

**MINUTES**  
**GOVERNANCE REVIEW CITIZEN ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
Held at the Police / Fire Building, Kirby Room, 760 Vernon Avenue  
**Wednesday, November 30, 2016 at 7:00 p.m.**

Chair: John Schmuck

Present: Julian Anderson; Art Beck; Joe Calenda; Matt Gauk; Zig Hancyk, Phil Lancaster; Andrew Medd; Mano Sandhu; Jim Schneider; Brian Wilkes

Regrets: Caleb Horn

Guests: Sharon Hvozdzanski, Director of Planning; Jennifer Kroeker-Hall, Janice Schmidt, and Janet Hawkins, Sirius Strategic Solutions Ltd.

Staff: Penny Masse, Senior Committee Clerk, District of Saanich

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The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and welcomed the Committee and guests.

**1. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**MOVED by J. Calenda and Seconded by A. Medd that the agenda be adopted as amended.**

**CARRIED**

**2. ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

**MOVED by J. Calenda and Seconded by P. Lancaster "That the minutes of the Governance Review Citizen Advisory Committee meeting held on October 26, 2016 be adopted as circulated."**

**CARRIED**

**3. SHARON HVOZDANSKI, SAANICH DIRECTOR OF PLANNING – REVIEW ISSUES PRESENTED BY CASEY EDGE VRBA**

- All levels of government are obligated to abide by established and ever-changing legislation; these legislative tenets are in place to achieve objectives and manage associated processes.
- A vast array of applications are processed by the Planning Department and can include; changes in land use to better fit the needs of the community today and the future, regulating the form and character of a development proposal, variance requests, subdivision, Agricultural Land Reserve inclusions or exclusions, heritage designations and sign permits, to name a few.
- Application processing across BC is regulated through the "Local Government Act" and other companion regulatory documents. Such legislation is set out by the Province and the Federal Government. Local Government is a creature of senior levels of government, and they determine for the most part what "we can do" and how "we can do it".
- Case law also affects process, procedures and the ability to apply Bylaws.

- A range of different individuals and stakeholders are involved in any development proposal or community planning initiative; staff's goal is to encourage quality discussion regardless of eventual outcome/decision. Focus groups, community engagement and an obligation to open communication is key.
- Processes evolve due to case law and changes in legislation and the Planning Department is constantly assessing ways to improve; however, with change comes the potential for risk, a more conservative approach does not always work well in terms of achieving quick turn-around times or being innovative, but it does minimize risk. The level of acceptable risk is determined by Council based on constant interactions and engagement with the community. Generally there is no wrong approach, but simply an approach that is best for the community-at-large.
- Policy documents (i.e.: the Regional Growth Strategy or the Official Community Plan) help guide the long-term municipal vision regarding social, environmental and economic goals; however, the ultimate authority is Council.
- The Planning Department cannot and does not make the decision on development applications such as; Rezoning's, Form and Character Development Permits, Development Variance requests or ALR inclusion/exclusions; it simply provides a recommendation. Any member of the community can also provide a verbal or written recommendation to Council as part of application review processes.
- Staff cannot stop a development from advancing to Council; sometimes residents ask why a development that does not seem to be fully resolved, or is lacking in consultation with the neighbourhood, is advancing to Council. Legally, applicants have the right to submit any application they wish, regardless if it meets policy or community objectives, and they have the right to ask that it be adjudicated by Council.
- Application processing times are affected and influenced by many factors, including how complete an application package is at the time of submission, referral response turn-around, and applicant response to staff and / or Council concerns.
- While infrastructure and development are interconnected; growth does not pay its share of the costs it generates if you look at both hard and soft costs. However, it is important to acknowledge we all live in and enjoy communities built by the development community. Development thoughtfully done can have a vast array of benefits. In terms of paying for and maintaining infrastructure in the long-term, a thoughtful approach to sustainable development in tandem with strategic and fiscally prudent infrastructure management, is the best means to keeping taxes as low as possible.
- Saanich has an active program in place to achieve sustainable infrastructure.

In response to questions from the Committee, Ms. Hvozdzanski stated:

- Council rationale for approving or defeating a development related bylaw is captured in the associated meeting minutes.
- Once Council approval is received for a development application the time to completion (development constructed and occupancy approved) varies and is dependent upon many factors, such as is the application complete, is required information provided in a timely manner, volume of applications and other priority work being undertaken by the Planning Department, as well as other partner Departments in the organization (i.e.: Engineering, Parks and Recreation and the Fire Department. A single family dwelling Building Permit is typically completed within 13-15 days, if the application is complete.
- Planning reports are quite detailed as staff try to anticipate questions Council is likely to have regarding a proposal; however, each application, the neighbourhood it is located in, and Council itself is unique and changes overtime, so discussions in the Council Chamber can cover a broad range of issues.

Staff's role is to assist in the review process, and we are simply one of many groups providing a "recommendation" to Council. In the end, Council considers all of this information and provides the final decision on an application.

- Local Area Plans (LAPs) do not have the same authority as the Official Community Plan (OCP); while they work in tandem, they have a "junior - senior" relationship. LAPs must adhere to the goals and objectives of the OCP.
- While it may be ideal to have similar / identical development processes for all municipalities, the uniqueness and culture of each community is reflected in its approach to development. There are things that have and can be done to reduce / minimize some of the inconsistency between municipalities.
- Saanich uses our webpage, social media, print media and other forms of community engagement to help inform the public of proposed or impending changes to bylaws; major bylaw amendments generally include and / or require public consultation.
- Based on a best guess, over the last 10 years, Council supports staff's report recommendation approximately 85% of the time. Often they will agree with the recommendation, but will add additional conditions and / or amend a particular aspect of the recommendation.
- Customer service is always front of mind; there will be times when service expectations are not met, but we are committed to ongoing training and improvement.

#### **4. INTRODUCTION OF JANET HAWKINS – ADMIN PERSON FOR GRCAC**

- Ms. Kroeker-Hall noted that a number of discussions with the Saanich CAO have identified the need for dedicated GRCAC administrative support; Ms. Janet Hawkins has agreed to take on that role.

#### **5. GRCAC FULL COMMITTEE – NEXT STEPS FOR PARTICIPATION BY ALL MEMBERS**

- Deferred to a future GRCAC meeting agenda.

#### **6. GRCAC CHAIR / VICE-CHAIR & "STEERING COMMITTEE"**

- Deferred to a future GRCAC meeting agenda.

#### **7. ESTABLISH GRCAC GENERAL INFORMATION AND ENQUIRIES EMAIL – CONSENSUS ON AUTO-RESPONSE; CREATION OF GRCAC WEBSITE AND FACEBOOK PAGE**

- The original intent was to create a generic GRCAC email address under the Saanich domain; however, this is not possible.
- Costs of creating and managing a dedicated email address and website are prohibitive; however, it is important that members of the public feel like they are being heard during the consultation period, this feedback is essential for the final report to Council.
- A Facebook page and a Twitter account are viable options and should be explored.
- Reconsideration by Saanich regarding linking to their website should be encouraged.
- A solid communication and public engagement platform needs to be in place by the hard launch date of January 17, 2017.

## **8. TARGETED ENGAGEMENT SESSIONS – REVIEW OF FIRST THREE MEETINGS**

- Three successful targeted engagement sessions have occurred with a total of 29 participants.
- Topics included opinions and perspectives regarding what governance means and what it entails. It is important that people continue to feel they have the opportunity to be heard while maintaining confidentiality; discussion needs to be captured without attribution.
- Specific topics included; authority and accountability, transparency and clarity of process, decision making, responsiveness, consultation, and improvement initiatives.
- Specific input is needed in order to most efficiently frame questions to the public; consultation needs to be relatable, understandable and targeted to specific groups.
- All info collected during the engagement sessions will be consolidated and summaries will be made available to all Committee members.
- The GRCAC mandate includes a regional aspect that should be considered when framing the public consultation process.

## **MOTION TO GO IN-CAMERA**

**MOVED by J. Calenda and Seconded by J. Schneider: “That pursuant to Sections 90(1)(j) of the Community Charter the following meeting be closed to the public as the subject matters being considered relates to information that is prohibited from disclosure under Section 21 of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.”**

**CARRIED**

## **ADJOURNMENT**

**On a Motion from the Chair, the meeting adjourned to In-Camera at 8:20 p.m.**

The next scheduled meeting date is Wednesday, January 11, 2017 at 7:00 p.m. and will be held in the Kirby Room, Fire and Police Building, 760 Vernon Avenue.

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John Schmuck, CHAIR  
Governance Review Citizen Advisory Committee (GRCAC)

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Penny Masse, Senior Committee Clerk