

**MINUTES**  
**PARKS TRAILS AND RECREATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
Held at Saanich Municipal Hall, Committee Room #2  
**February 28, 2019 at 7:00 p.m.**

Present: Chair: Councillor Taylor

Members: Ted Austin; Pamela Carroll; Elise Cote; Daryl Dagneault; Peter Haddon and Stefanie Yao

Staff: Suzanne Samborski, Director of Parks and Recreation; Kelli-Ann Armstrong, Senior Manager, Recreation); Eva Riccius, Senior Manager, Parks; Andrew Burger, Manager, Park Operations and Jeff Keays, Committee Clerk.

Regrets: Wyatt Matthews

Guests: Yvonne Mendel, Topaz Bike Club and the South Island Mountain Bike Society; Alon Soraya, South Island Mountain Biking Society; Stephen Parslow, North Saanich Free Ride Society. Patrick Nolan, Nolan Riding.

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**MINUTES**

**MOVED by P. Haddon and Seconded by T. Austin “That the minutes of the Parks Trails and Recreation Advisory Committee meeting held January 24, 2019 be adopted as amended.”**

**CARRIED**

**BIKE PARKS IN SAANICH**

The committee received a joint presentation from a number of community cycling organizations who are seeking support for the development of a youth bike in park in Saanich. The following was highlighted:

Y. Mendel, Topaz Bike Club

- Advocating for Saanich to consider:
  1. Increased funding for Parks and Recreation in general
  2. The development of all-weather pump track.
  3. The development of a bike jump park.
- High demand for a local facility
- The distance to Hartland is a barrier to children and youth participation.
- Pump track and bike jump park user communities are diverse.
- Various typed of tracks, and ratings allow a broad cross-section of riders of use facilities.
- Closest park is in North Saanich

S. Parslow, North Saanich Free Ride Society

- The Bike Park in North Saanich is one of the most highly used parks in the municipality.

- Riders come from all over the region to use.
- The features of the park have broad appeal to all ages and skill levels.
  - Courses and tracks are thoughtfully designed and identified for skill level which helps to manage risk.
  - The facility has been an opportunity for community involvement (volunteerism) and stewardship.
- Older youth take the opportunity to mentor younger youth, fostering a sense community amongst intergenerational riders.
- Providing designated facilities helps mitigate environmental impacts to natural and ecologically sensitive areas.

A. Soraya, South Island Mountain Biking Society

- Bike parks create safe riding environments that are low-impact to the environment.
- Lowers barriers and encourages youth participation in the sport.
- Active youth are excited youth, this positive relationship needs to be encouraged and supported.

P. Nolan, Nolan Riding

- Significant interest amongst youth.
- Large number of registrants for his riding skills programs
- Offers a youth cycling course through Saanich Parks and Recreation that teaches safe riding skills and the rules associated to urban trail riding.

Committee discussion ensued, the following was highlighted:

- The committee appreciates the positive community presentation, and large public turnout.
- Difficult to compare maintenance costs between a bike park and soccer facility – Saanich clubs maintain facilities on a day-to-day basis.
- North Saanich owns the park and provides approximately \$5000 a year towards ongoing maintenance. The society manages the remainder of the day-to-day maintenance (approximately \$5,000 – \$8,000 per year) with funds coming from fundraising initiatives.
- The takeoff structure is most important component of the jump. North Saanich utilizes both wood-to-dirt and dirt-to-dirt jumps.
- Pump tracks are typically made for asphalt. Although it is not a requirement to have the track located next to the dirt jump track; however, it is both beneficial and convenient to have them located in close proximity.
- Travel to Hartland is recognized as a barrier to youth and family participation.
- A local facility would be of great benefit to our community.
- Staff has not identified a location for any park.

The Chair thanked the community for their presentation and noted that the committee will seek input from staff on current bike park best practices at a future meeting.

## MARKET ANALYSIS

The Senior Manager of Recreation provided the committee with an update on the Market Analysis. The following was highlighted:

- Entering last phase of year-long study.
- Consultants are currently analyzing and confirming the data collected that will form the forthcoming report.
- Saanich has conducted two public open-houses since the January PTR meeting, there were over 100 attendees.
- Undertaken an online survey with over 1000 respondents.
- Invitations to participate in the second phase of engagement were sent to all community associations and SCAN.
- Highlights from data collected in this phase include:
  - Strong support for current programming, facilities and service levels.
  - 80% of respondents were Saanich residents.
  - Expanding arts and culture and ice/dry floor programming was opportunities were supported as high and medium priorities by respondents.
- Final report to Council on April 8, 2019.

## TREES IN PARKS

Andrew Burger, the Manager of Parks Operations, provided an overview of Saanich's Urban Forest. The following was highlighted:

- Value of Trees – Clerk will circulate the Regional Municipality of Halifax's video.
- Trees are more than just a trunk and canopy, an equally important part of the tree is underground structures.
- The Urban Forestry Strategy (UBF) was adopted by Council in 2010 and is the main driver of tree management work in the Parks Department. The strategy helps Saanich both protect and enhance the urban forest.
- Key components of the strategy include:
  - increased canopy cover
  - an amendment to the tree bylaw
  - the develop design guidelines
  - integration with local/regional initiatives
  - development of a tree inventory
  - development of an parks operations manual
  - engage the community
- Saanich uses numerous regulatory tools to protect urban trees, including:
  - **Public lands**
    - Parks Management and Control Bylaw
    - Boulevard Regulation Bylaw
    - Streets and Traffic Regulation Bylaw
  - **Private lands** (and public)
    - Bylaw Enforcement Bylaw
    - Tree Protection Bylaw
- Parks staff are part of the Development Review Group

- The group meets weekly to review all engineering/development/parks projects
- Saanich has 2:1 replacement ratio
- Staff also provide high-level input on MOTI and CRD related projects
- Managing trees in parks and boulevards utilizes three strategies:
  - Retention: primary goal
  - Mitigation: remove problems (dead limbs) if possible to retain tree.
  - Replacement: removal requires replacement - work with home owners to get buy in.
- District's goal is to protect and enhance the urban forest, however, there is an obligation to provide a safe setting for the public and staff.
- There were 1638 tree related calls for service in 2018 which accounts for 53% of all calls to parks for service.
- Saanich also uses numerous tools to protect and enhance the urban forest, such as:
  - Education (handouts, guides, social media)
  - Volunteer engagement, community events,
  - Work with external partners
  - Community associations to help promote tree planting and community champions
  - Work with private property owners to promote tree care
  - Hydro-grant funding to promote right tree in right place philosophy
  - Meet with vegetation coordinators to discuss pruning standards, local nuances (memorial trees) and storm response
  - Inform tree companies of rules and regulations to avoid irreversible mistakes.
- Public Tree Planting – Goal is not net loss.
  - Boulevard tree planting program
  - Park tree planting (capital projects)
  - Restoration
  - Planting partnerships (schools, associations)
- During replacement efforts the District uses the “right tree, right place” approach to encourage planting success. This approach considers:
  - Underground and overhead infrastructure
  - Site conditions,
  - Species type considerations including nuisance and potential size.
  - Planting locations proximity to water service,
  - Maintenance access,
  - Successful establishment
- Challenges to the UBF include:
  - Balance of interests, values and goals.
  - Increase demand to manage existing trees and expand planting program.
  - Climate change
  - Infrastructure damage and nuisance
  - Availability of planting sites
- There are numerous opportunities to support the UBF, including:

- Highly engaged public
- Economic evaluation of trees
- New technologies and design features
- Information systems
- Creative solutions with other departments
- Increase tree planning sites
- The costs associated to new trees are, \$575 for planting and \$775 for maintenance (5 years).
- Future tools and strategies for consideration include:
  - Update Urban Forest Strategy
  - Amend Tree Protection Bylaw
  - Update Boulevard Tree Policy
  - Investment in new technology/techniques

### **DIVISION UPDATE RECREATION**

The Senior Manager – Parks provided and overview of the February Parks Division Update report dated, February 20, 2019.

### **DIVISION UPDATE PARKS**

The Senior Manager – Parks provided and overview of the February Parks Division Update report dated, February 28, 2019.

### **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

The committee discussed potential topics for inclusion on future agendas

### **NEXT MEETING**

Next meeting is scheduled for April 25, 2019.

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Councillor Taylor, Chair

I hereby certify these Minutes are accurate.

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Committee Secretary