



WHISTLER

ZERO WASTE SELECT COMMITTEE

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2019, STARTING AT 1:00 P.M.

**Flute Room at Municipal Hall
4325 Blackcomb Way, Whistler, BC V8E 0X5**

PRESENT:

Andrew Tucker, RMOW
Arthur De Jong, RMOW Council
Cathy Jewett, RMOW Council
Ambre Marquie, RMOW
Anita Auer, Crystal Lodge
Tom McColm, Canadian Home Builders Association
Jeremy Valeriot, Alternate for Sue Maxwell
Kerren Bottay, Restaurant Association
Marie-Lou LeBlanc, SLRD
Lori Pyne, Whistler Community Services Society
Claire Ruddy, AWARE
Cheeying Ho, Facilitator

ABSENT:

Allana Williams, Whistler Blackcomb/Vail Resorts

Cheeying Ho recognized that the Meeting is being held on the traditional territories of the Lil'wat Nation and the Squamish Nation.

AGENDA

- Welcome
- Review of agenda and objectives
- Committee terms of reference
- Definition and scope of zero waste in Whistler
- Process for developing Zero Waste Action Plan
- Current reality
- Goals/desired outcomes
- Next steps

MEETING OBJECTIVES

- Understand ZWSC purpose and terms of reference
- Understand definition and scope of zero waste

- Understand zero waste hierarchy
- Understand and agree upon process for developing Zero Waste Action Plan
- Agree upon framework of action plan
- Understand zero waste current reality: performance and current initiatives
- Identify and confirm action plan goals/desired outcomes

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Councilor C. Jewett, Committee Chair, welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for their participation on the Committee.

C. Ho reviewed the agenda and objectives and led a round of introductions.

COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE

C. Ho reviewed the terms of reference for the Zero Waste Select Committee.

Responsibilities:

- Share understanding of the solid waste management systems in Whistler and around BC
- Advise Council on matters related to waste management best practice(s)
- Develop partnerships to coordinated actions for achieving waste reduction in the community.
- Develop a community-wide Zero Waste Plan identifying initiatives to bring Whistler towards a zero waste designation

The organizations involved in this Committee represent the industries where most progress towards zero waste can be made. There may be the need to form a subcommittee and that may involve additional stakeholders.

One of the guiding principles is to use the zero waste hierarchy in the creation of the action plan.

The question of confidentiality for this meeting was raised. The Terms of Reference indicate that confidential matters raised during meetings are not to be shared outside of the Committee. C. Jewett asked if this meeting should be declared a closed meeting. C. Ho indicated that Select Committee workshops are closed to the public.

C. Jewett proposed a motion to adopt the meeting as a workshop. All in favor, carried.

There was a discussion about whether the Committee would like the opportunity for community members to attend the meetings as observers, even if the meetings are not advertised as public.

Action: C. Jewett will check the status of committees allowing the public to observe meetings.

A question was raised on how we report back to the community. C. Ho advised that we will discuss at a later meeting.

DEFINITION AND SCOPE OF ZERO WASTE IN WHISTLER

C. Ho reviewed the working definition of zero waste for Whistler, and the zero waste hierarchy.

Zero waste means:

- Designing and managing products and processes to systematically avoid and eliminate the volume and toxicity of waste and materials.
- Conserving and recovering all resources - not burning or burying them.
- Eliminating all discharges to land, water or air that are a threat to planetary, human, animal or plant health.

C. Ho indicated that we are also aligning zero waste actions with the goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

A question was raised about adding 'refuse' to the hierarchy? Refuse is often considered the top of the hierarchy, equivalent to 'rethink' or 'reconsider'.

PROCESS FOR DEVELOPING ZERO WASTE ACTION PLAN

C. Ho reviewed the proposed process and timeline for developing the Zero Waste Action Plan. The committee will be meeting quarterly. The Committee may meet more frequently if needed, and/or with sub-committees. C. Ho indicated that the Committee will review existing actions, e.g. from the 2013 Zero Waste Plan and the actions identified from the think tank session last year as starting points, rather than come up with actions from a blank slate. We may also hold an event to seek public input. The Zero Waste Action Plan will be aligned with OCP and CECAP goals. Proposed goal for the zero waste action plan:

- Move progressively toward zero solid waste in a cost-effective, efficient and environmentally sound manner, and substantially reduce GHG emissions associated with solid waste management.

A question was raised about liquid waste. A Tucker responded that this is outside of scope of this committee at this stage. However, it was suggested to remove the word solid from the goal statement to read:

- Move progressively toward zero waste in a cost-effective, efficient and environmentally sound manner, and substantially reduce GHG emissions associated with waste management.

The new wording was agreed upon in order to keep the scope broader, even though the actions may focus on solid waste.

ZERO WASTE ACTION PLAN FRAMEWORK

C. Ho presented the proposed framework for the action plan, with four identified focus areas: construction and renovation, food and packaging, consumer products and packaging, and large consumer products and packaging.

A question was raised about whether stratas are represented? Airbnb and rental by owners are a large component of the community. Another group that is not represented is retail. C. Ho suggested that we will discuss who is missing at the end of the meeting.

There was a discussion about the framework and whether it should be organized by type of waste generated or by sector. It was agreed that, by organizing by waste generation, redundancies would be reduced. It would also be simple to identify who would be responsible for actions. The framework creates a more systems-based approach.

An example is mattresses – it doesn't matter which sector they come from, but rather how we deal with them.

C. Ho indicated that the think tank held last year in October generated close to 100 action ideas. These actions will be presented to the Committee to review and consider.

CURRENT REALITY

A. Tucker provided an overview of the zero waste current reality, including what is going on in Whistler.

Whistler has been dealing with waste for a long time. The RMOW has a solid waste management system. The old Nesters depot has now expanded to next door and is now called the Nesters Exchange. On same site we have Regional Recycling for collecting paint, light bulbs, electronics, and refundable bottles. Next door we have the Reuse-it Center, serving the community very well. The recyclables collected at the depot are recycled through the RecycleBC EPR (Extended Producer Responsibility) program.

The Whistler landfill closed in 2005. Whistler started flaring landfill gas that turns methane into CO₂, which is a less powerful greenhouse gas. We also have a transfer station in the Callaghan where waste is sorted. The residual landfill waste is transported to Surrey by truck, and then to Washington State by train. The municipality is dealing with space constraints at the transfer station.

With the help of AWARE, community outreach has been done over the past few years to educate people on how to manage waste properly. A few years ago the municipality gave away food scrap containers. Online resources, such as a solution guide, were developed to help reduce the amount of waste going to the landfill.

Metro Vancouver is doing a lot of work and is allowing the municipality to use their material for social media messaging. The municipality participates in social media campaigns such as the “Love Food Hate Waste” Canada campaign.

About 700 kg per person of waste is generated nationwide. The per capita rate in the SLRD is just over 500kg per person. The provincial target is 350 kg per person; we currently sit slightly above this target at 389kg per person.

Currently, 41% of material of landfill waste is actually compostable and could be taken out from the landfill. Construction waste is a noticeable 18%.

By sectors, 70% of waste is from the commercial and strata sector; 10% is residential and 20% is from construction.

A question was raised about the kind of capacity for compost. M. Leblanc indicated that the Sea to Sky Soils has already doubled their capacity, and SLRD and Sea to Sky Soils have applied for grant funding to further expand the capacity.

It was noted that there is a need to address plastics in the organic waste stream as it is difficult to compost organics when plastics are in the mix.

A question was raised about where all the construction recyclables are going. A. Tucker responded that dirty wood waste was used as hog fuel and all the plastic containers and films gets sorted and shipped to Squamish where the material is prepped for sale.

WHAT ARE THE INITIATIVES IN YOUR ORGANIZATION?

Committee members had a chance to describe new zero waste initiatives that their organization was leading.

A Committee member mentioned that Sea to Sky Removal made it very easy for construction waste to make it to the right stream; they saw huge uptake on this.

TM Builders: Finding efficient way to separate everything and separate wood and waste.

Crystal Lodge: Water bottles removed and added water fountain.
WB: Replaced on hill orange “slow down” banners and gave them away to be re-purposed.

Restaurants: Pushing suppliers to use less packaging. Some restaurants are doing it.

Reuse-it Center: Diverted 14 tons in June. They sell as much as they can and the rest is diverted. Currently there is no extended producer responsibility on textiles.

SLRD: Has a pilot project to recycle textiles in the future.

AWARE: Reached over 100k users with work done for the RMOW and Squamish. Stuff done with hotels has been very well received by guests. Conducted waste audits in stratas; reviewing waste systems. Engaging grocery stores on food- related actions. Held re-use events. Capacity is a challenge for AWARE to keep providing these programs and services.

SLRD: Curbside collection, re-use it events; exploring promotion/greater use of reusable diapers and feminine products.

SWOT (STRENGTH, WEAKNESS, OPPORTUNITIES, THREATS)

C. Ho explained that the SWOT was developed last year for the think tank.

The purpose of a SWOT is to help with prioritizing actions by identifying the most important elements of the SWOT to address.

Missing from the SWOT:

Threats:

- Lack of buyers in certain waste streams
- Packaging industry defending their right to use plastic – they sued the city of Victoria
- Transient resident and tourist not educated about waste management; different cultural norms

Opportunities:

- Global awareness/education around waste
- Increased federal and provincial support
- Federal 2021 target related to single use items

Weaknesses:

- Not having a landfill in the region
- Not enough funding for outreach
- Not enough infrastructure
- Extreme reliance on infrastructure we cannot control
- RMOW sustainable purchasing policy removed?

Action: A. Tucker to check whether the RMOW sustainable purchasing policy has been removed.

DESIRED OUTCOME

C. Ho explained that, before jumping into actions, it is important to know 'where we want to go,' i.e. the "what" we want to achieve, not the "how" yet. Desired outcomes are the descriptions of success if we've achieved our zero waste goal.

Committee members were asked to individually, then in small groups, identify what they think are the desired outcomes for each of the four focus areas. The input from the Committee members is below:

Construction and renovation

- Reducing construction waste arriving at the landfill
- Mandatory separation of material – deconstruction instead of demolition
- Requiring building re-cycling rooms to comply with standards that will allow for business adaptability
- Construction sector required to design out non-recyclable building material for the end of life (set a target at 80%)

Food and packaging

- No wildlife destroyed due to residential or commercial garbage.
- Less food waste

- Less packaging
- Elimination of redundant packaging
- 100% compost diversion in strata waste stream
- Maximise compost diversion
- Support regional food recovery programs
- Ugly food – Reduces barriers to sale and use of non-uniform food
- Better standards regarding compostable food containers and how they compost
- Eliminating single use items
- No plastic straws

Consumer products and packaging

- Federal legislation towards single use plastic
- Elimination of redundant packaging
- Support buying local and less boxes from shipping
- Make it easier for people to identify how to sort correctly
- Require all packaging (single use) to be made from recyclable material

Large consumer products and packaging

- Require appliance manufacturers to improve the cost of reparability (use a stick)
- Support return and repair initiatives
- No illegal dumping (back road, etc.)

NEXT STEPS

- Review/confirm desired outcomes
- Compile existing action ideas (from Think Tank, OCP, CECAP, previous zero waste plan)
- Identify who's missing and how to involve them

- Set next meeting date (mid-February)

WHO IS MISSING?

Committee members identified the following as missing from this process:

- Stratas/property managers
- Retail sector
- GFL, Recycle BC
- Grocery Alliance

C. Jewett, A. Tucker and C. Ho thanked everyone for their participation and input at the meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 3.30pm

Chair, Cathy Jewett