

1) In 2007 IPCC AR4 put 'Climate Change' on the map.

It was the largest and most detailed summary of the climate change situation ever undertaken, produced by thousands of authors, editors, scientists, and reviewers from dozens of countries citing over 6,000 peer reviewed scientific studies.

The Bottom Line:

"Warming of the climate system is unequivocal" and "most of the observed increase in global average temperature since the mid-20th century is very likely due to increase in anthropogenic greenhouse gas concentrations"

This is the one Al Gore became passionate about and for which he and the scientists received the Nobel Peace Prize.

2) Ralph Torrie, here in Cobourg, had been involved with the 1987 United Nations Bruntland Commission where the most accepted definition of 'sustainability' originated (although Ralph has some interesting 'behind the scene' accounts of how that happened)

"Sustainable development is the kind of development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

So in December 1983 the UN Secretary-General had asked Dr. Gro Harlem Brundtland (Prime Minister of Norway) to chair a World Commission on Environment and Development... She developed the broad political concept of sustainable development in the course of extensive public hearings that were distinguished by their inclusiveness.

3) Because of the ground swell of concern about Climate Change here in Cobourg by others and Ralph decided to run in the 2008 40th Federal Election to highlight the urgency of paying attention to the findings of IPCC's AR4. He lost, but he got 4,953 votes which was an indication to many, that people were concerned about this issue.

4) So in 2008, after the election, this group didn't want to lose the momentum they believed had been demonstrated in those results and conceived a non-profit organization that would build on that momentum.

And thus was created, **"Citizens for a Sustainable Cobourg"**.

5) In 2009 they applied to the Ontario Ministry of the Environment that was offering funding for not-for-profit organizations that would tackle the province's G.H.G. reduction targets of 6% below 1990 levels by 2014 as part of its Climate Change Plan for Ontario.

6) They got the funding and set up the Cobourg Go Green Centre in the little storefront next to the Lakefront Utilities office on Division St. in March 2009.

The Mission stated in that document remains the cornerstone of that of 'Sustainable Cobourg' today.

" ... to organize or participate in local environmental projects, to educate and increase the public's understanding of the environment and its importance, develop and offer programs promoting the protection and preservation of the environment and conduct and disseminate research relating to the environment."

7) The project started with the goal of achieving up to 809 tonnes of G.H.G. emission reductions in the residential, waste and transportation sectors by March 31 2010.

Torrie Smith Associates were the consulting and software (they had the only one) development organization that developed G.H.G. emissions software products that were used in the project.

8) At this point there were some members who didn't see the store-front quasi partnership with Cobourg and the province as particularly sustainable as these are government hence political entities that have a short lifespan (and memory) of 4 years.

9) Fall 2009 there were several meetings to discuss these views and it was decided that there needed to be an 'arms length' component to the organization so that it could lobby the Town or the Province and that would be difficult if not impossible if the organization was accepting funding and support from them.

That's when the SPLIT happened!

In my opinion, there were those who saw the 'practical' component of what had to happen to reduce G.H.G. emissions i.e. energy audits, low-flush toilets, light bulb replacement, water conservation devices, etc. and those of us who were interested in educating and informing our constituents and helping to build a critical mass that could transform our town's way of doing things that would use the lens of sustainability to create less G.H.G emissions and improve the health of our planet.

10) So it was decided to become TWO entities:

1. "Go Green Together", the store-front, practical hands-on- help and support component for citizens who wanted it and funded by Provincial Government incentives and Climate Action Strategy partnerships and
2. "Sustainable Cobourg", which was more of an advocacy organization that had a much broader more culturally trans-formative vision.

11) September 10, 2009 we became a separate entity incorporated as 'Sustainable Cobourg' by the 3 Richards:

Richard Homme (since deceased)
Richard Nonnekes (cycling advocate)
Richard Tyssen (public policy)

Of course the structure of this organization had to change from a government funded service provider, as this was now the purview of 'Go Green Together'. We decided to be a membership organization that charged a yearly membership fee and to have a website presence.

Several committees were struck to deal with various areas pertaining to 'sustainability' in our Town and surrounding areas.

E.g.

Town Hall Committee- advocates for sustainable planning and development in Cobourg. It makes presentations to the Town of Cobourg Council regarding plans such as The Official Plan. It addresses issues of concern regarding sustainable planning and development within the Town as they arise.

Bicycle Action Committee- serves to improve the bicycling culture in Cobourg by advocating for new bike lanes and routes, improved safety and convenience for cyclists, and bicycle tourism. Develop a Bicycle Action Plan for the Town.

Food Action Committee- encourages AWARENESS of where our food comes from, how its grown, when it was harvested and how its processed. We promote ACCESSIBILITY to affordable, local food and information about nutrition and local food programs. We provide CONNECTIONS to useful information and advocate for a sustainable food FUTURE.

Eco-Action Committee- (previously Health Hazards) supports any action intended to have a positive impact on the environment. This includes: promoting the '3Rs' of the waste-hierarchy- Reduce, Reuse, Recycle; providing connections and information on environmentally friendly and sustainable policies that protect our ecosystems, and; preventing soil, air, and water pollution or degradation in our community.

Committee chairs were elected and monthly meetings for the Board of Directors were organized.

It was decided that :

- a) The Committee Chairs report to the Board of Directors, who receive copies of their minutes and are informed of who the members of their committees are.
- b) The Board supports the committees' initiatives always with the lens of sustainability.
- c) The Board provides the funding for projects.

Description to date:

Our most established committee is the **Bicycle Action Committee**, which has developed a 'Do it yourself' bike shop that creates funding to sustain itself by selling refurbished bikes (thus keeping them out of landfill) and also provides 'Safe Cycling' instructors to schools for free. It is its own organization.

S.C. 's BAC still has the original mandate. It has been active at Council meetings for the past 10 years and some council members even believed it was actually a Town Committee.

When elections loomed we realized it would be an opportunity to bring 'sustainability' into the political discussions, so we have hosted about 9 'All Candidates Forums' with the most recent attendance exceeding expectations.

Our Town Hall Committee is the one responsible for establishing the procedures for the forums. This includes writing articles, advertising, candidate contact, creating questions, and engaging the community.

Our Food Action Committee was instrumental in establishing Cobourg's first Community Garden, which is now an independent organization; the 'Cobourg Community Garden Group'.

Our Eco-Action Committee has worked this past year to update the Town's Climate Action Plan as we had done in 2009.

We learned we are stronger in our message when we form partnerships. We now have several 'Corporate Members' whom we support with links on our website.

Community Power Northumberland Cycle Transitions

Loft Cinema

Red Tractor Farm and Market

What's in Store

Mass Environmental

Staples

Blue Frog Water Gardens

Jermey Clarke

Lakefront Utilities

Quinn's Blooms

We are now recognized as a 'go to' organization for information and knowledge about what a "Sustainable Cobourg" is.

Our organization has been involved in many projects over the last 10 years:
(In no particular order)

Grow the Greenbelt- provided speakers and forums in 2016 working with County and the Province.

Tannery District- lobbied federal and provincial and municipal governments to re-mediate this brownfield. Helped secure funding. Made at least 5 delegations to Town regarding our vision for this site as a 'Sustainable neighbourhood'.

Cobourg Community Garden- now self sufficient (2015)

Sustainability 101- Lunch and Learn for Town staff and councillors -(2016)

Climate Change- 4 presentations including Dr. John Stone of IPCC

Bicycle Paths- supporting cycle tourism

Sustainable Building Practices- Passive House presentation
Straw Bale construction (2016-2017)

Conference Presenters- Ontario Association for Committees of Adjustments (2017)

Student Sustainability Champions- elementary and secondary 'waste reduction' challenge (2018-2019)

Moderator: V 13 Fireside Chat on Sustainability (2019)

Sustainability Officer Presentation to County and Town Councils (2019)

All Candidates Forums- Provincial..and Federal

In Conclusion:

We are small but mighty!

Our 80 or so members and our affiliation with our Corporate Members as well as Federal Summer Works grants has allowed us to fund our activities

I have changed the 'non-profit' description to the 'for benefit' description, as we want to move away from the 'bottom-line ' mentality to the more sustainable 'triple bottom line' thinking.