

**MINUTES**  
**PARKS, TRAILS AND RECREATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
Held at the Cedar Hill Arts Centre, Art Room # 1  
**Thursday, April 24, 2014 at 7:00 p.m.**

Present: Acting Chair: Martin Roberts

Members: Jim Anderson, Terrance Berscheid, Tom Hatcher, Harry Lewis, Martin Roberts

Staff: Doug Henderson, Director of Parks and Recreation; Rae Roer, Senior Manager, Parks; Kelli-Ann Armstrong, Senior Manager, Recreation Services; Gary Darrah, Parks Planning and Design Manager; Becky Goddall, Park Planner Designer; Jason Jones, Programmer II Recreation; Carole Ireland, Cedar Hill Recreation Centre Manager/Cedar Hill Golf Manager; Elizabeth van den Hengel, Committee Clerk

Regrets: Councillor Wade, Stefanie Barber, Daryl Dagneault, Jesse McClinton

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**MOTION**

**MOVED by T. Berscheid and seconded by T. Hatcher, "That Parks, Trails and Recreation Committee Member Martin Roberts be appointed acting Chair."**

**CARRIED**

**MINUTES**

**MOVED by H. Lewis and seconded by T. Berscheid, "That the minutes of the Parks, Trails and Recreation Advisory Committee meeting held March 27, 2014 be adopted as circulated."**

**CARRIED**

**CUTHBERT HOLMES PARK**

The Parks Planning & Design Manager presented and the following was noted:

- Cuthbert Holmes Park is an urban refuge which promotes respectful and appropriate recreational use while protecting its natural features and ecosystems.
- In 1986 the park was turned over to Saanich and in 1987 a large portion of land was granted to the Provincial Capital Commission and subsequently leased for 99 years to Saanich.
- Cuthbert Holmes Park is a combination of the Cuthbert Holmes Park (Municipal Park classification) and Tillicum Park (Community Park classification). These two parks are collectively referred to as Cuthbert Holmes Park in the presentation.
- A number of factors have negatively affected the park over the years.
- Unrestricted access and unauthorized trails have resulted in soil compaction, loss of soil and plant understory and contributed to the spread of invasive plants.
- Areas of heavy invasive plant infestation and certain isolated pockets, harbour negative activities which discourage some potential visitors.

- There is a perception that parts of the parks are wasted, and that it is not fulfilling its recreational potential.
- Suggested management goals are:
  - Protect and restore natural areas.
  - Refine the trail system to meet the park's environmental, recreational and safety needs.
  - Provide the opportunity for a range of appropriate, enjoyable and enriching recreational activities.
  - Increase the number of park users, remove invasive vegetation cover that harbours negative activities and bring problem isolated areas into the larger park experience.
- Cuthbert Holmes Park contains 1.5 kilometers of the Colquitz River and borders on its estuary. A combination of Douglas fir, mixed forests, wetlands, riparian areas and sensitive ecosystems all exist within the park.
- The park is home to the largest breeding colony of Great Blue Heron on Vancouver Island.
- The Colquitz River supports numerous fish species.
- The park is well used by the neighbourhood, nature enthusiasts, dog walkers, boaters, students from nearby schools and visitors from the adjacent mall.
- The park trails link the immediate neighbourhood to the greater Centennial Trails system.
- The fish counting ladder is a popular feature during the salmon spawning season.
- Many groups are active in the park;
  - Friends of Cuthbert Holmes Park
  - The Portage Inlet Sanctuary Colquitz Estuary Society
  - Citizen Canine
  - Victoria Fish and Game Protective Association
- The public consultation process revealed two basic attitudes toward the park. A minority group feels that the park is degraded beyond recovery. The strong majority feel that the park has a natural environment that must be restored and protected.
- The stakeholder preference summary listed the following:
  - Preserve and restore the park's natural environment
  - Continue to accommodate public access and increase the number of park users
  - Showcase the park's natural environment and enhance the recreational opportunities it offers
  - Support only those activities that will not threaten the park's environmental health
  - Address safety and security concern
- There currently is little support for active recreation within the park.
- Strong requests to keep the park open for dog walkers.
- Approximately 65% of the park is classified as having high environmental sensitivity, 25% of the park is classified as having medium sensitivity, 6% is classified as low sensitivity and 4% is classified as very low environmental sensitivity.

Committee discussion occurred and the following was noted:

- Bikes rip-up sensitive ground plants. Methods to limit off-trail bike use should be considered.
- Make improvements to the main trails to reduce informal trail use.

- A bird-blind could be installed at the “U” point of the Colquitz River. This is an excellent wildlife viewing area.
- Dogs chasing wildlife can be problematic. Investigation into methods for limiting off leash dogs running down the river bank to chase wildlife should be conducted.
- Pearkes Recreation Centre currently does not utilize the park for any active recreation.
- A formal trail bisecting the perimeter trail could be considered.

## **YOUTH SERVICES**

The Senior Manager of Recreation Services introduced the Recreation Programmer II. An overview of youth programs and services in Saanich was presented.

The current Youth Strategy is from 2003 and is being reviewed and updates are planned. The Committee was provided with an overview of what is happening in Saanich Recreation youth programs and services and the following was noted:

- The Philosophy of Engagement for Youth Services is based upon engaging young people and actively supporting the contribution and participation of young people in decision-making about the issues that affect them.
- Engaging young people in the planning, delivery and evaluation of services will result in services that are more effective, relevant and better able to meet the needs of young people.
- To capture what youth are seeking from Saanich Recreation a planning session was held with eight youth and eight Saanich staff participating.
- From the planning session a draft vision, mission statement and values for Saanich Youth Services was developed. The draft has been circulated to the public via posters in the teen centres and at events targeting youth for additional feedback.
- The document will be finalized at the end of April 2014.
- Youth Services had an active year in 2013. Some of the events/programs supported by Youth Services are: afterschool and evening drop-ins, school programs, girls and guys groups, FUEL Breakfast program and lunch drop-ins.

## **RECREATION SERVICES UPDATE**

The Senior Manager of Recreation Services provided a verbal update and the following was noted:

- The Easter “Eggstravaganza” was held on April 19, 2014 at the Gordon Head Recreation Centre.
- The “Moving Forward” program for youth at risk and the ‘Educating Children Outdoors – nature preschool” programs won Program Excellence Awards from the British Columbia Recreation and Parks Association.
- This year’s Bike Festival was cancelled as a result of the difficulty in obtaining enough volunteers, due to an overlap with the Times Colonist 10 km run/5 Km walk on the same day.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m. Committee members were given a guided tour of the Cedar Hill Arts Centre by Carole Ireland, Cedar Hill Recreation Centre Manager/Cedar Hill Golf Manager.

**NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday May 22, 2014 at 6:00 p.m. at the Cedar Hill Golf Course Clubhouse.

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Councillor Wade, Chair

I hereby certify these minutes are accurate.

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Committee Secretary