

## How Did the Declaration of Climate Change Come About?

I called THE CITY OF PETERBOROUGH and spoke to James Byrne, Climate Change Coordinator, today to inquire. Here is what was discovered.- Maggie Hope Braun

The declaration was an act of council.

It was not preceded by any report from staff.

These declarations were preceded by the Paris Climate Accord in 2015

and the IPCC Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C in 2018.

Kingston, Ontario, was the first of forty-four Cities in Canada to declare Emergencies starting in 2019.

Peterborough was the 22nd municipality to declare a Climate Emergency.

The purpose of the declaration was to "form a touchstone for naming and framing directives and securing funding for projects." In other words, all decisions are viewed through the lens of potential climate disasters and lowering emissions while remaining unbinding. According to James, the funds come from external and internal sources (federal, provincial and municipal).

I inquired about the International Council on Local Environmental Initiatives ICLEI and whether the city paid for a membership with this organization. A team from San Carlos, California, found this true in 2012. James was not aware of an annual membership with ICLEI Canada.

I inquired about the CITY OF PETERBOROUGH'S Climate Change Action Plan (CCAP) of 2016. The CITIES website states it was developed in partnership with Sustainable Peterborough and ICLEI-Canada. The CCAP is Peterborough's foundational climate change strategy to mitigate corporate and community GHG emissions. The CCAP identified 21 strategies that would limit the growth of GHG emissions by 30% by 2031 from 2011 baseline levels.

James did not mention Sustainable Peterborough but stated Lura Consulting did the public consultation.

I found James helpful and cordial. I hope this research can save others a little time as we work to reverse the declarations of climate emergency in our cities and recommend utilizing city staff to navigate the byzantine nature of municipal websites and procedures. They technically work for us, so put them to work!

## **How do we Reverse the Declarations of Climate Emergency?**

This morning, I spent some time inquiring about how to reverse the declarations of climate change emergency, including raising public awareness through online and written petitions in preparation for our next delegation.

Each municipality has specific protocols for submitting petitions. Additionally, I have been instructed that meeting with ward counsellors is most effective. Counsellors are the only ones who can bring forward a motion to reverse the declaration. In Peterborough, most of the counsellors were not elected when the declaration was made.