

Kingston-SCAN! report – by Nancy Nicol

Kingston SCAN! continues to meet monthly. We recently formalized our structure and set up three standing committees: municipal work; outreach and education; and provincial. We now have a chair, secretary and regional rep. We will be hosting a SCAN information table at the 2024 Climate Change Symposium, put on by Sustainable Kingston.

This report will focus on our recent municipal work.

350 Kingston, Seniors for Climate Action Now and other climate activists in Kingston have been working to pressure the city of Kingston to raise GHG emissions reduction goals to a 50% reduction in by 2030, in line with 2023 IPCC recommendation for developed countries.

Background: Since Kingston declared a climate emergency in 2019, progress has stalled. In its 2021 'Climate Leadership plan' Kingston committed to a 15% reduction in GHG emissions by 2022 and to 30% reduction by 2030. But Kingston failed to meet its 2022 GHG target and is not on track to meet the 2030 target. And, the 2021 plan recommended reassessing the 30% GHG target in 2022, to consider raising the GHG emissions reduction goal to 40-50% by 2030. But, a report to council on January 23rd, called for a further delay before reassessing GHG emissions targets until 2025!

Seniors for Climate Action Now and 350 Kingston wrote an Open Letter to city council, signed by 178 people and 12 organizations and sent to city council and the mayor. The Open Letter called for an increase from 30% to 50% GHG emissions reductions by 2030; urged the city of Kingston to continue to pressure the Provincial government on climate policy and to uphold the OEB decision on Enbridge; and called on the city to enlist, support and fund citizen action to address the climate crisis.

We drafted a motion to council for the January 23rd council meeting calling for a 50% reduction by 2030. We called, emailed and lobbied council members, to talk with them about the climate emergency and to urge them to take our motion forward. We mobilized supporters to call and email their councilors and to come to the council meeting on January 23rd.

On January 23rd, 40 people filled the council chambers wearing masks with the words: "Later is too Late". Five people spoke as delegates to council; Aric McBay (Providence Centre); Nancy Nicol and Maurice Breslow (Seniors for Climate Action Now); Bob MacInnes (350 Kingston) and Sarah Gordon (Queen's Backing Action on Climate Change). You can view our speeches [here](#) (links to the video are below)

Despite our speeches and a room full of supporters, council voted to wait until 2025 to consider more aggressive greenhouse gas emissions goals. We anticipated this outcome, and despite it we feel we have made progress. City council was put on notice and engaged in a serious discussion which without our presence would likely have been a rubber stamp of the delay. The coalition we have built over the past year was strengthened. One council member, even as she didn't support our motion - used our presence to speak to council, saying: "The goal of a 50 per cent

GHG reduction for 2030 is what I want deeply... I agree with all the people who have spoken to us tonight. We all want the same thing... The question then becomes how.”

Our members were energized by this action and enthusiastic to continue the pressure on the city. We were on the front page of the Kingston Whig Standard (press links below) The media reports alerted residents to this debate. Key issues such as the fact that the city budgeted \$9.5 million to build a ‘promenade’ out into the harbor – dumping tons of concrete, sand and stone in the water in the midst of a climate emergency - were exposed.

This action has raised many questions of strategy, in particular, how do we balance working *with* and *against* city council. We are planning our next steps.

Videos of our speeches to Kingston city council – Jan. 23rd

Nancy Nicol (SCAN!)

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1dlidkq_aK-sDYSIH9Km0em8KOWnGDn_-/view?usp=drive_link

Maurice Breslow (SCAN!)

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1hFh8JU8MStlUyLRq65A-cUak3YkRduTB/view?usp=drive_link

Robert MacInnes (350-Kingston)

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1BvwV9k4Yb6NwluNiYNWGIzVMfyq4Bz77/view?usp=drive_link

Sarah Gordon (Queen’s masters student, QBACC)

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1SzBdSm5IM9XaC6p-a5aQBLP8042tll6i/view?usp=drive_link

Aric McBay (Providence Centre)

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1coqSetKdplGe5PzzrYckuF2SeAvAZqD9/view?usp=drive_link

Press:

Whig Standard

[Tuesday](#) Kingston looks to ways to get emissions reduction back on track

[Wednesday](#) Kingston city council opts to wait for transit, facility reviews

Kingstonist

[Monday](#) Letter: Kingston residents urge City Council to increase 2030 greenhouse gas reduction target without delay

[Wednesday](#) Kingston Council defers increase of corporate GHG reduction targets to 2030

Attachments:

Front page of Whig – paper edition

Open Letter to Kingston City Council

Photos will be sent separately