

Parks & Environment Committee -- July 21, 2011

Emily J. Alfred, Toronto Environmental Alliance (TEA) Deputation on Core Service Review

Good Morning,

My name is Emily Alfred, and I'm a Campaigner for the Toronto Environmental Alliance. With our over 15,000 members, we've been working to build a Greener Toronto for over 22 years. Our members are proud of Toronto's great environmental programs that make us a leader in North America.

I'm here because we are concerned about the Mayor's consultant's suggestion to reduce or eliminate the Toronto Environment Office is short-sighted, and based on incomplete facts. *I've had a very short time to look into this matter, and I'm by no means an expert on all of what the TEO does, but I have found some important information that I'd like to share today.*

As pointed out by my colleagues who spoke ahead of me, the Toronto Environment Office plays a crucial role in coordinating and managing a number of programs for the City related to sustainability, energy conservation, climate change preparedness, community education, as well as policy and research.

According to a report from April 2011, the TEO is responsible for:

- providing research and policy expertise to a range of departments and offices at the City
- establishing effective policy and program partnerships between external and internal stakeholders; and
- delivering the tools needed to support residents and businesses in making changes to contribute to greener lifestyles and business practices

The Toronto Environment Office was created in 2006, previously operating since 1996 as Environmental Services in the Technical Services department. It now coordinates a range of technical and non-technical programs across the City, supporting all ABCDs and ensuring that there isn't wasteful overlap or duplication.

This includes using technical and environmental expertise to assist other departments in program planning and reporting to other levels of government.

One example of this expertise can be seen by looking at this table showing credits for the City's carbon offset program as of May 2011.

The TEO assists staff in technical reporting and calculations for a wide range of departments, on a wide range of 'greening' projects, across the City.

- *Note - the Province now requires GHG reporting, so this technical information is necessary*

The TEO also works on behalf of Toronto Water to administer Community Stormwater Management Program; and works across a range of departments to administer the Local Food Procurement Policy, including Parks and Rec, Childrens Services and Long Term Care homes. s

The Toronto Environment Office has also worked with other levels of government and consulted all departments on climate change and what this means for the City in terms of extreme weather

– they consulted and worked with departments managing Toronto Water, insurance, emergency preparedness, public health, city infrastructure and development standards among other things.

Comparison with other Municipalities with a similar office

*****See attached table**

Here is a table comparing Toronto to similar large cities with a central ‘sustainability office’ performing a similar role to the TEO, including three of the cities chosen for comparison by KPMG.

You’ll see that the per capita staffing is third lowest. The TEO is not alone, and is by no means far off in terms of size and scope, as demonstrated by the reasonable staffing levels

Conclusion

Environmental issues are not special-interest issues, they affect our health, our economy, our living environment, our city infrastructure, and our social programs to name a few.

The information provided in the Mayor’s Consultants report is far too thin to make such a serious decision on.

I urge you today to take the time to understand the value of the Toronto Environment Office. I urge you to seek the missing information about the full environmental, social and economic impact of all of the TEO programs, the impact it would have on other departments in the City, and to understand how efficiencies can be made BEFORE making a decision to refer the matter to Executive Committee.

Please defer a decision today until you can be sure that you’ve had time to understand all the issues and the community and public input you’ve heard here today.

Comparable municipalities with departments similar to Toronto’s Environment Office

Office	Population	Staffing	Staffing
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	(millions)		per 100,000
PHILADELPHIA -- Mayor's Office of Sustainability	1.53	5	0.33
SAN FRANCISCO -- Dept of the Environment	7.47	56.2	0.75
TORONTO -- Environment Office	2.50	26.6	1.06
VANCOUVER -- Sustainability Project	0.58	17	2.93
CHICAGO -- Dept of Environment	2.70	36	1.33
BOSTON -- Environment Dept	0.62	18	2.90
SEATTLE -- Office of Sustainability and Environment	0.61	11	1.80
EDMONTON -- Office of Environment	0.73	13	1.78