

**MINUTES**  
**NATURAL AREAS, PARKS, AND TRAILS ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
Held at Saanich Municipal Hall, Committee Room 2 and via MS Teams  
770 Vernon Avenue  
Thursday, March 14, 2024, at 4:02 p.m.

Present: Councillor Judy Brownoff (Chair), Julian Anderson, Jane Cameron (via Teams), David Little, Evan Papps, Darrell Wick and Kathleen Woodruff

Staff: Eva Riccius, Senior Manager, Parks; Megan Squires, Senior Transportation Planner; Paul de Greef, Manager; Park Planning and Development; Alix Link, Manager, Urban Forestry, Natural Areas, and Community Stewardship; Nikki McWalters, Park Planner; Angela Hawkshaw, Committee Clerk

Guests: Tracey Moss, Visitor Services and Community Engagement, Capital Regional District

Regrets: Catherine du Bois and Wendy Trotter

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#### **ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES**

**MOVED by E. Papps and Seconded by K. Woodruff: "That the Minutes of the Natural Areas, Parks and Trails Advisory Committee meeting held February 8, 2024 be adopted as circulated."**

**CARRIED**

#### **CHAIRS REMARKS**

The Chair made the following comments:

- The Pickleball Strategy for Victoria, Saanich, Oak Bay and Esquimalt is available on the Saanich website.
- On April 4<sup>th</sup> an open house is scheduled to discuss the plans for the new tower at PKOLS. More information will be available on the website

#### **STEWARDSHIP INITIATIVES IN CAPITAL REGIONAL DISTRICT PARKS**

The Visitor Services and Community Engagement representative gave a presentation (PowerPoint) on file. The following was noted in response to questions and during committee discussion:

- In 2022-2023, the Capital Regional District (CRD) introduced 24 new positions, including the establishment of a stewardship team and a leadership team dedicated to the volunteers.
- Thanks were given to the team working in the Mt. Work Regional Park, particularly in the sustainable trail rerouting efforts.

## **DRAFT ROAD SAFETY ACTION PLAN**

The Senior Transportation Planner gave a presentation on the Draft Road Safety Action Plan (PowerPoint on file). The following was noted in response to questions and during committee discussion:

- The plan is excellently laid out and offers valuable insights.
- Consideration could be given to funding the work through a tax benefit aimed at non-vehicle users.
- Emphasis is placed on addressing aspects of the plan that are achievable.
- Regional trail crossings that are experiencing a high rate of accidents could be improved.
- CRD is spearheading a pilot project focused on trail widening and improved lighting. Saanich could consider participating in respect to road edge redesign.
- Crash data from 2016-2020 is accessible. Information beyond this timeframe is currently unavailable.
- Intersection safety cameras are utilized to issue tickets to drivers who disregard red and yellow lights.
- Parking and curbside regulations are not addressed in this plan.

The Senior Transportation Manager exited the meeting at 4:33 p.m.

## **SENSORY GARDEN PRESENTATION**

The Park Planner gave a presentation on the Sensory Gardens (PowerPoint on file). The following was noted in response to questions and during committee discussion:

- The proposed plans could benefit a diverse range of trail users, including older adults and individuals with visual impairments.

The Manager of Park Planning and the Park Planner exited the meeting at 5:34 p.m.

## **BIODIVERSITY STRATEGY (COLQUITZ VIDEO)**

The Senior Manager of Parks provided an overview of the draft Biodiversity Strategy (report on file). The following was noted in response to questions and during committee discussion:

- Aerial photographs provide insightful data.
- Each plan that is implemented in Saanich will work in tandem.
- The draft Habitat Connectivity Network prioritizes habitats that will support biodiversity.
- Incentives could be explored to ensure the protection of homeowner's green spaces.
- Densification will be observed in tall and wide developments.
- A recommendation could be brought back to the committee before it is adopted by Council.
- Saanich follows a right tree, right place perspective when choosing native trees for boulevards and parks.
- Past examinations of permeable sources have been conducted at the Municipal Hall.
- The Environmental policy framework will guide staff in making new or reviewing environmental policies.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL GUIDELINES FOR PROJECTS IN PARKS**

During a roundtable discussion, the members discussed the Environmental Guidelines for Projects in Parks, and the following was noted:

- Staff within the Parks Department are tasked with completing a form outlining project details and mapping out key impacts on the environment. This highlights issues and directs actions to prevent environmental harm. This approach proves beneficial for new staff, particularly those involved in Public Works.
- Consideration of archaeological factors may be integrated into the process.
- The protection of streams is deemed crucial and holds significant value.
- Establishing measurable objectives is deemed essential for effective project management.
- Concerns were raised regarding local guided tours that could cause damage to natural areas beyond the designated trails in the parks. Examination of the current park permit application process is underway.
- There is a worry that the unlawful disposal of waste in parks may lead to the spreading of non-native seeds.
- Restoration projects within parks and the implementation of planning initiatives are underway, focusing on risk management and boundary management.

**MOVED by D. Wick and seconded by K. Woodruff: “That the Natural Areas, Parks and Trails Committee recommend that Council direct staff to monitor the unauthorized dumping in parks and natural areas due to the recent fee implementation at the garden waste facility.**

**CARRIED**

## **FINAL REMARKS**

- The Chair encouraged members to bring suggestions for the draft Biodiversity Strategy to the next meeting for a roundtable discussion.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

On a motion from K. Woodruff the meeting adjourned at 6:14 p.m.

## **NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday April 11, 2024, at 4:00 p.m.

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Councillor Brownoff, Chair

I hereby certify these minutes are accurate.

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Angela Hawkshaw, Committee Clerk