

MINUTES
NATURAL AREAS, PARKS, AND TRAILS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

via MS Teams

January 11, 2024, at 4:01 p.m.

Present: Councillor Judy Brownoff (Chair), Julian Anderson (4:29 p.m.), Jane Cameron, Catherine du Bois, David Little, Evan Papps, Wendy Trotter, Darrell Wick and Kathleen Woodruff

Staff: Eva Riccius, Senior Manager, Parks; Nathalie Dechaine, Manager, Community Development/Business Systems; Paul de Greef, Manager, Park Planning and Development; Alix Link, Manager, Urban Forestry, Natural Areas, and Community Stewardship; Donovan Coates, Park Use Coordinator (4:10 p.m.); and Angela Hawkshaw; Committee Clerk

Guests: Danielle Wilhelm, Strawberry Vale and Fastball Association

MINUTES

MOVED by C. du Bois and Seconded by D. Little: "That the Minutes of the Natural Areas, Parks and Trails Advisory Committee meeting held November 9, 2023, be adopted as circulated."

CARRIED

CHAIRS REMARKS

The Chair welcomed the committee, and the following was noted:

- The new Regional Parks and Trails Residential Survey results will be available soon.
- Island Health will be providing a report on water safety, specifically concerning Thetis, Elk and Beaver Lake. There are no lifeguards in the Capitol Regional District (CRD). The goal is to implement safety protocols."

FIELD RENAMING REQUEST AT ROSEDALE PARK

The Park Use Coordinator introduced the guest speaker, and the following was noted (letters of support and dedication submission request on file):

- The dedication to the Strawberry Vale Fastball Association from Wes Jantzen and Pam Schon is recognized by those who have worked with them the past 26 years.
- This proposal is being made with the support of the current executive and home user group.
- In honour of the efforts that Wes and Pam have made to the association a proposal has been given to rename Softball Diamond 2: "Wes Jantzen and Pam Schon Field".
- If the request is supported, a plaque will be placed.

MOVED by C. du Bois and Seconded by D. Little: “That the Natural Areas, Parks and Trails Advisory Committee recommends that Council approve the request from Strawberry Vale Minor Softball Association to rename Softball Diamond #2 at Rosedale Park the “Wes Jantzen and Pam Schon Field” in honour of community volunteers Wes Jantzen and Pam Schon.”

The following was noted during committee discussion:

- Putting forward one name for a renaming does not encourage diversity. Naming requests in the future could include several options.
- An award or bursary given by associations to honour individuals could be an option.
- Minority groups that use public spaces could be included in the proposed renaming.
- The Park Naming Policy could be examined.

The Motion was then PUT and CARRIED

OVERVIEW OF NATURAL AREAS, PARKS AND TRAILS

The Senior Manager of Parks gave a presentation (PowerPoint on file), and the following was noted:

- This presentation is to give an overview of what the Parks Division is responsible for and to encourage a discussion about future topics within this committee.
- The main mission statement is “Everyone belongs here”.
- The Parks Department defines itself in the centre of the department mission outcomes: Healthy Nature, Healthy People and Healthy Community. Within these outcomes a focus on advocacy, physical, mental and emotional health and connections within the community exists.
- Natural Intelligence underpins how Parks approaches its work. It is more than working with the community to make positive and meaningful change against the climate crisis, it is multi-dimensional work.
- Parks’ work is environmental stewardship. This is integrated into all the Division’s work, including outdoor sports facilities using best-of-class environmental practices, and providing trail or nature restoration opportunities.
- Some of the strategies and actions that are currently underway are the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy, Urban Forest Strategy and the Panama Flats Concept Plan Check-in.
- The four desired outcomes within the municipality are a healthy ecosystem, advanced reconciliations, effective stewardship and resilient communities and economies.

The following was noted during committee discussion:

- Having a deliberate intentional focus on how ecosystem restoration connects with Indigenous reconciliation could be a future topic.
- Walking trails that exist in the community, not just in the parks, could be promoted. Connectors could be explored and added to the Active Transportation Plan. A feedback mechanism for reporting overgrown bushes could be explored.
- Accessible education for planting trees and protecting wildlife could be offered to government workers and residents.
- Park and residential space are not balanced. Funding for staff resources from the Province and Council is needed to protect the natural areas.
- Balance is needed within the Provincial mandate for more housing to protect the urban forest and natural areas.
- Incentives for planting trees and protecting nature within new public and private developments are needed.

- Public trails could replace areas where trees are removed to encourage outdoor living.
- An assessment and overview of the state of the environment could be useful to the committee.
- The Biodiversity Conservation Strategy is large and extra time for the committee to review and consider would be appreciated.

VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION

The Senior Manager of Parks provided an overview, and the following was noted:

- The Committee Recognition Event in October 2023 was well attended.
- The event requires a lot of resources and work from staff.
- It is suggested that the event take place every 2 years. Individual committees hosting small events could be discussed.

The committee members made the following comments:

- An end-of-life recognition could be an idea.
- Limiting the number of awards could allow for more meaningful nominations.
- Recognition given to donations of land, contributing to and educating the community on various topics, long service and a focus on youth, could be considered.
- Staff and resident achievements could be combined for simplicity. This could help with cost and staff resources.
- An award for the 3 sections of the committee's name, Natural Areas, Parks and Trails, is a suggestion.
- It was noted that the nomination process was difficult and an easier avenue for the public could be explored.

BIODIVERSITY AND ECOSYSTEM HEALTH FRAMEWORK

The Senior Manager of Parks gave the following presentation (PowerPoint on file) and the following was noted:

- The recommendations from the project are broad.
- The desired outcomes for implementing the framework include healthy ecosystems, advance reconciliation, effective stewardship, and resilient communities and economies.
- The vision is that healthy and biodiverse ecosystems will be thriving, productive and resilient – and sustain community, social, economic, and environmental well-being in all ways for generations to come.
- Chief Ecologist is a new position being considered by the province.
- At the 15th Conference of the Parties (COP15) Canada signed an agreement to protect 30% of its natural areas by 2030. An update about Saanich's ecosystems could be considered for a future presentation.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 5:54 p.m.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is on February 7, 2024.

Councillor Brownoff, Chair

I hereby certify these minutes are accurate.

Angela Hawkshaw, Committee Clerk