

**MINUTES
PLANNING, TRANSPORTATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY
COMMITTEE**

Held at Saanich Municipal Hall, Committee Room #2
September 10, 2015 at 4:30 p.m.

Present: Chair: Councillor Haynes

Members: Bill Mumford, Blair Echlin, John Schmuck, Travis Lee, Scott Hindle

Staff: Cameron Scott, Manager of Community Planning; Elizabeth van den Hengel, Committee Clerk

Absent: Suzanne Bartel, Andrea Mercer

MINUTES

MOVED by T. Lee and seconded by J. Schmuck, "That the minutes of the Planning, Transportation and Economic Development Advisory Committee meeting held June 11, 2015 be adopted as circulated."

CARRIED

REPORT FROM THE CHAIR

The Chair reviewed the four reports (Property Transfer Tax, Home Renovation Tax Credits, Downloaded Building Codes and Affordable Seniors Housing) that were forwarded from the Committee to Council in June 2015. The four reports were all unanimously supported by the CRD and two of the reports are going forward to the upcoming UBCM meeting. The Chair congratulated the Committee for their efforts in seeing these important initiatives move forward.

NIGEL VALLEY PROJECT

Item tabled

REVIEW OF THE DRAFT 2015-2018 STRATEGIC PLAN: BALANCED TRANSPORTATION AND VIBRANT CONNECTED ECONOMY

The Chair gave a brief overview of the Strategic Plan review process. The Director of Engineering answered questions regarding the Balanced Transportation theme and the following was noted:

- Slow growth of transit ridership was discussed.
- Saanich supports BC Transit with accessibility to transit. Saanich installs shelters and sidewalks for ease of access to transit.
- Several factors impact the slow increase in transit ridership;
 - Convenient availability of transit
 - Ease of car use
 - Density

MOTION: Moved by B. Mumford and seconded by T. Lee: "That the Planning, Transportation and Economic Development Advisory Committee requests that a representative from BC Transit be asked to prepare a presentation for the Planning, Transportation and Economic Development Advisory Committee on current and future ridership plans."

CARRIED

- Engineering is in the process of drafting an Active Transportation Master Plan. The Master Plan will help to develop policies to support cycling and pedestrian activities.
- The Active Transportation Master Plan will address the “gaps” in the active transportation network and outline proposed timelines for progress in improving the active transportation network.

MOTION: **Moved by T. Lee and seconded by S. Hindle: “That the Planning, Transportation and Economic Development Advisory Committee requests that a representative from the CRD be asked to prepare a presentation for the Planning, Transportation and Economic Development Advisory Committee on the regional trail system.”**

CARRIED

The Manager of Community Planning answered questions regarding the Vibrant Connected Economy theme and the following was noted:

- The draft Strategic Plan indicates target of \$30 million increase in the value of commercial and industrial building permits approved. Is this a realistic target?
- Planning should consider reducing parking standards in the future.

The Committee had no change requests for the indicators that were presented.

COMMERCIAL AND RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY TAX MILL RATES

The Chair facilitated a committee discussion on current commercial and residential property tax mill rates. The following was noted:

- A tax incentive should be considered for commercial buildings that have a certified Green and/or Building Owners and Managers Association Building Environmental Standards (BOMA BEST) designation.
- The current commercial property tax system has green building paying higher property taxes than non-green buildings. This is a disincentive to the green retrofitting of older building and discourages new construction from green building practices.
- Tenants shy away from green building because the tax rate is significantly higher than non-green buildings.
- Suggestion to put green buildings into a separate mill rate group.
- Green buildings and their associated technologies often under-utilized in residential applications as the homeowners often do not know how to optimise the technology.
- A conversation with large commercial landowners regarding improving the property tax rate for green certified and BOMA buildings should be considered.

***** NOTE:** **The following motion was RESCINDED at the October 8, 2015 Planning, Transportation and Economic Development Advisory Committee meeting.**

MOTION: **Moved by T. Lee and Seconded by B. Echlin: “That the Planning, Transportation and Economic Development Advisory Committee recommends that Council consider championing commercial mill rate adjustments for certified green and Building Owners and Managers Association Building Environmental Standards (BOMA BEST) designated commercial buildings.”**

CARRIED

AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN SAANICH: OPTIONS FOR GARDEN HOME, COACH HOUSE AND LANE WAY HOMES

The Chair facilitated a committee discussion on options for affordable housing in Saanich. The following was noted:

- Garden homes have been permitted in some areas in Victoria.
- Garden homes are often expensive to build.
- When Saanich did the study on allowing secondary suites the question of allowing garden homes was asked. The results indicated that while there was interest in allowing garden homes in Saanich but in the future.
- Saanich is actively seeking affordable housing solutions, but there appears to be resistance within the community to many of the creative solutions that make homeownership within the municipality more affordable.

ADMINISTRATIVE ELEMENTS AT SAANICH MUNICIPAL HALL AND THEIR IMPACTS ON HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

The Chair facilitated a committee discussion on the impacts of administrative elements at the Municipality of Saanich on housing affordability. The following was noted:

- Fees associated with developing land add significantly to the affordability of the finished home.
- Empowering staff to make non-political decisions would improve the turnaround time for development applications.
- Tackle bylaws that continually require variances. Parking and height bylaws could be revisited to streamline the development permit process.
- Many of Saanich's bylaws are 20-30 years old.
- Updating Saanich's bylaws to reflect current standards and practices could be considered.
- Saanich offers good service, but the lengthy turnaround time is considered by many in the development community as a disincentive to pursuing development projects in Saanich.

MOTION: **Moved by T. Lee and Seconded by J. Schmuck: "That the Planning, Transportation and Economic Development Advisory Committee requests that Council ask Planning staff to create a steering committee to be comprised of Planning, Transportation and Economic Development Advisory Committee members and other stakeholders to be included in the Terms of Reference for the parking study identified in the Strategic Plan."**

CARRIED

MOTION: **Moved by J. Schmuck and Seconded by S. Hindle: "That the Planning, Transportation and Economic Development Advisory Committee requests to Council that Planning staff be asked to research administrative elements that could be reviewed to improve the timeline for building permits and development applications, and that the report be included in the 2016 Strategic Plan."**

CARRIED

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 6:45 pm

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is scheduled for October 8, 2015.

Councillor Haynes, Chair

I hereby certify these minutes are accurate.

Committee Secretary