



## **AGM November 2022 Environment Committee Report**

Arnold De Graaff, Knut Holmsen (co-chair), Bob Mitchell and myself along with a recent potential recruit, Leah Pressey have been reinvigorating our committee primarily by planning a presentation on recycling and waste which was held on October, 30, 2022. Jo-Anne St. Godard, the Executive Director of the Circular Innovation Council was our main speaker. It was an excellent presentation on the potential of a circular economy as compared to the largely linear kind of economy we have lived with for decades. Laura Campbell, Arnold De Graaff and Melissa Kovacs Reid were panelists for the Q. & A.

We have increased the global consumption of goods, increased the number of manufactured products available, and then we eventually are dumping these goods as waste. While not true of all products, this economic model is taking place around the world, and we (as humans) have been seduced into believing that this is the best economic system. Clearly it is not for many reasons, namely: pollution, increased greenhouse gases, waste at each step of the manufacturing process, the carbon footprint of every item produced, the climate emergency, the loss of resilience, the loss of skills and resources, and to a large extent, the loss of community. Capitalist, consumer-based economies driven by profits, and furthermore systems where huge profits are the goal, have created and continues to increase this wasteful mess.

The alternative is much more satisfying and sustainable. Jo-Anne gave an interesting example of thinking about what *service* needs to be provided for rather than focusing on the *product*. Two or three airports under renovation in the Netherlands decided to initiate a RFP where they asked for lighting as a service rather than a product. Philips Electronics was awarded the contract based on their idea of selling the lumens to the airports, not the actual light fixtures or the bulbs. Phillips, as a supplier, quickly realized that since they were responsible for maintaining the fixtures and the light bulbs it was wise to build a re-cycling facility next to the airport to retrieve and reuse the old bulbs or “waste”. It has been a win-win for both parties and the environment. The airports no longer pay for fixtures, bulbs or the labour to replace burnt-out equipment, while the supplier is saving themselves a great deal on shipping and manufacturing by recycling old bulbs locally and using the components to create new ones. We’ll write a report of the information from the presentation for members.

One conclusion several people in the audience could resonate with was the need to find a better form of representation for our provincial and federal politicians. The system as it stands is not built to value diverse voices or to think more creatively and urgently about necessary changes in our society.

As a committee we welcome new members to join us in continuing the vision of building a better community through information which can lead to action. You can reach Knut and/or Rita through the MC<sup>2</sup> email: [info@monomulmur.com](mailto:info@monomulmur.com).

Rita Reitsma, Co-chair, the Environment Committee