



Sustainable Orillia

Our Mission

To engage the community in actions that build more rewarding and healthy lives for the people of Orillia, our children and grandchildren.



SUSTAINABLE ORILLIA LEADER RECOGNIZED



Stan Mathewson
named Citizen of the Year

As we all know our Orillia community is a very giving one and there are so many deserving volunteers. It is for that reason that I was both surprised and gratified by us winning the Citizen of the Year award, or should I say Citizens. Sustainable Orillia is a remarkable collection of individuals from Orillia and the surrounding townships who have come together to help us become a more sustainable community for now and future generations. As President, I was so pleased to have accepted this award on behalf of Sustainable Orillia.



BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE PARTNERSHIP FOR THE FUTURE

Sustainable Orillia launched in early 2019 as a Mayor's Task Force with the mandate to create a network of citizens committed to improving the quality of life, wellness, and the environment in our community. Since that time Sustainable Orillia has worked towards becoming a central hub for communications, events, education and mobilization in a grass roots battle to combat climate change and further deterioration of our environment.

A year later, the operating framework is in place. Sustainable Orillia is now an incorporated 'Not for Profit' entity with nine critical sector teams, all engaged in projects delivering benefits across the community. The organization has launched communication platforms, established positive media relations, and has been churning out relevant content, original and pre-published, to an ever-broadening audience. Over the past year, a wide-ranging series of informative public events were organized by Sustainable Orillia. Our expertise continues to grow, and we are grateful to the many sponsors, partners and volunteers who have helped Sustainable Orillia deliver so much this past year.

Central to these successes is the partnership Sustainable Orillia has built with the City of Orillia. Ongoing communications and shared priorities have been enabled by the participation on Sustainable Orillia's board of **Dave Campbell**, Councillor, and **Renee Recoskie**, City of Orillia Manager of Environmental Compliance.

Mayor Steve Clarke maintains his personal interest and engagement through regular meetings with Sustainable Orillia's Chair, **Stan Mathewson**, and more recently by attending an early January board meeting.

Commenting on the recently-published City of Orillia's Strategic Plan, "Realizing our Potential", Mayor Clarke spoke passionately about ongoing and future measures the City is putting in place to boost Orillia's long-term sustainability. He stressed that measures of climate change mitigation and adaption will be an ever-present consideration in decisions taken by this and future Councils. This commitment to "protect the environment" is embedded in the City's Mission Statement and woven throughout the strategy document.

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Here at Sustainable Orillia, we will continue our coverage of developments in future editions of this newsletter and in our press copy. With your help, we will continue to build our role as an active advisor and partner with the City of Orillia—the goal being for this community to become a model for sustainability.

SUSTAINABLE ORILLIA YOUTH COUNCIL ... hard at work!

The Sustainable Orillia Youth Council has worked to connect schools and youth projects across Orillia. With help from the Youth Council, different schools and students have shared their knowledge and experience with others, who were then able to make a difference more easily.

Emerson, the Secretary of the Youth Council, has started an EcoClub team at Patrick Fogarty:



Youth Council hard at work
on "Boomerang Bags"

"I am the president of the EcoClub at Patrick Fogarty Catholic Secondary School. The club was created in November 2019. Our current project is painting a mural on one of the school's walls. This is our very first project and is estimated to be completed by the end of March. The mural's purpose is to promote awareness around the school about the environmental crisis around the world. There will be many more future projects for the EcoClub and we are excited to contribute to helping the environment in any way we can."

Emily, the Twin Lakes Rep. of the Youth Council, is head of the Twin Lakes Green Machine: "The Green Machine is the environmental club at Twin Lakes Secondary School. We are a Gold Certified Eco-School. Eco-Schools is a year-long Canadian certification program. The Green Machine consists of a team of about 10 dedicated members that work on projects all year long. Some of the projects include Tea Club, School House Greening, energy and waste audits, and trying to make awareness about the environment a central focus of our school community.

"Zac, the President of the Youth Council, has been working with Emily and others on 'Boomerang Bags'. 'Boomerang Bags is an initiative to see more people using re-usable bags instead of plastic at grocery stores. We are making re-usable bags out of old fabrics. They will be available for free at stores, with a reminder to bring them back along with a reusable bag of your own. Old clothes and fabrics from a Textile Drive at Twin have been separated into what can and cannot be used. We donated what we were not able to use to a church for those in need. We have cut the remaining fabrics into strips to begin the process of making re-usable bags which can be put into stores." If you want to hear more, follow us on Instagram: @sustainableorillia_yc or to join or assist, contact Zac at zacsustainableorillia@gmail.com.

PEOPLE-POWERED RENEWABLE ENERGY COMING TO ORILLIA

The Sunshine City is taking the lead with a new citizen-led, citizen-supported solar energy project at the new state-of-the-art Orillia Recreation Centre on West St. South. In addition to recreation, this facility, as the new heartbeat of Orillia, will be a busy, highly visible gathering place, offering a good opportunity for citizens to learn about renewable energy – what it is, how it works, and what it delivers. A 150 kW solar installation will take over 11,000 square feet of rooftop space that is already engineered to support the



system. Mayor Steve Clark and Orillia City Councillors have committed \$30,000 towards the \$90,000 cost of the project's Phase 1 in 2020, and potentially again for each of two years beyond. "I want to emphasize this is a big win for our city if we can bring this forward," said Councillor Jay Fallis. "It's a big environmental win and contributes to our city's infrastructure. I am fully in support." According to a City staff report, one of the project's primary impacts will be a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from the facility.

In addition, citizens have stepped up. With the campaign barely underway, \$17,000 have been pledged by citizen-donors (as of Feb. 15) who support steps toward more renewable energy in Orillia.

The project is the initiative of a group of citizens who call themselves Orillia Community Energy. They have rallied to engage Orillians in reducing the City's dependence on fossil fuels and making their city more self-reliant with clean, local electricity. Renewable energy sources are more cost-effective than ever before.

Citizen-donors will receive charitable tax receipts from the City. They will be recognized as green energy pioneers; their names will be displayed in the Recreation Centre's lobby adjacent to a "real-time" solar monitoring display showing the production from the system, environmental benefits and aerial photos of the project. Donors will be invited to a "green gala" at the Recreation Centre to celebrate the solar installation.

The climate emergency is a call to action for everyone on the planet. Orillia is no exception. Job #1 is to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases. Solar panels on our rec centre take us forward to a better future. For more information, contact Gordon Ball at: gordon.ball@sympatico.ca or (705) 326-4792.

WHAT DOES "SUSTAINABILITY" REALLY MEAN?

If you were to ask ten people what 'sustainability' means, you would likely get ten different answers. "Sustainability" is a broad term that is used in multiple ways, from "financial sustainability" to "eco-sustainability" to the "sustainability of the planet itself." This, in a way, is both good news and bad news. The good news is that the idea and imperative of "sustainability" is influencing more and more people, while the bad news is that, as "sustainability" gets used in more and more different contexts, it is becoming increasingly vague and confusing—over-used and often appropriated for green marketing purposes!

The first published instance of "sustainability" is usually attributed to Hans Carl von Carlowitz, who postulated the notion of sustainable yield forestry in 1713. Up to 1987 the term "sustainability" was not often heard. But the release of "Our Common Future – the report of the UN's Brundtland Commission in 1987, defined sustainability as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

Our planet faces a diminishing ability to produce the resources we need – those that stem from all that lives in water, air and soil, because humans continually create new stresses on the planet such as increased CO2 and resulting global heating. At the same time we increase demands on resources. To anybody this is not sustainable and future generations will suffer. Just last month a World Health/UNICEF report published in the Lancet, concluded that "[E]very child worldwide now faces existential threats from climate change and commercial pressures," former New Zealand Prime Minister and commission co-chair Helen Clark."

With the future of our descendents in jeopardy, here at Sustainable Orillia, the Brundtland definition is our working definition. In that context we recognize the need of our society to balance economic, environmental and social perspectives as we strive to become a more sustainable community and the only way to accomplish that is to tread much more lightly on the planet and let it recover for future generations. In our next issue we will spend some time uncovering what our heavy human footprint really looks like and why it is not sustainable.



The Future - a Circular Economy

(written with a debt to the The Ellen MacArthur Foundation website, from which quotes are taken)

A sustainable future world is only possible if—eventually—we can eliminate waste and throwaway products. Otherwise, given enough time, our entire planet will be deep in our human garbage (remember the Pixar/Walt Disney movie Wall-E?)



Given that knowledge, a new (or rather, an old) concept is being raised as a solution—the circular economy. The natural world on Earth demonstrates the circular aspect of all life. Animals are born, plants grow, schools of fish and aquatic plants populate our oceans and waterways. They interact. They die. They return to the soil or to the ocean or lake bottom. From the nutrients that made up their bodies, new life arises. Nothing is wasted. Nothing is permanently "thrown away." Life > death > new life > death > new life. Cyclical. Circular. Forever.

What is a circular economy?

Looking beyond the current take-make-waste extractive industrial model, a circular economy aims to redefine growth, focusing on positive society-wide benefits. It entails gradually decoupling economic activity from the consumption of finite resources, and designing waste out of the system. Underpinned by a transition to renewable energy sources, the circular model builds economic, natural, and social capital. It is based on three principles:

1. Design out waste and pollution;
2. Keep products and materials in use; and
3. Regenerate natural systems.

(<https://www.ellenmacarthurfoundation.org/circular-economy/concept>)

It is clear that transitioning to a circular economy is not a question of "adjustments" to the way we do things now. Rather, it requires a shift in our entire way of thinking about the products we make and use.

There's a need—and that need brings opportunities—to re-design the way we manufacture things. By changing the way we think—rejecting the idea of "throwing things away"—we can design products that are "made to be made again." This

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can design products that are “made to be made again.” This is especially viable if we power manufacturing systems with renewable energy.

Two cycles: biological and technical

A circular model distinguishes between biological and technical cycles. Consumption happens only in biological cycles, where food and biologically-based materials (such as cotton or wood) are designed to feed back into the system through processes like composting and anaerobic digestion. These cycles regenerate living systems, such as soil, which provide renewable resources for the economy. (Ibid)

Technical cycles recover and restore products, components, and materials through strategies like reuse, repair, remanufacture or (in the last resort) recycling. With current advances, digital technology has the power to support the transition to a circular economy by radically increasing virtualisation, de-materialisation, transparency, and feedback-driven intelligence. (Ibid)

In a circular economy, economic activity builds and rebuilds overall system health. The concept identifies the importance of the economy needing to work effectively at all levels – for large and small businesses, for organisations and individuals, for municipalities and cities.

Clearly this is a profound transformation in how we make things, how we think about the things we purchase, and how we build processes of the future. But it is not an impossible transformation—and that’s the reality we need to recognize.

So much of what needs to be done to make our world truly sustainable is possible now. The ideas and the technologies already exist—and will only get better and more efficient as we use them. All it takes now is the will to make the change—perhaps the toughest part of the whole transformation.

Let’s find that will. Let’s talk to our neighbours, talk to our municipal leaders, talk to our politicians, our people in business and industry. Let’s persuade them that this transformation is not only necessary, but also desirable.

A better world awaits at the end of the process.



50 YEARS EARTH DAY 2020

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 22

**This year's theme is
climate action**

"Change starts with
action. Better yet, an
action that affects the
world around you."

earthday.org

What's one thing you can do to build a
more rewarding and healthy life for the
people of Orillia, our children and
grandchildren?

*Let us know what you're
doing for Earth Day or
everyday by posting on our
Facebook page.*

