

**MINUTES**  
**PARKS TRAILS AND RECREATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
**Saanich Municipal Hall, 770 Vernon Ave.**  
**September 18, 2019, 7:00 p.m.**

Present: Chair: Councillor Taylor

Members: Ted Austin; Peter Haddon; Dex Owen and Stefanie Yao

Staff: Suzanne Samborski, Director of Parks and Recreation; Kelli-Ann Armstrong, Senior Manager, Recreation); Nathalie Dechaine, Manager of Community Development and Business Systems; Cristina Caravaca, Manager Community Services; Chris Filler, Programmer II; Andrew Richards, Programmer II; Troy McKay, Manager of Transportation and Development Service; and, Jeff Keays, Committee Clerk.

Regrets: Pamela Carroll; Daryl Dagneault, Lyndsay Edgar; and, Wyatt Matthews (Resigned)

Guests: Julian Anderson and Dorothy Chambers

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\*\*\*\* COMMITTEE DID NOT ACHIEVE QUORUM. ALL ITEMS ARE FOR INFORMATION ONLY. \*\*\*\*

### **CHAIR'S REMARKS**

The Chair welcomed the members back after the summer break before providing several updates pertaining to committee related business. The following was noted:

- Member W. Matthews has resigned their seat on the committee. The Chair thanked the member for their contribution and wished them well in their future endeavours.
- The position will remain vacant until the end of the term.
- Committee members are reminded to advise the Clerk if they are unable to attend a meeting.

### **ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION PLAN – UPDATE**

In response to the committee's August 1, 2019 memo, the Manager of Transportation and Development Services provided the committee with a high-level overview of Transportation Division including: services, assets and operations, the network, design and capital works. The following was noted:

### **TRANSPORTATION**

- The Transportation Division is housed within the engineering department, and provides three main services:
  1. Operations and Maintenance
  2. Long Range Planning
  3. Design and constructions of new and replacement assets.
- Saanich's Road Network is set out in the Official Community Plan (OCP) and is informed by Local Area Plans (LAP).

- The road network is comprised of four classifications: Highway, Major, Collector and Local.
- Saanich’s transportation network is unique, the geography, terrain, coastlines, and provincial highways as well as Saanich’s rich history, has shaped the network we know today.
- The historical legacy associated to this development – lacking of the traditional grid system – presents challenges, as there are a limited number of direct east-west streets through the municipality.
- The current value of transportation assets is about \$470 million, and includes:
  1. 570km of roadways;
  2. 260 km of sidewalks;
  3. 160 km of cycling lanes;
  4. 40 bridges vehicle and pedestrian bridges;
  5. 81 traffic signals;
  6. 9000+ streetlights; and,
  7. 20,000+ traffic signs.
- The division receives approximately 800 Transportation enquiries annually, including: new sidewalk requests, parking restriction enquiries, boulevard issues and complaints related to traffic volume and speed.
- Responses to these enquiries range from simple (short turnaround) to complex, requiring comprehensive review and investigation.
- Out of the 800 enquiries, approximately 50 of these complex/controversial enquires go to the Administrative Traffic Committee (ATC) for review.
- The ATC is comprised of senior members from the Engineering Department, Saanich Police, as well as a council Liaison. The Director of Engineering serves as the chair.
- Approximately 17% of all enquiries result in changes to roads.
  1. Changes are implemented through either existing operation programs, or a large scale capital projects, requiring detailed design and funding.
- Operationally, the division receives about 5,000 calls for service (CFS) annually. These CFS are for matters such as missing or vandalized street signs, potholes, street lighting issues and illegal roadside dumping.

## **ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION PLAN**

- Approved by Council in June of 2018.
- The Plan is a comprehensive guide for Saanich’s investments in active transportation over the next 30 years and will result in increased transportation options through the improvement of accessibility, comfort, and safety for active transportation.
- Highlights of the Plan include: recommendations for improving active transportation policies, standards, infrastructure and programs over the short and long-term.
- Mapping that outlines the short and medium priorities was developed.
- The Plan has four main goals:
  1. Build a culture for active transportation.
  2. Observe a significant shift to active modes of transportation.
  3. Improve safety for people using active transportation modes,
  4. Create more connections and places for walking and cycling.
- The plan was developed with two main targets:
  1. Double the proportion of all trips made by active transportation.
  2. Work towards zero traffic related fatalities or serious injuries.

- The plan will employ nineteen strategies and one-hundred corresponding actions, that have been categorized into three main sections:
  1. Connections
  2. Convenience
  3. Culture
- Actions and initiatives will be implemented in accordance to an implementation matrix.
- The implementation section of the plan will be update on a 5 year, rolling cycle.

### **MT. DOUGLAS ACCESS STUDY**

- Study was undertaken in 2017.
- The main focus of the study was parking.
- Persons crossing along Ash Rd. are not j-walking.
- The installation of mid-block crossings, and the associated infrastructure, assign the right-of-way to pedestrians.
- Drivers are conditioned over time to expect that these crosswalks will be used; corollary low-use pedestrian facilities may result in driver apathy, resulting in surprise or delay when pedestrians are present.
- Road geometry plays a significant role in the design, orientation and appropriateness of any pedestrian crossing.
- Additionally, appropriate stopping capacity is required. The alignment of this crossing, at the apex of the curve, would make accommodating the requisite stopping capacity difficult.

Committee discussion ensued, the following was noted:

- A significant number of signs have been installed at trailheads throughout the District.
- Staff recognize there is a need to clear and upgrade a number of these access points.
- Details pertaining to the trail network in Cedar Hill Park will be subject to the public engagement process for the park. There are no details available at this time.
- Blenkinsop Lake Trail identified as a Council priority. The developer is required to build it as part of their approval.
- Victoria uses different technology for the signalized mid-block pedestrian crossings.
- The demonstrable downside to the continuously flashing beacon (Victoria example) is driver conditioning and apathy due to the banal nature of the technology.
- The District currently employs approximately 70 pedestrian activated crossings.
- Saanich intends to maintain uniformity of design, so as to ensure drivers are conditioned to one technology, as opposed to a hodgepodge, throughout the District.

### **FRIENDS OF CUTHBERT HOLMES**

The Chair welcomed representatives from the Friends of Cuthbert Holmes to the meeting.

Julian Anderson and Dorothy Chambers provided the committee with an overview of the organization, its initiatives and their perspective on the development of a grass-roots community organization. Julian Anderson was the first presenter. The following was noted:

- *'Friends of'* groups are typically made up of local community members who have a strong affinity, and passion for a particular amenity, greenspace, park or watershed.
- *'Friends of'* groups are a great way to build and connect community.

- Two characteristics attributed to successful community groups are collaborative and selfless.
- A number of factors should be consider when determining organizational structure: registered society or a loosely organized group. The Friends of Cuthbert Holmes have operated in the former since their inception.
- A Registered Society gives of an air of legitimacy as it maintains formal procedures, hosts regular meeting and has the authority to apply to grant programs, and enter into formal agreements with local municipalities to undertake restoration works etc.
- A loosely organized structure, does not have the benefit of access to grants, or the ability to enter into formal agreements with local governments. That said, a loosely organized group does not have a requirement to maintain a constitution, or bylaws, or any other formal governance structure. It can focus its energy and efforts solely on a desired outcome.
- *The Friends of Cuthbert Holmes Park (FOCHP)* began in the early 90's with a number of guerilla restoration efforts.
- Julian Anderson, the Lead Steward, enrolled in a Restoration of Natural Systems Program in 2002. During his studies he learned about importance of community involvement in ecological restoration.
- FOCHP was formed at a Gorger Waterway Initiative meeting in 2005. Subsequently the group joined The District's Pulling Together volunteer initiative.
- FOCHP has developed strong relationships with numerous community groups, such as the Gorge Tillicum Community Association, Peninsula Streams Society, local schools and community members.
- FOCHP, and in line with Saanich's template, are in the process of developing a Restoration Plan for the park.
- The plan's draft goals include:
  - Summary current and historic restoration projects;
  - Identify needs with regard to ongoing monitoring and treatment;
  - Prioritize invasive species removal efforts, and identified areas requiring specialized treatments (undertaken/administered by Parks staff or experienced volunteers);
  - Identify opportunities within Cuthbert Holmes Park (CHP) for future restoration projects;
  - Fostering public education regarding natural history an ecological restoration;
  - Create opportunities for public participation, and develop strategies to improve volunteer turnout.
- Consideration given to formally registering as a society, and developing the requisite Board of Directors and governance model.

J. Anderson turned the presentation over to Dorothy Chambers. The following is noted:

- *'Friends of'* groups appeal to passionate residents.
- Collaborate and be inclusive of both Saanich staff and committees, share good news stories and the community will support the District's initiatives.
- Mentors exist everywhere. Reach out to these people, listen and recognize both their experiences and knowledge.
- Advocacy efforts in the park area began in 1989 with a proposed long-term care facility, which would have resulted in significant deforestation and disturbances to the natural area.

- There have been some losses along the way, including the development of Silver City and the construction of the second ice surface at Pearkes.
- Relationship with local government has evolved, with the local government becoming more in-tune with the goals and visions of their community members.
- The need for advocacy is endless.

The Director of Parks and Recreation took the opportunity to thank both presenters for their ongoing contribution to Cuthbert Holmes Park and recognized the great benefits to Saanich that are associated to the efforts of a passionate and highly engaged community.

Committee discussion ensued, the following was noted:

- Input on Cuthbert Holmes Park restoration efforts are beyond what the District is capable of in isolation.
- Collaboration between the District and community, not only builds trust, it harnesses and leverages the power and energy of the community to deliver great things.
- Parks elicit visceral interests amongst community, and can elicit visceral reactions from the community during the course of any engagement process.
- Conflict may arise when differing opinions on usage, design, or amenities are presented.
- The Restoration Plan will be reviewed after the completion of the interchange, as there are material changes in the topography since the plan was first considered.
- The District will benefit from the baseline data, and history of restoration efforts the FOCHP can contribute.
- The Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MOTI) is to undertake public consultation with regard to the restoration plan.
- The community has been lead to believe that MOTI will circulate a draft plan as a part of this engagement.
- \$15,000 has been earmarked for invasive species removal.
- MOTI has not been monitoring and maintaining the berm, resulting in the unfortunate proliferation invasive species.
- It is important that Saanich continue to nurture and leverage these groups. It is of tremendous benefit to the community.
- Saanich secured funding during the 2019 budget process to hire a full-time coordinator for Pulling Together.
- Community organizations can submit an application to the District's Spark Grant Program.
- Community groups help to both raise awareness and build community capacity with regard to the stewardship of ecosystems, watershed and the natural environment.

## **SUMMER PROGRAM UPDATE**

Cristina Caravaca, Manager of Community Services introduced Chris Filler and Andrew Richards, who provided the committee with an update on the District's summer programming. The following was highlighted:

- 700+ summer camps and programs offered to our Saanich community over the summer of 2019.
- These camps and programs had over 10,000 registered participants, 75+ amazing summer staff, 40+ Volunteers and 20+ partnering organizations and services.
- These programs generated \$1,000,000+ in gross revenues.

- Saanich’s strength remains the diversity of its program.
- Saanich maintains consistently high fill rates through our high-quality facilities and parks, qualified and trained staff.
- Saanich is willing to go the extra mile to support families, and ensure that our kids have best summer camp/program experience possible.
- Saanich offered a new training structure for staff for 2019. Staff were trained in accordance to the BCRPA High 5 module on Healthy Childhood Development.
- Saanich delivers high-quality summer programs by:
  - Attracting, recruiting, hiring and training the best summer camp leaders in the region;
  - Providing diverse activities and experiences which are creative and responsive to the changing needs of our participants; and,
  - The integration of all children through staff education and creative programming which encourages equal opportunity, accessibility, and self-expression.
- In addition to enhanced collaboration with Queen Alexandra’s Child Development Centre, new offerings such as Ukelele Camp and Jr. Explorers the District implemented a new Inclusion Program Leader position and hired 15 staff.
- The Saanich Neighbourhood Playground Program had fill rates percentages in the high 90s.
- Staff are cognizant of the fact that these programs are aimed at lower-income families, and undertake annual review to ensure that they are meeting the needs of this targeted user group.
- Saanich Middle Schools play a key role in program delivery, by making available facilities and spaces allowing Saanich to expand its programming.
- This partnership enabled programming opportunities for over 1500 youth, and generating over \$250,000 in revenue.
- New realities, present new challenges. Registration in the Youth Internship and Teens in Action programs is on a decline.
- The downstream effect on future service delivery reiterates the need to ensure that attracting and developing our own staff must remain a top priority.
- Moving forward, staff will:
  - Reassess youth leadership programming;
  - Seek opportunities to enhance youth camps and program;
  - Investigate and provide more outdoor programming opportunities; and,
  - Seek to improve supports for children and youth with behavioural challenges.

Committee discussion ensued, the following was noted:

- Surprised and concern over lower enrollment in the youth leadership programs.
- It is difficult to provide the same flexible work environment that youth are seeking. Youth place high value on their work/life balance.
- Corporations like McDonalds and Subway offer flexibility at a comparable rate of compensation. This is difficult to overcome.
- Saanich staff are cognizant of these challenges and will give them due consideration during the reassessment of the youth leadership programming.
- Saanich will not compromise on requisite qualifications for their staff. No qualified staff, no program.
- Exploring partnerships with post-secondary institutions to develop hybrid certification/co-op programming that would see participants receive an accreditation at the end of their summer employment may increase appeal to youth participation and enrollment.

- Attracting youth means eliminating barriers and improving accessibility.
- Attracting and retaining qualified aquatics staff is a regional issue as there is significant shortage of qualified persons in the labour pool.

### **INCLUSIVE SERVICES UPDATE**

The Community Services Manager provided the committee with an overview of their Report on Inclusion Services Program, and dated September 18, 2019. The following was highlighted.

- The District is working on the development of an Inclusion Services program to be housed in the Community Services Department.
- Historically the District has provided services to the disabilities community through the non-profit society, Recreation Integration Victoria (RIV).
- Services most utilized by Saanich are the Leisure Assist Pass and the Summer Inclusion Workers program. Accordingly, and in exchange for direct municipal funding, RIV provided these two services to the Recreation Department.
- The Recreation Market Analysis made it clear that Saanich was not meeting the demands of its community, and that persons with disabilities were experiencing barriers when attempting to engage with recreation programming.
- The best practice with recreation inclusion programming is a 1:1 ratio (client:support provider); however, RIV's ability to this target was challenge.
- In spring of 2019 the department determined that in needed to provide direct programming in order to enhance the services, the result being the development of the Inclusion Services Program.
- The department considers inclusion to be much broader than persons with disabilities, accordingly the program was embedded within the Community Services Division where it could be supported by the relevant and appropriate community services.
- To deliver the program the District required highly specialized staff with experience in the field of disability support.
- In order to fund the program the District ended its contract with RIV and reallocated the funds to act as seed money for the new program.
- Before the formal launch of the program Community Services were able to deploy over a dozen inclusion leaders to the summer camps programs to support children with disabilities.
- Staff training was provided by the Queen Alexandra Centre for Children's Health.
- Staff were able to seamlessly transition the Leisure Assistant Pass program from RIV to Saanich eliminating any service interruptions.
- Customers were now able to acquire an assist pass from the recreation centre of their choice.
- This equitable change now afforded persons with disabilities the same experience as others in the community enjoy.
- The department plans to have an Inclusion Services Specialist on staff by October. The position will administer the program and work with the community and staff to improve accessibility to Saanich Parks, Recreation and Community Services programs.
- The position is funded as a 0.5 FTE in the current budget; accordingly, staff identified a number of priorities for the position.

Committee discussion ensued, the following is noted:

- Finding volunteers for the Challenger Program was difficult. Providing training opportunities for both summer staff and regular employees will be of great benefit.
- Are the agencies in the community that possess the skills and expertise to assist in program delivery?
- The Leisure Pass application requires sign-off by a health authority.
- There is no cap on the number of passes so the only barrier is facility capacity.

## COMMERCIAL OPERATIONS IN PARKS

The Chair provided the committee with an overview of this proposal to develop a food-truck/food-vendor in parks pilot program. The following was noted:

- There are opportunities for businesses such as food trucks and food stands to operate in certain Parks during Special events.
- The option to purchase a snack or cold beverage at an event like Music in the Park or Cadboro Bay Day helps to enjoyability and vibrancy of these events. The potential to have food trucks/vendors at these events would further enhance this.
- Section 17 of our Parks Management and Control Bylaw prohibits the sale of refreshments, goods or services in parks except with the expressed written consent of Council.
- Interested in the exploring the idea of permitting small scale business operations in certain parks on a more regular basis; however, there are significant implications to consider, including:
  - Limiting the potential for over-commercialization in parks, and maintaining the calm, natural atmosphere our community currently enjoys.
  - Criteria to determine what Parks are appropriate, and which are not.
  - What kind of business is permissible?
  - What is the best manner to explore the notion?
- Staff have recommended that consideration be given to a Pilot Project that is limited to only one Park.

Committee discussion ensued, the following was noted:

- This could elicit significant community response.
- The concept has not been considered in any of the current corporate plans or strategies. Is this what people want?
- Where does this concept stack-up when compared to other priorities?
- The opportunity to animate parks is the genesis of the idea.
- No changes to the Bylaw are being proposed, or recommended.
- Developing a limited pilot project would be an appropriate manner for moving forward.
- Should Council receive a recommendation for consideration, it is expected that they would first request staff to comeback with a report highlighting feasibility, and programming options.
- What is the real cost to the municipality? It is seemingly negligible within the context of this discussion.
- It isn't unreasonable to presume that there is a need for this. There is a precedent, as Gyro Park had a successful snack stand in past.
- Is there demand for this service? Has there been engagement with supply side vendors to determine if there is a viable business case, or interest to support this?



**DIVISION UPDATE RECREATION**

The Senior Manager – Recreation provided and overview of the June Recreation Division Update report dated, September 11, 2019.

**DIVISION UPDATE PARKS**

The Director of Parks and Recreation provided and overview of the September Parks Division Update report dated, September 26, 2019.

**DIVISION UPDATE COMMUNITY SERVICES**

The Community Services Manager provided and overview of the September Community Services Division Update report dated, September 18, 2019.

**NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting is scheduled for October 24, 2019.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 9:04 p.m.

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Councillor Taylor, Chair

I hereby certify these Minutes are accurate.

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Committee Secretary