

MINUTES
HEALTHY SAANICH ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Held at Saanich Municipal Hall, Committee Room #2
March 19, 2014 at 5:30 p.m.

Present: Chair: Councillor Paul Gerrard

Members: Jean Fraser, Franca LaBella, Nancy McDuffe, Dorthy Rosenberg, Nadia Rajan, Shirley Woods

Staff: Kelly-Ann Armstrong, Senior Manager, Recreation Services; Mark Boysen, Sustainability Coordinator; Elizabeth van den Hengel, Committee Clerk.

Guests: Ms. Elmarie Roberts, Farmer and Board member, Haliburton Farm; Ms. Janette Sheehy, Director, LifeCycles Project Society; Mr. Aaron Topley, member CR-FAIR

Absent: Fred Haynes (SCAN), Jean Hodgson

MINUTES

MOVED by F. LaBella and seconded by N. Rajan, "That the minutes of the Healthy Saanich Advisory Committee meeting held February 19, 2014 be adopted as circulated."

CARRIED

HALIBURTON FARM

The Chair introduced Ms. Elmarie Roberts, Farmer and Board Member, Haliburton Farm. Ms. Roberts presented the Committee with an overview of Haliburton Farm. The following was noted:

- Haliburton Farm (the Farm) links new farmers with skills and land. Helps with local farms surviving the farm succession crisis.
- The vision of the Farm is "To be a leading model of community supported, small-scale sustainable organic agriculture carried out in harmony with local ecosystems". The mission of Haliburton Farm is to "Demonstrate viability of small-scale farming supporting farmers, stewardship, community and education".
- Haliburton Farm promotes new generations of farmers.
- Creative solutions for increasing new farmers and new farms include:
 - Matching land owners and new farmers
 - Helping land owners understand farm leases
 - Partnering with restaurants and/or green businesses
 - Asking sustainable development planners to set aside land for food considerations.
 - Establishment of a Farmland Matching Service.
 - Setting up a Farmland Task Force
- Farmers on Haliburton Farm have increased from two farmers to the current twelve farmers over the ten years the farm has been in operation.

The Chair thanked Ms. Roberts for her presentation.

LIFECYCLES PROJECT SOCIETY

The Chair introduced Ms. J. Sheehy, Director, LifeCycles Project Society. Ms. Sheehy presented an overview of the LifeCycles Project Society and the following was noted:

- LifeCycles cultivates community health from the ground up by connecting people, the food they eat and the land it comes from.
- The Society supports people in gaining the knowledge, skills and resources they need to access or grow their own food in a way that fosters biodiversity and enhances our urban environment.
- LifeCycles projects include:

Fruit Tree Project

- This project harvests apples, cherries, pears, and other fruit from privately owned trees that would otherwise go to waste.
- The produce from this project is then shared in the harvest 4 ways: among homeowners, volunteers, food banks & community organizations within Victoria and also within the project. A unique aspect of this project is that a portion of the harvest is set aside to make value-added products that help defray our costs.

Growing Schools Program

- These projects educate about food security, urban agriculture, the environment, community development and health through the creation of an organic food garden on the school grounds. This program has a solid reputation of working in partnership with schools and the District Facilities Department to implement long-term garden projects.
- The vision is a garden in every school. The Program offers an inspiration and a successful model for schools to implement gardens on the school grounds to use as an outdoor classroom.
- The garden is an educational tool to engage students, teachers, parents and school community members in the learning of how to grow food and a classroom for these topics. This classroom supports the different learning styles of all students.
- The Growing Schools Program offers partnering schools the delivery of our model workshop series. The program offers participating students and teachers five integrated hands-on workshops throughout the course of the school year.
- This Program matches hands-on garden activities with small group curriculum based learning. This model curriculum supports the Learning Outcomes of the Ministry of Education and addresses subjects such as

Science, Social Studies, and Math, exploring topics such as: Where Our Food Comes From, Pollination and its Pollinators, Environmental Education, Global Food Systems and our role in contributing to these issues.

The Victoria Seed Library

- This pilot program offers free access to seeds and seed saving education. The goal is to support local food security and steward the region's biodiversity.
- LifeCycles and the Greater Victoria Public Library created the Victoria Seed Library as a way for hobby and beginner gardeners to share seeds and other gardening resources, and to connect with other seed savers.

Committee discussion occurred and the following was noted:

- Projects such as community gardens suffer from the “NIMBY” syndrome and work must be done to have a shift in paradigm from the public.
- Heritage orchards tend to require significant rehabilitation.

The committee thanked Ms. Sheehy for her presentation.

2014 COMMUNITIES IN HARVEST PROGRAM

The Sustainability Coordinator presented an overview of the 2014 Communities in Harvest Program. The following high-lights were noted:

- Communities in Harvest is a residential program to educate, support and engage residents in backyard food growing to create a culture that fosters local food production in our region.
- Grow in your backyard through 2014 projects, take a food growing course and then celebrate the harvest in September. A joint effort between Saanich and LifeCycles Project Society, offering 4 educational workshops that empower Saanich residents to grow and harvest their own food.
 - Container Gardening in Small Spaces
 - Growing a Garden to Feed Your Family
 - Preserving Your Harvest, Simply
 - Canning 101

SAANICH AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SECURITY ACTION PLAN

The Manager of Community Planning presented an overview of the 2014 Communities in Harvest Program. The following high-lights were noted:

- Saanich is known for its close rural/urban connections.
- Saanich Council and the Official Community Plan policies support these connections and opportunities for local food production in both rural and urban areas.
- There are a variety of initiatives, supported by Saanich Council, that contribute towards improving Saanich's food security.

- Residents in Saanich participate in community gardens, community kitchens, urban backyard agriculture, agricultural cottage industries, farmers markets, home delivery of local organic food and commercial agriculture.
- A Task Force will be initiated and the goal is to have the Task Force Terms of Reference to Council in the spring 2014.
- The Agriculture and Food Security Action Plan will involve long range policy planning.

CRFAIR, FOOD SECURITY AND COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Mr. A. Topley and the Programmer, Saanich Parks and Recreational Department, presented the committee with an overview of food security and community connections.

The following was noted:

- Currently working with the CRD to develop a regional food policy.
- Food security roadmap identifying the 50 organizations within the CRD to illustrate where all stakeholders fit.
- Food literacy programs are being offered that connect food with hand (growing/preparing food), heart (social aspects of food), and mind (food knowledge).
- Island Health is assisting with establishing food hubs. Currently the established hubs are Capital Region, the Cowichan Valley, the Nanaimo region and the Comox Valley.
- Flavour Trail is a two week event that has the public exploring local agriculture.

The Chair commented that there is a lot of activity being undertaken by many groups/stakeholders, but a cohesive plan needs to be developed to allow food security and community connectiveness programs to move forward.

RECREATION UPDATE

The Senior Manager, Recreation Services provided an update to the Committee. The following high-lights were noted:

- Cycling Festival has been cancelled this year due to overlap with the Times Colonist 10K race.
- Drop in fitness classes such as Athletic Drill and Spin Bike Class have remained very popular at G.R. Pearkes Recreation Centre.
- Spring Break Camps at Gordon Head Recreation Centre (GH), continue to show strong support in the community with a 94% fill rate for both weeks of programmed camps.
- In partnership with Island Health, GH is offering a “Better Balance” program that is running at full capacity.
- Staff assisted with the CRFAIR’s Farmer2Farmer conference on March 6, 2014.

N. Rajan and F. LaBella left the meeting at 7:00 pm

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:15 pm.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is scheduled for April 16, 2014.

Chair

I hereby certify these minutes are accurate.

Committee Secretary