

MINUTES

NATURAL AREAS, PARKS AND TRAILS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Held at Saanich Municipal Hall, Committee Room 2 and via MS Teams

770 Vernon Avenue

September 17, 2025 at 4:00 PM

ROLL CALL

In Attendance: Councillor Chambers (Chair), Julian Anderson (via Teams), Hollis Hodson, Kathy Humphrey (4:06 p.m.) (via Teams), Kim McIvor (via Teams), Michelle Watt (4:09 p.m.), Brian Wilkes, and Kathleen Woodruff (via Teams)

Regrets: David Little and Kathryn Bridge

Staff: Eva Riccius, Senior Manager, Parks; Paul de Greeff, Manager, Park Plan and Development; Nathalie Dechaine, Manager Community Development/Business Systems (via Teams); Becky Goodall, Park Planner Designer; and Colton Whittaker, Senior Committee Clerk

ADOPTION OF MINUTES

MOVED by H. Hodson and Seconded by B. Wilkes: “That the Minutes of the Natural Areas, Parks and Trails Advisory Committee meeting held May 21, 2025, be adopted as circulated.”

RESULT: Carried 6 TO 0

IN FAVOUR: Anderson, Woodruff, Chambers, Wilkes, Hodson, McIvor

ABSENT: Humphrey, Watt

OPPOSED: None

MOVED by H. Hodson and Seconded by B. Wilkes: “That the Minutes of the Natural Areas, Parks and Trails Advisory Committee meeting held June 18, 2025, be adopted as amended.”

The minutes were amended to add Becky Goodall, Park Planner Designer, as in attendance.

RESULT: Carried 6 TO 0

IN FAVOUR: Anderson, Woodruff, Chambers, Wilkes, Hodson, McIvor

ABSENT: Humphrey, Watt

OPPOSED: None

COMMITTEE BUSINESS ITEMS

CHAIRS REMARKS

No comments were made.

MOVED by B. Wilkes and Seconded by H. Hodson: “That the agenda be amended to move the Washroom Operations and Capital Plan item to first on the agenda.”

RESULT: Carried 7 TO 0

IN FAVOUR: Anderson, Woodruff, Chambers, Wilkes, Hodson, Humphrey, McIvor

OPPOSED: None

MOVED by H. Hodson and Seconded by B. Wilkes: “That a third item be added to the end of the agenda to allow local community associations and environmental groups to provide feedback on the Panama Flats Concept Plan.”

RESULT: Carried 7 TO 0**IN FAVOUR:** Anderson, Woodruff, Chambers, Wilkes, Hodson, Humphrey, McIvor**ABSENT:** Watt**OPPOSED:** None**WASHROOM OPERATIONS AND CAPITAL PLAN**

The Manager, Park Planning and Development and Park Planner Designer gave a presentation on the Washroom Operations and Capital Plan (PowerPoint on file). The following was noted in response to questions and during committee discussion:

- Pavement provides better accessibility to washrooms than permeable surfaces.

PANAMA FLATS CONCEPT PLAN

The Manager, Park Planning and Development and Park Planner Designer gave a presentation on the Panama Flats Concept Plan (PowerPoint on file). The following was noted in response to questions and during committee discussion:

- Staff have engaged with the WSANEC Leadership Council (WLC), who are interested in participating in the process.
- Birds perceive both leashed and unleashed dogs as threats.
- At the June open house, some residents may not have received survey forms, and some were unable to use the provided QR codes.
- Engagement strategies include multiple community touchpoints; staff review data broadly and look for anomalies.
- Staff continually adjust methods to ensure resident feedback is effectively captured.
- Each fenced off-leash dog facility under People, Pets, and Parks will consider shade in its design.
- Dog-related planning reflects both site preservation and opportunities for people to spend time with their dogs.
- The park includes multiple zone designations and P-4 zoning does not prevent restoration work.
- Zoning is not linked to Saanich's Animal Bylaw; rezoning the Flats to P-5 would not restrict dog access.
- Staff have consulted with Peninsula Streams Society and Colquitz Coalition, who expressed strong interest in the stream.
- This is an update to the 2014 Panama Flats Plan, not a replacement.
- Engineering is preparing the Colquitz Integrated Stormwater Management Plan.
- There may be future opportunities to enhance the on-site fish pond.
- Most new trails would follow existing alignments.

The Park Planner Designer exited the meeting at 5:39 p.m.

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK ON PANAMA FLATS CONCEPT PLAN

The President of the Carey Area Residents Association, together with committee members representing environmental groups, delivered a verbal presentation and the following was noted:

- An open house was held on the future of Panama Flats.
- The majority of participants identified trails and biodiversity conservation as priorities.
- Year-round access to a rough trail is considered important.
- Protecting and restoring biodiversity and managing invasive species is a priority.
- A balance is needed regarding dog access, including on-leash and off-leash use.

- A P-5 zoning designation may be beneficial for the park.
- Maintaining the natural beauty of Panama Flats is a community priority.
- Some groups expressed concern about leash-optional access after 9 p.m.
- Removing the berm in the middle of the Flats could improve water connectivity.
- Better connection between the duck pond and Colquitz River may increase productivity.
- A costed implementation plan would be valuable.

The Manager Community Development/Business Systems exited the meeting at 5:43 p.m.

The following was noted in response to questions and during committee discussion:

- The engagement process is a strong example of community feedback, with multiple touchpoints.
- Trails and biodiversity conservation are also priorities for Parks staff.
- Fencing needs will vary by location; some areas may not require fencing, while dense blackberry growth may influence where and what type is used.
- Interim trail work is dependent on budget while Engineering develops the Stormwater Management Plan.
- Additional information on the effectiveness of signage and maps would be helpful.

MOVED by K. Humphrey and Seconded by K. Woodruff: "That the Natural Areas, Parks, and Trails Advisory Committee endorse the Panama Flats Concept Plan in principle."

The following discussion ensued:

- Endorsing the concept plan in principle means endorsing it as presented, with the understanding that it is a concept plan.

RESULT: Carried 6 TO 2

IN FAVOUR: Anderson, Woodruff, Chambers, Hodson, Humphrey, McIvor

OPPOSED: Wilkes, Watt

ADJOURNMENT

MOVED by H. Hodson and Seconded by M. Watt: "That the meeting be adjourned."

RESULT: Carried 8 TO 0

IN FAVOUR: Anderson, Woodruff, Chambers, Wilkes, Hodson, Humphrey, McIvor, Watt

OPPOSED: None

The meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

CHAIR

I hereby certify these Minutes are accurate.

SENIOR COMMITTEE CLERK