

From: [Barbara Schumacher](#)
To: [Eric Schwindt](#); [Evan Burgess](#); [Bonnie Bryant](#); [Sandy Shantz](#)
Cc: [Nathan Cadeau](#); [Kayla Grant](#); [David Brenneman](#); [Jeff Smith](#)
Subject: Green levy decision
Date: October 23, 2023 9:05:35 AM
Attachments: [Three Choices for Green Levy Fund.docx](#)

Dear Councillors and Mayor:

I am in bed with COVID but I am so dismayed by Woolwich Council's decision last

Tuesday to reject the possibility of redesignating the Green Levy funds to a two year salary for a *Sustainability and Climate Action Coordinator*, that I am doing my best to gather my thoughts before your meeting tomorrow when I hope you will take the opportunity to reverse this regrettable decision. I am sorry that I am not well enough to delegate.

I have attached the helpful chart which Sandra Bray forwarded to me, outlining the pros and cons for the Green Levy going forward.

If you hold to your decision not to hire a staff person to lead the township's climate action initiatives, I am wondering how you expect we will start to see action to reduce our emissions when each year of inaction will result in more expense to residents. This summer we have seen the results of an earth on fire and chaotic weather systems causing flooding and drought, impacting our farmers. Surely you are aware these events are causing insurance companies to raise premiums and in some jurisdictions even refuse to insure homeowners. And the cost of energy is escalating rapidly. One of the best options for homeowners is to retrofit to obtain energy efficiencies. However the cost of a home assessment which is necessary to access grants for the work is out of reach for most homeowners. What is council planning to do about these expenses? These costs are not taxes, but are as important in household budgeting and there is no question that these expenses will be well above \$1.75/month that you may save property owners by applying the Green Levy to defray property taxes this year.

It is obvious since the Green Levy was established that the personnel within the staff and council do not have the expertise to apply for the many grants available through the federal government (the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, Energy Efficiency Canada and many other organizations establishing assistance to municipalities across Canada to help them meet their emission targets). And do we need help?

Certainly. This year if we are to start with a serious climate plan, we need to reduce Woolwich emissions by 4700 tonnes/ year. Will we achieve this goal without a Sustainability and Climate Action Coordinator?

No, look at what we have done in the past two years since the Levy was in place - emission across this community are not reduced. Do you plan to continue on this path? Doing nothing, with the Green Levy just sitting in the bank, is the most irresponsible decision you can make.

Applying the Green Levy to reduce the property tax burden is equally irresponsible. Council in establishing the Green Levy had the courage to face the reality of the climate emergency we are in and to establish a fund to deal with it. The fact that Woolwich has not used this Green Levy is not a fault of Council. It is evidence that before money can be allocated to projects there must be a manager/champion with the expertise to know what levers to pull and what tools to apply. If you think that taxpayers are not asking for a climate action plan you have not read the polls that show 70% want action to reduce emissions, you do not listen to young people who are suffering from climate anxiety and depression thinking they are facing a

world of chaotic climate, conflict and mass migrations in pursuit food and water security.

Your mandate is to make good financial decisions but that is not all. You must also make decisions to protect the health and safety of Woolwich residents and hopefully improve their quality of life too. Our world without urgent climate action will be in decline however scientists tell us we still have a window of opportunity to turn things around. As we decrease our emissions we will reduce global heating by fractions of degrees and that will make a difference - fewer extreme heat days, less air pollution, more stable weather for farmers, less drought, floods and fire, healthier ecosystems and water sources, healthier people.

Please think of the decision to support the two year salary for a Sustainability and Climate Action Coordinator as an investment in our community's future and the well-being of its residents. This decision will provide an opportunity for "proof of concept" without the necessity for Council to commit to an on-going salaried position. This is an investment that will bring in much more than what you will invest:

- More funding into Woolwich coffers to support climate action projects from the funding we have not applied for, yet already being accessed by other municipalities.
- More money into the pockets of property owners who are able to use the Sustainability and Climate Action Coordinator resources to realize energy efficiencies in the community where they live and work.
- Reduced energy bills every month because homeowners have successfully retrofit their homes with the support of funding programmes which are possible through the township, modelled after other municipalities and will be recommended by the Sustainability and Climate Action Coordinator.
- Savings on insurance premiums for homeowners that qualify because they are fire smart and flood protected and for farmers because with emission reductions we will expect more stable weather and growing conditions.
- Attract business and industries who have made climate action a key goal in their operations and will only build/invest in communities demonstrating a strong commitment to climate action.

So when you make your final decision about the Green Levy, please give our children a hopeful future. Please have the courage and foresight to fulfill your whole mandate and not be limited by a narrow view of fiscal responsibility. Please support redesignating the Green Levy to fund a Sustainability and Climate Action Coordinator position for this proposed two year term. For the sake of our children please do not use the Green Levy to reduce the tax burden by \$1.75/month - that won't even buy a single cup of coffee for

the taxpayer. Look at the potential for what could be done in Woolwich, using the Green Levy in this foundational decision to get serious about our commitment to Transform WR.

Sincerely, Barbara Schumacher MD
Research Lead for 50by30WR
Member of GreenWR
Resident of Heidelberg
Living in Township of Woolwich since 1973

PS

Dear Jeff Smith: please append this letter to the meeting agenda for Tuesday, Oct. 24, 2023. Thank you, Barbara