

MINUTES

PLANNING, TRANSPORTATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Held at Saanich Municipal Hall, Committee Room No. 2

August 20, 2020 at 5:00 pm

Present: Councillor Zac de Vries (Chair), Ericka Amador (5:30 pm via teleconference), Sophia Baker-French, Sonja Cunningham (5:25 pm), Brittany Higginson (6:00 pm), Richard Michaels, Shawn Steele

Staff: Troy McKay, Senior Manager, Transportation and Development Services; Rebecca Newlove, Manager of Sustainability; Debra Herbert, Senior Sustainability Planner; Nadine Kawata, Planner, Community Planning; Tania Douglas, Senior Committee Clerk

Regrets: Taylor Alexander, William Bedford, Lois-Leah Goodwin, Peter Rantucci

The meeting was brought to order at 5:10 pm. As quorum was not yet met, the adoption of the February 13, 2020 meeting will be considered later if quorum occurs.

CHAIR'S REMARKS

The Chair welcomed committee members back and advised that he has been acting Mayor on the South Island Prosperity Partnership and he is also a member of the Rising Economy Task Force. Additionally, Council has endorsed the Terms of Reference for a new Housing Strategy Task Force and the Uptown Douglas Corridor plan review will be coming down the line shortly.

HOUSING STRATEGY

The Planner presented detailed information regarding the Saanich Housing Strategy. Items still to be completed include a community engagement report, Housing Strategy Task Force meetings followed by recommendations to Council, a public survey on those recommendations, a draft Housing Strategy and then final approval by Council hopefully by Spring 2021.

The Planner asked committee members for input and the following comments were noted:

- In reply to a question about liaising with other CRD municipalities, staff noted discussions have occurred with the City of Victoria regarding a recent housing strategy done in that municipality and the district meets with other municipalities that are concurrently developing housing needs assessments.
- In reply to a question about the survey, staff noted the initial survey will be open to all, not just Saanich residents.
- Saanich has a well-developed urban area and there are not many areas to re-develop.
- Regarding how University of Victoria housing will fit into the plan, staff noted during focus groups the University of Victoria staff and Student Association representatives were consulted.
- Comment made that it would be good to continue working on approving garden and secondary suites.
- More people may be working from home due to Covid-19. This may also affect housing needs. Any information gathered pre-Covid may have to be changed or re-evaluated.
- This presentation captured legal suites in Saanich; it is difficult to quantify illegal suites.

- Staff noted non-profit housing providers can approach Council and other levels of government with funding requests, however Saanich's fund is not large.
- The rise of vacation rentals causes tenancy issues. Suggestion made that task force could consider licensing Air B & B's to incentivize longer term rentals.
- Lease commencement dates can prove challenging as it can be difficult for students to find housing beyond the September-May school term.
- There are very few 2+ bedroom units for rent.
- In reply to a question about consultation with school districts, staff noted the school districts did not accept invitations to join focus groups discussions – likely because of other priorities
- There is a need for flexibility in terms of allowing for tiny homes, secondary suites, and garden suites. More mixed use development is needed.
- Suggestion made that developers could educate Community Associations on why less single family dwellings are being built. The market demand is for future density.
- Staff confirmed that the task force will include landlord and developer representatives.

The Planner thanked members for their input. The Chair noted that the housing issue is difficult to grapple with, and that municipalities each have different goals. The Housing Strategy Task Force Terms of Reference will be considered at the next Council meeting.

EV USER FEES

The Senior Sustainability Planner presented detailed information on proposed Electric Vehicle user fees in Saanich which will help offset operational costs. She also advised that in January Council adopted a new climate plan with accelerated actions, and the provincial government has legislated that 100% of vehicle sales be electric vehicles by 2040.

Committee members asked questions and provided comments, and the following was noted:

- Fees are being proposed in order to recover costs and to save for future charge station replacements.
- Demand is not yet known, but using last year's numbers each station would generate approximately \$2,200 in revenue (assuming only 12 stations) and uses about \$750 in electricity annually. Maintenance costs, management fees and replacement reserves are on top of this.
- Any excess revenue will be put toward climate actions.
- Conversations are being held with higher levels of government regarding EV infrastructure funding.
- There is a plan to install 20 new level-two charging stations within the municipality as the cost for level-three stations are prohibitive.
- Time limits and fees for charging were discussed. Saanich does not have any paid parking at this time and usage patterns will need to be looked at.
- Charging infrastructure for electric bicycles needs to be looked at and will be included in the E-mobility strategy. Battery recycling is not in the strategy.
- The province had done pilot projects with municipal governments to monitor existing charge stations, these projects closed in March this year. Staff can look into whether there will be future pilot projects.

Staff were thanked for their presentation.

FUTURE ITEMS/ROUNDTABLE

Committee members discussed future topics of conversation/action and the following was

noted:

- Information on the economic recovery work (specific to COVID-19) being done in Saanich.
- Request made to invite the president of the newly formed Royal Oak/Broadmead Business Improvement Association (BIA) to discuss economic development and how they can obtain government assistance and future funding. Chair suggested a staff perspective on BIA's roles, potential for more BIA's and impact on retailers could also be beneficial.
- Economic recovery discussions would be beneficial. Include topics such as BIA's and partnerships with neighbourhood associations as well as streamlining business interactions with Saanich.
- An update on the Economic Development Strategy was requested.

Minutes

As quorum was now met, the Chair asked committee members to clarify a motion made in February regarding signage improvements. The word "Council's" was added between the words "during" and "economic" to indicate that the reference material circulated should be included in economic development and strategic planning discussions of Council.

MOVED by S. Steele and Seconded by R. Michaels: "That the Minutes of the Planning, Transportation and Economic Development Advisory Committee meeting held February 13, 2020, be adopted as amended."

CARRIED

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:03 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, September 10, 2020.

Councillor de Vries, Chair

I hereby certify these Minutes are accurate.

Committee Secretary