

MINUTES
NATURAL AREAS, PARKS AND TRAILS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Held at Saanich Municipal Hall, Committee Room 2 and via MS Teams
770 Vernon Avenue
Thursday, November 14, 2024, at 4:03 p.m.

Present: Councillor Judy Brownoff, Julian Anderson (via Teams), Jane Cameron, David Little (via Teams), Evan Papps, Darrell Wick and Kathleen Woodruff

Regrets: Jane Cameron, Catherine du Bois and Wendy Trotter

Staff: Eva Riccius, Senior Manager Parks; Alix Link, Manager, Urban Forestry, Natural Areas, and Community Stewardship; Rebecca Newlove, Manager of Sustainability; Renee Cenerini, Environmental Education Coordinator; Katie Tuner, Parks Stewardship Coordinator and Angela Hawkshaw, Committee Clerk

ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES

MOVED by E. Papps and Seconded K. Woodruff: "That the Minutes of the Natural Areas, Parks and Trails Advisory Committee meeting held October 10, 2024, be adopted as circulated."

CARRIED

CHAIRS REMARKS

- A volunteer recognition event for the Capitol Regional District (CRD) was held, with attendance from 600 volunteers.
- Wildlife cameras are used to study the use of trails by both animals and people. The project is being overseen by the University of Victoria.
- Restoration efforts in parks are having positive impacts on many wildlife species.
- Cliff McNeil-Smith and Marie-Térèse Little, have been appointed as the new CRD Chair and Vice-Chair.
- The pilot project to enhance water safety at Thetis Lake and Hamsterly Beach (Elk/Beaver Lake) was successful, receiving positive feedback and experiencing no incidents of vandalism. Ongoing data updates could potentially support the expansion of the program. Prospect Lake has installed a new dock that could benefit from this project.

CLIMATE PLAN: TARGETED UPDATE

The Manager of Sustainability gave a presentation on the Climate Plan: Targeted Update (PowerPoint on file). The following was noted in response to questions and during committee discussion:

- Collaboration on land use and future transportation plans is essential for the municipality to grow effectively and responsibly.
- The goal is to accommodate population growth responsibly and sustainably.
- This update will help clarify misunderstandings and uncertainties surrounding climate change.
- Partnering with other local governments and the CRD ensure consistent messaging about sustainability.
- Grants have been acquired to offset the cost of replacing fleet vehicles with electric ones.

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- The District of Saanich's Community E-bike Incentive Pilot Program enabled residents to travel in an emission-free, healthy and sustainable way.
 - Accessibility to various modes of transportation will continue to evolve as the population increases.
 - Water consumption in the region is concerning.

The Manager of Sustainability exited the meeting at 5:02 p.m.

PARKS' COMMUNITY STEWARDSHIP UPDATE

The Parks Stewardship Coordinator and the Environmental Education Coordinator provided an update on Parks' Community Stewardship (PowerPoint on file). The following was noted in response to questions and during committee discussion:

- The Saanich website offers resources, such as the Naturescaping in Saanich booklet, for residents looking to start or expand their stewardship efforts.
- A park ambassador program exists at PKOLS Park. It benefits community, biodiversity and the natural environment by fostering stewardship, offering educational opportunities, and enhancing visitor experiences. Local schools and students are involved in Parks' Pulling Together program through volunteer opportunities. There is currently a waitlist as the program is at capacity.
- A concern was raised about the growing population leading to increased park usage. Protection and education are crucial.

The Environmental Education Coordinator and the Parks Stewardship Coordinator exited the meeting at 5:35 p.m.

FUNDING STRATEGY: BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION AND URBAN FORESTRY STRATEGIES

The Senior Manager of Parks gave a presentation on the Funding Strategy: Biodiversity Conservation and Urban Forestry Strategies. The following was noted in response to questions and during committee discussion:

- All budget decisions are considered by Council.
- Funding considerations are made on a project-by-project basis.

DISCUSSION ON DEFINITION OF PARK ZONES

D. Wick led a discussion on the Definition of Park Zones. The following was noted in response to questions and during committee discussion:

- The Planning Department could be consulted to explore rezoning parks to enhance protection and align with the Climate Action Plan.
- Zoning of parks is typically assigned when parks were acquired. A review of park zoning is a significant project and would need to be directed by Council.
- These could be updated to protect the changing landscape.
- In Saanich, 81 parks are available for temporary overnight sheltering with criteria of where that can occur.

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion from D. Wick the meeting adjourned at 6:15 p.m.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is scheduled for January 9, 2024 at 4:00 p.m.

Councillor Judy Brownoff, Chair

I hereby certify these Minutes are accurate.

Angela Hawkshaw, Committee Clerk