

MINUTES
HEALTHY SAANICH ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Held at the Saanich Municipal Hall, Committee Room #2
June 22, 2016 at 5:30 p.m.

Present: Chair: Councillor Colin Plant

Members: Philip He, Marlene Bergstrom, Dorthy Rosenberg, Marsha Henderson (SCAN), Nadia Rajan, Jasindra Jawanda, Jean Hodgson, Merie Beauchamp, Peg Orcherton, School District #61 Representative

Staff: Kelli-Ann Armstrong, Senior Manager, Recreation Services; Elizabeth van den Hengel, Committee Clerk.

Guests: Colleen Hobson, Executive Director, Saanich Neighbourhood Place; Corinna Bays, Early Childhood Educator, Saanich Neighbourhood Place; Rob Wickson, President, Gorge Tillicum Community Association; Dr. Trevor Hancock, Professor and Senior Scholar, School of Public Health and Social Policy, University of Victoria

MINUTES

MOVED by M. Beauchamp and Seconded by M. Henderson: “That the Minutes of the Healthy Saanich Advisory Committee meetings held April 27 and May 25, 2016, be adopted.”

CARRIED

SAANICH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLACE CHILDCARE CENTRE

The Executive Director and Early Childhood Educator, Saanich Neighbourhood Place provided the Committee with updates on the proposed new childcare centre. The following was noted:

- Two rounds of public participation events have been held to date.
- Currently Saanich Neighbourhood Place has secured \$1.25 million in funding towards the construction of the new childcare facility.
- Currently 70 family are signed up on the interest list.
- The building has been repositioned into the parking lot area to reduce the impact on greenspace.
- This parking lot is currently not well utilized.
- The proposed childcare centre is approximately 7500 square feet. The building has been designed as a multiuse facility.
- An outdoor nature play space is planned for the children.
- The area for the proposed centre is currently zoned for health and recreation.

HOMELESSNESS IN SAANICH

The President of Gorge Tillicum Community Association along with Dr. Trevor Hancock presented the Committee with an overview of homelessness in Saanich and the highlights are noted:

- It is challenging to get an accurate picture of homelessness in Saanich.
- The CRD-wide annual ‘one-night’ counts from 2011 through 2014 (facilities only) have reported aggregate data rather than results reported by municipality.
- Researchers caution that facility counts underrepresent certain homeless populations.
- Saanich and other CRD municipalities often have homeless citizens camping in greenspaces.
- Housing is a right under Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
- Homelessness is seldom a choice. Most often people end up becoming homeless for a variety of reasons including; poverty, unemployment, low-wage employment, mental health, disability and addiction issues.
- Saanich has a responsibility to support those who are homeless within the municipality.
- Saanich has laid out targets within the Strategic Plan, which includes as part of its Vision of Social Well-Being, that “Housing, public services and amenities are affordable, accessible and inclusive”. As a municipality we should be actively pursuing these goals.
- Currently the police are the front line workers with the homeless population in Saanich. Homelessness is not a criminal activity and an alternative liaison with the vulnerable community should be considered.
- The GTCA recommends the following:
 - Strategies be developed to ensure a coordinated, comprehensive community response to homelessness.
 - Increase the supply of safe, decent, affordable, permanent housing, including supported housing.
 - Reduce the risk of homelessness and assist those who are homeless.
 - Build public and political support to end homelessness.
- Planning at Saanich should be done through a social lens.
- At present there does not appear to be a policy in place requiring developers to provide affordable housing units in multifamily residential units.
- The Official Community Plan for Salt Spring Island directs policy for affordable housing.
- Currently in the Saanich OCP there is no language around affordability in any of the policies.
- Creation of a position within the Saanich Planning Department to specifically work on homelessness, affordable housing and poverty reduction in Saanich. This person would conduct environmental scans, gap analysis and have general responsibility for coordinating the action plan’s development and implementation
- Fund an outreach/social inclusion worker to engage with people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness in Saanich.

- Establish a Community Task Force on homelessness and housing affordability with a mandate to develop and oversee a strategy to address these issues.

MOTION: Moved by J. Hodgson and seconded by J. Jawanda: “That the Healthy Saanich Advisory Committee recommends Council fund the creation of a Social Planner position to work with the issue of homelessness and housing affordability in the 2017 fiscal year.”

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

MOTION: Moved by M. Henderson and seconded by D. Rosenberg: “That the Healthy Saanich Advisory Committee recommends Council establish a Community Task Force on homelessness and affordable housing by November 2016, with a mandate to develop and oversee a strategy to address these issues.”

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

POTENTIAL TOWNHALL MEETING TOPICS

The Chair facilitated a discussion on potential topics for Townhall meetings and the following was noted:

- Housing affordability and homelessness.
- Syrian refugees in Saanich.
- Housing market in Saanich.
- Mental health support and related issues
- Food security
- Revitalization of Folk Festival.
- At the September HSAC meeting the Committee will create a schedule for potential Townhall meetings.

UPDATES FROM THE CHAIR

The Chair provided an update to Committee members and the following was noted:

- Councillor Plant made Notice of Motion at Council for Saanich participating in the 2016 PRIDE Parade. The motion was passed by Council.

MOTION: Moved by J. Hodgson and seconded by D. Rosenberg: “That the Healthy Saanich Advisory Committee authorizes up to \$1500.00 for the LGBTQ Committee to purchase a banner, stickers and to pay the 2016 PRIDE Parade entry fee.”

CARRIED

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:55 pm.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is scheduled for September 28, 2016.

Chair

I hereby certify these minutes are accurate.

Committee Secretary