

MINUTES

GOVERNANCE REVIEW CITIZEN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Held at the Police / Fire Building, Kirby Room, 760 Vernon Avenue

Wednesday, May 31, 2017 at 7:00 p.m.

Chair: John Schmuck

Present: Julian Anderson; Art Beck; Joe Calenda; Matt Gauk; Zig Hancyk; Caleb Horn; Mano Sandhu; Jim Schneider; and Brian Wilkes

Regrets: Andrew Medd (Participated Via Conference Call); and Phil Lancaster

Guests: Jennifer Kroeker-Smith and Janice Schmidt, Sirius Strategic Solutions Ltd.

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

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. and welcomed the Committee and guests.

1. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOVED by J. Calenda and Seconded by M. Sandhu: "That the agenda be adopted as amended."

CARRIED

2. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

MOVED by Z. Hancyk and Seconded by J. Schneider: "That the minutes of the Governance Review Citizen Advisory Committee meetings held on April 26, 2017 be adopted as circulated."

CARRIED

3. GUEST PRESENTER – JOHN VICKERS OF AMALGAMATION YES

- Amalgamation is an outcome of the Commonwealth; Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and Canada have all executed amalgamation.
- The Commonwealth focuses on social equity across the greater community versus a focus on social equity within the immediate community.
- Amalgamation is a tool used to accomplish efficient and effective government that is accountable to the merged population of the whole.
- Amalgamation continues to be citizen-driven; however, administrations cannot be forced to work together.
- A regional transportation plan for Greater Victoria would be advantageous; however, it has not been undertaken under the current construct.
- Amalgamated Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM), with a population of 390,000, has one Mayor and 16 Councillors, versus Greater Victoria, with a population of 367,000, which has 91 Mayors and Councillors.
- HRM has incorporated Community Council's to consider local matters, make recommendations to Council and provide opportunities for public input.

- A timeframe of 10-16 years is required to complete a full amalgamation.
- Larger municipalities (over 100,000 citizens) can make special application for funds that smaller communities cannot apply for; this creates social inequity.
- An Angus Reid poll indicates that 84% of Victoria respondents are in favour of amalgamation and 89% of Saanich residents voted in favour of a non-binding question of amalgamation on the previous election ballot.
- The founding principles of ‘Amalgamation Yes’ include:
 - No position on any specific level of regional amalgamation;
 - A belief that our region can be governed more efficiently and effectively with a significant reduction in the level of municipal government;
 - A call on the provincial government to conduct a full and in-depth amalgamation review; and
 - A call to allow the electorate to vote on governance structure in accordance with provincial legislation preventing forced amalgamations.
- The amalgamation review for the Greater Victoria area would like cost between \$400,000 and \$600,000.

In response to questions from the Committee, Mr. Vickers stated:

- While no official cost analysis is available, the general desire would be for an independent council but unified police and fire services.

4. SIRIUS STRATEGIC SOLUTIONS – REVIEW OF MAY 17th and 27th, 2017 TOWN HALL MEETINGS

- Ms. Kroeker-Hall and Ms. Schmidt will be assimilating all data and input received through the public consultation process for Committee review and comment in the near future.

5. SIRIUS STRATEGIC SOLUTIONS – REVIEW OF PLANS FOR TARGETED ENGAGEMENT SESSIONS

- A second Advisory Committee engagement session is scheduled for June 8.
- A second senior’s engagement session will be scheduled in early July as the first session was not well attended.
- Continued engagement with UVIC and Camosun students is planned and will include pop-up opportunities, focus sessions, and student union participation.
- A second session with the Saanich Community Association Network is planned for June 15; members of the Committee are encouraged to attend.
- Former Saanich Council members were engaged on April 12, current Council members and external levels of government still need to be approached.
- Targeted engagement with First Nations, multi-cultural associations, the Victoria Refugee Association, the Greater Victoria Coalition on Homelessness, Volunteer Saanich and the Chamber of Commerce are all avenues of opportunity for more input and data findings.
- There is an opportunity through Black Press to assemble a group of business owners who could provide some valuable input.
- A letter has been forwarded to the CAO of Saanich regarding possible engagement with staff; no updated response to date. A Confidentiality Agreement may be required.

6. CAPITAL REGIONAL DISTRICT (CRD) ENGAGEMENT / GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

- Mr. Horn has contacted the Chair of the CRD Governance Committee in regard to presenting at its meeting of June 7; the goal is to share information and give a short presentation on GRCAC Terms of Reference and mandate.

7. DUNCAN & NORTH COWICHAN STUDY - DISCUSSION

- A coffee session with the District of North Cowichan and Duncan amalgamation study group would be beneficial; a date in late June will be established.
- The group is comprised of 36 members of the public chosen randomly through a lottery process.
- An invitation will be forwarded by the Vice-Chair.

8. ASSIGNMENT OF STUDY TOPICS FOR COMMITTEE MEMBERS

- Study topics can be generalized into three themes: regional governance, lack of public participation and internal governance. Sub-categories, i.e.: budget issues, could be rolled into the broader subject.
- Forming the structure for the study topics will benefit from the synthesized data results provided through public engagement, this information will be to the Committee within the next week.
- A consensus was achieved regarding assigning study topics to Committee members; once building blocks are established and a framework of conclusions is in place all study topic assignments will be discussed and confirmed.

9. ROUND ROBIN

- The Chair will present to Council at its meeting of June 26 in order to provide an update and status report; all Committee members are encouraged to attend. Speaking notes will be forwarded to all members prior to the meeting.
- Mr. Horn noted he will invite a representative from the Ministry of Sport and Culture to a future GRCAC meeting to discuss the Local Government Act and any related implications or opportunities.
- Mr. Horn reminded members that some research assistance is available to the Committee through UVIC students.
- The Saanich website and social media channels have been updated to reflect the extension to the consultation phase.
- Due to an error on behalf of Saanich News, two new ads encouraging citizen involvement will be published free of charge.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 9:04 p.m.

The next scheduled meeting date is Wednesday, June 28, 2017 at 7:00 p.m. and will be held in the Kirby Room, Fire and Police Building, 760 Vernon Avenue.

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

Penny Masse, Senior Committee Clerk