be used for energy efficient, greenhouse gas emissions-reducing home upgrades such as heat pumps or insulation. Adaptation programming can be an expansion of the current PACE program. The Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) has opened applications for funding residential adaptation financing; funding for a program feasibility and design study is open now, with funding to operate a program being made available later in 2026. These applications are limited to municipalities that have existing PACE programs, giving WHRM a niche opportunity to take advantage of. John is requesting that the Committee recommends Council endorse expanding the PACE program. He is also recommending that the Committee recommends Council approve allocating \$20,000 from the Climate Action Committee workplan budget, which has not yet been allocated for the 2025-26 fiscal year. If approved, this funding in combination with \$150,000 from FCM and \$20,000 from the Municipality of Pictou County, would pay for the study.

Councillor Ivey asked for clarification that there is \$30,000 available in this year's budget and that the \$20k needed for the application fee is not earmarked for anything else. It is not. He asked if future funding would come from next year's fiscal budget, and John confirmed it would.

Deputy Mayor Francis asked for clarification on what the cost is for. John explained that the \$20,000 is WHRM's contribution to the cost of completing the study. This would be in addition to the grant of up to \$150,000 from FCM. This grant is for a feasibility and design study for the administrative process for an adaptation program, which would support applying to FCM for capital funding to operate the program. Typically, FCM requires a study to be done before the

operations. The feasibility study would determine if it's reasonable to apply for further capital funding.

Moved by CAO Phillips and seconded by Councillor Smith that the Climate Action Committee recommend that Council endorse expanding the Property Assessed Clean Energy Program in the manner described in the staff report titled "Property Assessed Clean Energy Program Expansion: Adaptation Financing", dated November 12, 2025, to the Climate Action Committee, to include financing for residential climate change adaptation measures with the assistance of SwitchPACE CIC. Motion carried unanimously.

5.0 Business Arising from the Minutes

5.1 Recommendation: 2026-27 CAC Work Plan (John Ogilvie)

The work plan was originally presented to the Committee on September 10, 2025. The Committee expressed a desire to see more climate change adaptation initiatives. Staff have updated the workplan with three (3) adaptation items which are considered achievable and have funding opportunities available. The draft workplan was attached to John's report.

Councillor Ivey noted that Council has begun discussions on the next fiscal budget and are reviewing the strategy. He asked if there was flexibility if there were any changes during the budget deliberations or strategy or if this would paint the Committee into a corner. John responded that the workplan can be flexible, if Council and/or the Committee change priorities, and especially as funding opportunities come and go.

Moved by Councillor Ivey and seconded by Councillor Smith that the Climate Action Committee 2026-27 Work Plan be submitted to Council to be placed on file in a manner substantively the same as Attachment A to the staff report titled "CAC 2026-27 Work Plan" dated November 12, 2025. Motion carried unanimously.

5.2 Update: Zero Emissions Transportation Feasibility Study and Committee Input (John Ogilvie)

WHRM is working in partnership with WSP to complete a Zero Emissions Transportation Feasibility Study. John provided a list of qualitative questions for the Committee to consider. The questions will help shape the scope of the study. Responses or other feedback can be sent to John via email. Feedback will also be received from the Diverse, Equitable, and Inclusive Communities Committee, the Accessibility Advisory Committee, municipal staff, and through public engagement sessions that will be held on November 19 and November 24 in different communities in the region. A survey will also be available for the public.

Councillor Ivey asked if there should be a study done to determine if there is any interest a traditional (fossil fuelled) transportation service to begin with. John explained that the zero emissions study will be benchmarked against a traditional, not zero emissions system. This will

be included in the feasibility. Different options (electric, diesel, etc.) will be assessed. Zero emissions will be the focus, in part because it is the condition of the grant received to complete the study, and because most grants currently available focus on zero emissions in transit and facilities.

6.0 Roundtable Discussion

CAO Phillips shared his experience with the Municipality's electric vehicle, which was used to travel to the Association of Municipal Administrators Nova Scotia (AMANS) conference in Cape Breton. He said it was a great driving experience, and when looking at overall costs, felt there were savings. One thing he wanted to highlight was the price difference between Level 2 and Level 3 chargers. Level 3 chargers are significantly higher cost. He commented that people are paying for the convenience of a faster charge. For most people who are traveling locally, charging a vehicle overnight or at the workplace during the day with a Level 2 charger is adequate. For an extended trip, a Level 3 charger may be preferable. He said that their vehicle got to an 80% charge in 25 minutes with a Level 3 charger, while the same 80% charge would take approximately 2 hours or longer on a Level 2 charger. Choices will vary by consumer.

Director Richard commented that the price may be based on demand, from a utility perspective. He would like to know NSP's feedback on this matter. John commented that the municipality's Level 2 chargers run at 6 kW. The Level 3 chargers run at 180 kW for one car, or 90 kW for two cars (one for each port). He added that it also depends on an individual vehicle's intake capacity.

The example of \$8 for a Level 2 charge and \$40 for a Level 3 charge was given. Councillor Ivey asked about the actual price gap. CAO Phillips said that was an approximation, and John confirmed that the price difference is quite significant. The average price for a Level 2 charger, to go from 0-100% charge, is about \$10-15. John can check with NSP and return with more information. Councillor Ivey also commented that the price of electric vehicles and replacement batteries, and how the price has gone down over the years. Other costs may also lower over time.

7.0 Public Comments

The public is encouraged to attend the meeting or contact staff directly with any questions or comments.

Lisa is interested in joining the Committee. She sat in as an audience member to better understand how it works. She was engaged and interested in the discussion had around the table and was happy to see the "action" of the Climate Action Committee in practice.

8.0 Next Meeting Date

The next meeting is scheduled for February 11, 2026. The Committee and the public will be notified if there are any changes.

9.0 Adjournment

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:46am.