

**MINUTES**  
**PLANNING, TRANSPORTATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
Held at Saanich Municipal Hall, Committee Room No. 2  
**June 9, 2016 at 4:30 p.m.**

Present: Councillor Fred Haynes (Chair), Suzanne Bartel, Bill Mumford, Travis Lee, John Schmuck, Stuart Chalmers

Staff: Elizabeth van den Hengel, Committee Clerk

Regrets: John Schmuck, Andrea Mercer, Peter Rantucci

Guests: Rob Wickson, President, Gorge Tillicum Community Association; Dr. Trevor Hancock, Professor and Senior Scholar, School of Public Health and Social Policy, University of Victoria; Eko Goldberg; Tamara Knott; Patricia Molchan

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**MINUTES**

**MOVED by S. Bartel and Seconded by B. Mumford: “That the Minutes of the Planning, Transportation and Economic Development Advisory Committee meeting held May 12, 2016, be adopted.”**

**CARRIED**

**HOMELESSNESS IN SAANICH**

The President of Gorge Tillicum Community Association along with Dr. T. Hancock and E. Goldberg 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.
- Definition of a “home” is difficult to define.
- 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 recommend 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 is no policy in place at Saanich 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.
- More community consultation will be done by the GTCA and the results will be presented at a future PTED committee meeting.

### **SUSTAINABLE FARMING PROJECT FOR SAANICH**

T. Knott, Saanich Resident, gave the Committee an overview of controlled environment farming and the following comments were noted:

- Freight Farming has over 200 growing units across the United States.
- Freight Farming uses revamped Seacan shipping containers to create a controlled farming environment.
- There are over 85 million discarded shipping containers that could be re-purposed for second careers.
- The Freight Farm allows for 1.5 acres of growing space in a controlled environment.
- Producing high quality fresh, local produce.
- Currently the Freight Farm in Saanich is the 5<sup>th</sup> such farm in Canada.
- Currently Saanich zoning requires the Freight Farm to be placed on ALR land. These "farms" are well suited to being placed on vacant city lots to bring fresh produce closer to the local consumer.
- Freight Farm technology has progressed and current LED growing lights have significantly lowered the operating costs. Much of the crop maintenance/farming can be controlled remotely via the internet.

T. Knott was thanked for the informative presentation. The Chair will follow up with staff regarding the zoning requirements for freight farming.

### **TINY HOUSES IN SAANICH**

P. Molchan Saanich Resident, gave the Committee an overview of tiny houses and the following comments were noted:

- Micro-houses are an affordable housing solution.
- Current zoning bylaws for parking and suites would need to be modified to allow for maximum housing benefits of micro-houses.
- Building codes need to be developed so the tiny house can be insured.

P. Molchan was thanked for the informative presentation.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 6:30 p.m. The next meeting is Thursday, September 8, 2016.

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Councillor Haynes, Chair

I hereby certify these Minutes are accurate.

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Committee Secretary