

MINUTES
HEALTHY SAANICH ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Held electronically via MS Teams from Saanich Municipal Hall, Council Chambers
May 5, 2021 at 6:01 p.m.

Present: Councillor Ned Taylor (Chair), Silvia Mangué Alene, Jasmine Noble, Kam Judge, Liz Miller (SCAN), Nadia Rajan, Clare Attwell, Ryan Henderson and Jasmindra Jawanda.

Guests: John Martyn and Teale Phelps Bondaroff.

Staff: Pam Hartling, Senior Planner (Community Planning); Nadine Kawata, Planner (Community Planning); Cristina Caravaca, Senior Manager Community Services; and Megan MacDonald, Committee Clerk.

Absent: Carren Dujela and Abigail Toledo (Youth).

MINUTES

MOVED by N. Rajan, and seconded by L. Miller: “That the minutes of the Healthy Saanich Advisory Committee meeting held April 7, 2021 be adopted as amended.”

CARRIED

CHAIRS REMARKS

The Chair provided a verbal update on items of interest to the committee, the following was noted:

- The Committee does not meet during the summer months of July and August. Members are welcome to communicate with the Chair about items of interest any time.
- The Committee recommendations related to the Saanich Strategic Plan will be going to Council on May 10th, 2021.

RIGHT TO QUIET SOCIETY

John Martyn, President of the Right to Quiet Society and Teale Phelps Bondaroff presented information on the impacts of noise pollution. The following was noted:

- There has been research on how noise pollution effects the human body, including mental and physical health. There can be acute health impacts.
- Gas powered leaf blowers are a prevalent source of noise pollution in Saanich.
- Older model leaf blowers can run at 150 decibels or more. WorkSafe BC requires hearing protection for noise over 82 decibels as hearing damage can occur.
- The low frequency of the two stroke gas powered leaf blowers can penetrate walls and windows, so closing windows and doors will not help stop the noise.
- In addition to leaves, the blowers also blow dust, spores/fungi, pollen, pesticide/herbicides and other debris which can cause detrimental health effects.
- Studies detail the high levels of air pollution created by gas powered leaf blowers.
- Electric leaf blowers are typically 40-70% quieter and more efficient than gas powered.
- The presenter has a petition which will be forwarded to Council in the near future. The petition will call on council to ban gas powered leaf blowers, develop a program to recycle old gas machines, and regulate the use of electric blowers.

- It was suggested that the Saanich Noise Suppression Bylaws should be improved, the current bylaw was written in 1973. The wording is vague and may be unenforceable.
- Victoria has districts with robust noise bylaws that are specific to each district.
- Information obtained in late 2019 indicates that Saanich has 8 leaf blowers in Recreation, 24 in Public Works and 51 in Parks, the majority of which are gas powered.
- The presenter would like the committee to pass a motion to recommend that Saanich Council direct staff to consider revising the noise suppression bylaws, include phasing in a reduction and eventual ban of gas powered leaf blowers and other lawn maintenance equipment.

*** J. Jawanda entered at 6:40 p.m. ***

In response to questions and comments from the Committee, the following was noted:

- The committee is grateful for the information provided in the presentation.
- Nature is not neat. Clearing lawns and garden beds effects the biodiversity in the soil, damage is done by trying to maintain the esthetic of a neat lawn.
- A thin layer of leaf mulch on the grass will increase the water retention of soil.
- A large pristine lawn was a colonial symbol of power and conspicuous consumption.
- The committee expressed interest in having more information on the topic, including access to the research that was used to formulate the suggestions.
- Noise pollution effects humans and nature. There are studies that suggest the reduced noise due to the COVID-19 pandemic is beneficial to animals.
- The phased-in ban approach would allow for all users to adjust to new requirements.

MOVED by J. Noble and seconded by K. Judge: "That the Healthy Saanich Advisory Committee request that the topic of gas powered leaf blowers is included on the next Healthy Saanich Advisory Committee meeting agenda for further discussion."

CORDOVA BAY LOCAL AREA PLAN

Pam Hartling, Senior Planner (Community Planning) provided an overview of the proposed Cordova Bay Local Area Plan (LAP). The following was noted:

- The LAP is part of the Official Community Plan framework, which provides detail at a neighborhood level, incorporating the latest municipal direction including Indigenous content, housing policy, climate change and the Active Transportation Plan.
- There were many opportunities for community input while the plan was being drafted. This input helped identify issues, priorities, and the future vision for transportation and active transportation. A village design charrette was created, a transportation workshop was held, along with advisory committee input and survey feedback
- Cordova Bay is an area that is abundant in natural beauty and outdoor recreation.
- There is indigenous history of the area, which will be promoted with signs and art.
- There is a legacy of active community organizations supporting the social and spiritual well-being of residents, including senior's organizations, churches and school clubs.
- The area is one of the most remote in Saanich. It is fairly car dependent, with limited local shops and services. There is an older than average demographic, with higher than average income, limited housing types and a lack of affordable housing options.
- The Draft LAP includes a focus to facilitate social connections by increasing opportunities for social gathering, creating plazas and improving the public realm.
- Creating recreation opportunities and create more cultural spaces are important

- aspects of the plan. New design guidelines will enhance the appeal of the streets.
- Facilitating social connections will be accomplished by enhancing beach areas, beach access points and improving trails and outdoor recreation opportunities.
 - The plan works to support community organizations who provide social and physical support. The plan works to encourage collaboration between organizations, consider community uses at the Trio site, and to support church sites with future plans.
 - Promoting Indigenous heritage, culture and inclusiveness is an important aspect of the LAP, this will be done by building relationships and an opening dialogue with First Nations. A balanced telling of history is important to all. Steps are being taken to understand First Nations values and rights, as well as to protect cultural sites and heritage resources and policies in support of honouring ancestors.
 - The hope to create a welcoming place for all will be accomplished by identifying First Nations sites of significance, adding First Nations languages into signage, renaming places of significance and installing Indigenous public art.
 - The draft LAP includes building a complete village, with a new village plan being included in section 10. There will be more housing within walking distance of retail stores and services. The buildings in the village will be up to 4 storeys, with new design guidelines to improve public realm and walkability. This will strengthen the sense of place by referencing the natural environment including the heritage and culture.
 - Housing in Cordova Bay is currently primarily single family on large lots (almost 80% is single family dwellings). The LAP will add to the diversity of housing by development of the Village, the Trio site and the ridge node, as well as supporting infill in established neighborhood areas. Land use is integrated with public transportation, increased density on transit routes will lead to increased public transportation services.
 - The Village and Node includes allowances for up to 4 storeys. There is a focus on walkability. The Trio site will be a range of forms, heights, tenure and affordability.
 - The Ridge Node adds density while providing a variety of unit sizes and costs.
 - Neighbourhood infill will maintain the large lot character while infill with houseplexes. Duplexes will be allowed within the Urban Containment Boundary (UCB). Four-plexes will be supported on corner lots. The Village area will allow for triplex on a single family lot plus four plex on corner-lots. Garden suites and secondary suites are alternatives that provide more suitable opportunities for a broader range of families.
 - A Saanich owned parcel on Doumac Avenue will be considered for non-market housing. The developer of the large Trio site will be encouraged to work with a non-market housing provider to provide affordable housing on the site. ‘
 - The plan supports agriculture and food security. Half of Cordova Bay is outside UCB, and 1/3 in in the Agricultural Land Reserve. Policies will support Haliburton Farm, support farm stands and farm gate sales, encourage urban farming and community gardens. There is hope to restore indigenous plants and food sources as well.

*** J. Noble exited the meeting at 7:03 p.m. ***

In response to questions and comments from the committee, the following was noted:

- Archeological sites were identified as a topic of high importance to the WLC. Saanich is currently taking steps to improve policies to ensure these areas are not disturbed.
- An archaeological site review (submitted through the Provincial government) is now a requirement of any development applications in the area.
- Shoreline protection is an important consideration as the coastal area is ecologically sensitive. The plan addresses future development on the shoreline by limiting redevelopment of this area. Only Single family homes will be permitted on the shoreline, no other densification will be considered. The Biodiversity Strategy which is currently being created will likely give further guidance.

- The plan addresses affordability by providing opportunities for smaller unit sizes
- Non-market housing is difficult to create. There is a Saanich parcel on Doumac Avenue which is designated for non-market housing. Institutional sites, church sites and benevolent organizations will be supported to redevelop with the possibility of affordable housing. A broad range of housing will support housing affordability.
- Multigenerational living and co-housing bring in a sense of community, along with a different lifestyle. Church properties that are being considered for redevelopment should think outside of the box. The Social Purpose Real Estate Collaborative may be able to help facilitate creative and collaborative developments that the faith/non-profit communities may not have the resources for.
- Units that are accessible, inclusive and affordable are difficult to find in Saanich.
- Policies that support collaboration of community organizations are being put in place.

MOVED by L. Miller and seconded by K. Judge: “That the Healthy Saanich Advisory Committee supports the draft Cordoba Bay Local Area Plan as proposed in principal, and recommend the following notes from Healthy Saanich be considered:

- **Archeologically sensitive areas**
- **Inclusion of affordable and creative housing principles including collaboration and support for the maintenance and retention of transitional institutional properties (eg churches) for non-market housing and other community uses**
- **Inclusive and accessible housing**
- **Supportive neighborhood opportunities.”**

CARRIED

*** P. Hartling exited the meeting at 7:42 p.m. ***

HOUSING STRATEGY

N. Kawata, Planner (Community Planning), provided information on the Saanich Housing Strategy, the following was noted:

- The Housing Strategy Task Force report was presented to the public for feedback.
- Once feedback is gathered from the public on the Task Force’s recommendations, a proposed Housing Strategy will be presented to Council for consideration.

In response to comments from the committee, the following was noted:

- There is a lack of generational connection, there is a need for intergenerational housing to provide an economic mix and for social purposes.
- It is important to build welcoming and vibrant housing developments.
- Saanich could look at implementing community grants similar to Victoria to provide opportunities for community members to host events that welcome new residents to the community.
- Saanich could look at a Land Trust Model (see example from the City of New Westminster).
- Regenerative and resilient housing opportunities to take us into the future and are important for all.
- The “right” mix of housing is an exclusive term, it was recommended to change the word to a “healthy” mix of housing.

COMMITTEE STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The committee recommendation related to the Saanich Strategic Plan will be included on the Council meeting agenda on May 10, 2021.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:07 p.m.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is scheduled for September 1, 2021 at 6:00 p.m.

Councillor Taylor, Chair

I hereby certify these minutes are accurate.

Committee Secretary