

MINUTES
PARKS, TRAILS AND RECREATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Held at the Saanich Annex, Learning Centre
April 28, 2016 at 7:00 PM

Chair: Susan Brice

Members: Ted Austin; Terrance Berscheid, Pamela Carroll; Daryl Dagneault; Warren Ellam; Tom Hatcher; Dave Marecek; Stefanie Yao and Dex Owen (Student Liaison)

Staff: Suzanne Samborski, Director of Parks and Recreation; Kelli-Ann Armstrong, Senior Manager, Recreation Services; Eva Riccius, Senior Manager Parks; Julie Lamarisse, Parks Planner; Elizabeth van den Hengel, Committee Clerk

Regrets: Rick Paynter (SD 63 representative)

Guest: Rob Wickson, GTCA; Dorothy Chambers

MINUTES

MOVED by W. Ellam and Seconded by T. Austin “That the minutes of the Parks, Trails and Recreation Advisory Committee meetings held February 25 and March 24, 2016 be adopted as circulated.”

CARRIED

MCKENZIE/HIGHWAY NO. 1 INTERCHANGE

R. Wickson, Gorge Tillicum Community Association, was present to discuss the McKenzie/Highway No. 1 interchange proposal, and the following was noted:

- This project began from a push from drivers and it is also political in nature; there are questions about local leadership and where the \$85 million budget came from. No one is available to speak to environmental questions.
- Questions raised include:
 - Why were only two or three designs given by the Ministry?
 - What are the environmental costs?
 - Are there other options that will achieve the same results but use less land and have less environmental impact?
 - How can pedestrian, cycling and transit options be given a higher priority?
 - How does this project reflect the goals of the Regional Growth Strategy?
- Problems to solve include traffic congestion, environmental impacts, accidents and improvements to transit, cycling and pedestrian movement.
- The options provided by the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure are almost all identical, do not address many issues, and are environmentally devastating (1.4 hectares of Saanich parkland is needed for the cloverleaf).

A discussion occurred and the following comments were noted:

- The Ministry plans to start construction in the fall of 2016.
- If the Ministry requires land from Cuthbert Holmes Park, then some Crown lands should be transferred to Saanich. Council will need to be approached for land acquisition.

- Saanich should actively pursue the protection of the Gary Oaks that will be impacted by the proposed project.
- Large scale projects like the McKenzie Road Interchange should be asked to leave the surrounding natural environment with a net benefit.
- The Committee agreed it would be desirable to get the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure to measure the impacts of the proposed project on the surrounding natural environment.
- Cuthbert Holmes Park is signature Saanich Park and the proposed interchange will have significant environmental impacts to all aspects of the park.
- The Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure could be approached to establish a legacy fund for Cuthbert Holmes Park and to help support the Cuthbert Holmes Park Management Plan with an annual operating fund.

MOTION: Moved P. Carroll and Seconded by D. Marecek,

“Where as:

Cuthbert Holmes Park is a signature park in Saanich with high environmental values;

Cuthbert Holmes Park is a popular natural area that promotes and demonstrates respect for the natural environment through progressive management and nature-based recreational opportunities;

Park management is guided by the council approved Cuthbert Holmes Management Plan (September 2015); and that

The Garry Oak knoll on the north side of the TransCanada Highway is listed provincially as a Sensitive Ecosystem;

The Provincial McKenzie Interchange Project will have significant and permanent impacts on the park and surrounding natural environment including permanent loss of ecosystems:

The Parks, Trails and Recreation Advisory Committee recommends to Council that Saanich staff work with the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure with the expectation that the outcome of the McKenzie Interchange Project results in significant improvements to Cuthbert Holmes Park and the surrounding natural environment with specific focus on, but not limited to:

- 1) Transfer of Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure lands along the north edge of the park to Saanich ownership;**
- 2) Transfer of the provincially held lands (currently owned by Provincial Capital Commission) to Saanich ownership;**
- 3) Enhancement of the Colquitz River and estuary;**
- 4) Protection of existing wildlife habitat;**
- 5) Recognition of valuable ecosystems through restoration or compensation;**
- 6) Full financial support for Cuthbert Holmes Park in the form of an annual operating fund; and**
- 7) A legacy fund to be used for further land acquisitions or projects in Cuthbert Holmes Park and surrounding natural environment.”**

CARRIED

TOLMIE PARK IMPROVEMENTS:

The Parks Planner updated the Committee on proposed improvements for Tolmie Park and the following was noted:

- The proposed plan is available on the Saanich website. Option #3 was the plan that was preferred by the public (70% of respondents).
- Dog walking near the playground is a concern and a low split rail type fence is being considered.
- Some residents are concerned with possible parking and increased traffic if dedicated pickleball courts are put into the park.
- Lighting is being considered along the path that is used by commuters, but is not decided yet.
- There are some drainage issues within the park that will be addressed within the scope of the park improvements.

LIFE PROGRAM

The Senior Manager of Recreation provided the Committee with an update on the Leisure Involvement For Everyone (L.I.F.E.) program. The participants in the L.I.F.E. program in the first 3 months on 2016 has seen an increase over previous years participant levels.

DIVISION UPDATE, PARKS

The Senior Manager of Parks, provided a Division update.

DIVISION UPDATE, RECREATION

The Senior Manager, Recreation Services, provided an update.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:57 p.m.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is scheduled for May 26, 2016.

Chair

I hereby certify these minutes are accurate.

Committee Secretary