**Drought & Water Committee Meeting**

**Minutes**

**Date:** Wednesday, May 21, 2025

**Attendees:** Heike Stippler (Chair), Miles Hunter, Len Smit, Chris O’Donoghue, Mike Lalonde, Rena Vanderwal, Bill Hardy, Bob Markwart (Irrigation Industry Association of BC), Pocha Sachdeva (IIABC), Coreen Rodger Berrisford (ED)

Called to order: 3:06 pm

Approval of Agenda

**Motion:** to approve the agenda as presented. **Carried.**

Minutes from April 3, 2024

**Motion:** to approve as presented. **Carried.**

Collaborating with the IIABC is seen as critical to addressing water regulation issues effectively. We need stable water regulations or no one will understand them. Including the Landscape Architects is also important on ensuring that they use higher standards in irrigation design in planning.

**Action:** ED will invite the BC Landscape Architects Society to join the committee.

1. Review of key messages – BCLNA Position Paper.

The Committee discussed the Position Paper.

* The key messages and issues have not changed
* The Position Paper is too long to be effective in some channels
* It could be bolder and stronger in stating the consequences of mismanagement and benefits of proper management of water resources.
* The Position Paper is the basis from which other advocacy and public appeal items can be developed, with more images and stronger messaging. Water for the right things and the right reasons.
* The template letters were seen as too wordy – changing to shorter bullet points and/or infographics (maybe on the back)
* There is no Retailer letter – the curtailments affect their businesses as people do not buy plants during water restrictions.
* Can we leverage resources from the Plants Love You Campaign to create infographics. Potentially lawn signs – Plants Love You – lawn is helping you breathe, keeping you cooler, humidifying the air. Water Me, You like to drink at 5 pm I like to drink at 5 am. My Gardens Keep you Cool.
* We could have a QR Code online petition, an email distribution list and social media with short clear calls to action and asks. Like recycling promotions.

**Action:** ED: Update snowpack numbers in position paper

ED: Write template letter for retailers – Retail Advisory Group to review

ED: Rewrite other template lettersto bullet points

Heike: Contact CNLA to secure potential resources from the Plants Love You initiative and other funding opportunities from CNLA

1. Vancouver water survey and response.

The survey is seen as being biased. BCLNA encourages our members to fill out the survey and is confident that the members do not need guidance in filling it out.

BCLNA wants to capture the sentiment of our members to the Vancouver survey and send it out to all our landscapers for response. This will help inform the letter to the City of Vancouver.

There are short, medium and long term strategies. We can improve what we have with available technologies. We can learn from other drought prone jurisdictions.

The City’s short term options are regulatory. In the medium term, they could start to implement water metering in new builds. In the longer term, the Province could change the building code enforcing water management technologies within new housing and commercial buildings. There could be rebates for stormwater capture.

* 1. City of Vancouver letter points:
     1. Appreciation for reaching out to professionals in assessing the effectiveness of Metro Vancouver’s seasonal watering restrictions.
     2. Support smart watering vs not watering to keep plants alive
     3. Promote water conservation technologies and methods – we can share a list for them from the Irrigation Industry Association of BC.
     4. Review the timing of the restrictions – June 2 start and September 15 end.
     5. Exemptions for those that are utilizing the best water conservation technologies would provide an incentive to adopt them and keep the vegetation alive.
     6. Request a meeting with the city to discuss

**Action:** Create a duplicate survey that Vancouver has done and send to all BCLNA landscape members asking them would they support the changes. Send both the City of Vancouver and BCLNA surveys out to members with URGENT notification.

Draft a letter to the City once the BCLNA survey results are compiled and send to the Committee for review.

Adjourned: 4:37pm