



SUBJECT: Sustainable Hamilton Burlington membership

TO: Committee of the Whole

FROM: Capital Works

Report Number: CW-69-17

Wards Affected: not applicable

File Numbers: 210-09

Date to Committee: September 25, 2017

Date to Council: October 10, 2017

Recommendation:

Authorize the Mayor and City Clerk to sign an agreement with Sustainable Hamilton Burlington (SHB) for the City to participate as a member at the bronze level in SHB's Sustainable Business Initiative, subject to the approval of the City Solicitor.

Purpose:

The City of Burlington is joining Sustainable Hamilton Burlington's Sustainable Business Initiative as a member at the bronze level.

Specifically this initiative supports the following direction in the Strategic Plan under:

A Healthy and Greener City – Environmental and Energy Leadership

- The city's operations are net carbon-neutral.
- The city will develop and implement a plan to make city operations net carbon-neutral.
- The city will work with community stakeholders to implement the Community Energy Plan and achieve the goals and objectives related to energy conservation, generation and availability.
- The city recognizes that climate change is a significant issue and is working with the community and all levels of government towards the goal of the Burlington community being net carbon-neutral.

Background and Discussion:

Sustainable Hamilton Burlington (SHB) was launched in 2011 (as Sustainable Hamilton) and is a membership based, non-profit social enterprise. It is dedicated to supporting local businesses, institutions, non-profit groups and other entities to improve the sustainability of their organizations. SHB achieves its goals by providing educational workshops, direct support to its members and an annual event to recognize and celebrate progress.

SHB is a member of the Sustainability CoLab network, a network of eight organizations in the province. The CoLab network is committed to working with businesses to help them reduce their impact on the environment and improve the sustainability of their operations.

City staff have been monitoring the progress and activities of SHB since its inception. Sandi Stride, the executive director, has met over time with city staff and the Mayor, to share information about the organization and the work that they do to support local organizations. In 2015 Sustainable Hamilton changed its name to recognize those member organizations that reside in this city as well as expand their network by attracting new members. City staff have also attended numerous workshops hosted by SHB since 2011 as well as their annual celebration event to recognize the progress of their members.

Earlier this year, Sandi Stride, representing SHB, joined Burlington's Community Energy Plan (CEP) stakeholder advisory committee, recognizing the work she does with local groups to reduce energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions. She also participates on the Community Engagement Task Group for the CEP.

City of Burlington Member – Sustainable Business Initiative

In 2017 staff determined that it would be beneficial to join the SHB network and take advantage of the support they provide to organizations to improve their sustainability and reduce their carbon footprint. The city will participate at the bronze level in the Sustainable Business Initiative (SBI) requiring us to track and report on our energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions for city operations. Participating in this program should not require significant resources or time as staff already track and report on energy and emissions annually to council. A two page information sheet is included in Appendix A of this report.

There is a benefit to the city participating in this program to learn about and share best practices throughout the SHB network. Staff are in the process of determining options to update the Corporate Energy Management Plan (CEMP) with limited resources. Staff may be able to rely on available expertise through the SHB network to support this work. The CEMP is required to be updated every five years.

Participating in the SBI program with SHB also shows leadership within the community for other businesses and organizations to join the network. It provides a forum for the city to reach out to additional community stakeholders to help implement actions in the Community Energy Plan and meet energy and emission reduction targets both in the CEP and in the Strategic Plan.

There are also synergies between the cities of Hamilton and Burlington, Mohawk College and SHB as we all work together to establish the Centre for Climate Change Management (Refer to Report CW-45-17). SHB is working with Mohawk College to help develop and implement the Industry Partnerships Office.

Strategy/process

Staff have been monitoring the progress and activities of SHB since its inception. The organization has demonstrated staying power in the communities of Hamilton and Burlington and has an excellent relationship with local businesses as well as academic institutions like McMaster University and Mohawk College. Sandi Stride, the Executive Director of SHB has met and discussed the city's participation with the Executive Director of Capital Works and the Sr. Sustainability Coordinator, as well as the Mayor and City Manager. She has also presented to the Sustainable Development Committee in the past about the work that her organization delivers.

Legal and IT staff were consulted to ensure that the agreement to be signed by the Mayor and City Clerk is acceptable and the carbon reporting tool provided by SHB meets our cloud computing policies and requirements.

City staff have also discussed the benefits of joining SHB with city of Hamilton staff, as they are also in the process of taking a membership with SHB and participating in the SBI program.

Options considered

The city does not have the resources to work closely with individual local businesses on energy and sustainability initiatives. Burlington Hydro and Union Gas do support conservation efforts with local businesses, but SHB can focus their resources on small to medium enterprises (SME). SHB can help fill a gap in the Community Energy Plan to support initiatives specifically in the SME sector to reduce energy and greenhouse gas emissions.

A similar program that staff have also monitored over several years is Partners in Project Green (PPG), a network created by the Greater Toronto Airports Authority and the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority. PPG supports local businesses within a defined district around Pearson Airport to create an eco-business network.

Staff will review the benefits of the city's participation in the SBI program after the first year to determine whether to renew for a subsequent year.

Financial Matters:

The cost of the annual membership is \$5,500. Participation in SHB will be reviewed on an annual basis prior to renewing the membership.

Total Financial Impact

The total annual financial impact is \$5,500.

Source of Funding

In year one of the membership, funding will be provided in the operating budget – two thirds from Capital Works and one third from the City Manager's office. In year two, the membership fee will be covered by Capital Works.

Other Resource Impacts

It is expected that some time by the Sr. Sustainability Coordinator and the Coordinator of Energy Management will be required to be dedicated to this initiative.

Connections:

As noted above, this initiative directly relates to and supports the Corporate Energy Management Plan, the Community Energy Plan, the Strategic Plan and the Mohawk Centre for Climate Change Management.

Public Engagement Matters:

A media release will be issued by SHB to announce the cities of Hamilton and Burlington joining the network, in consultation with city staff. City staff will continue to participate in SHB events and activities to promote the work that the city is doing to conserve energy as well as network with stakeholders to support the Community Energy Plan.

Conclusion:

The City of Burlington has made a commitment in its Strategic Plan to conserve energy and reduce greenhouse gas emissions both at an operational level with city operations as well as at a community level. By supporting and working with SHB and its growing network of businesses and other organizations, we can work towards being a net carbon neutral organization and community.

Respectfully submitted,

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Appendices:

- A. Sustainable Hamilton Burlington – information sheet

Notifications:

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Report Approval:

All reports are reviewed and/or approved by Department Director, Director of Finance and Director of Legal. Final approval is by the City Manager.