

MINUTES
ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL AREAS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Held at Saanich Municipal Hall, Committee Room No. 2
September 23, 2014 at 5:15 p.m.

Present: Chair: Councillor D. Murdock

Members: Kevin Brown, Al-Nashir Charania, Mary Haig-Brown, Harry Drage, Jude Coates, Hal Gibbard, Roberta Hesselgrave

Staff: Debby Harris, Corporate Projects Coordinator; Adriane Pollard, Environmental Services Manager; Cory Manton, Urban Forestry, Horticulture and Natural Areas Manager; Mark Boysen, Manager of Sustainability; Lee Johnson, Sustainable Energy Planner; Shannon Jamison, Sustainable Community Planner; Elizabeth van den Hengel, Committee Clerk

Regrets: Marie Vander Heiden

Guest: Ian Bruce, Executive Coordinator, Peninsula Streams Society

MINUTES

MOVED by J. Coates and Seconded by H. Gibbard: "That the Minutes of the Environment and Natural Areas Advisory Committee meeting held June 26, 2014 be adopted as amended."

CARRIED

STRATEGIC PLAN INDICATORS

The Managers of Environmental Services and Urban Forestry, Horticulture and Natural Areas presented and the following was noted:

- Currently Strategic Plan Indicators do not directly measure biodiversity.
- Biodiversity is biological diversity as measured by the variety and abundance of species, ecosystems and genetic diversity in a given area.
- Local governments are mostly involved with the variety and abundance of ecosystems, rather than the species or genetic biodiversity.
- The Strategic Plan currently has indicators for:
 - Urban forest cover
 - Parkland, including recreational sites and natural areas.
- Potential data sources that could be considered for ecosystem biodiversity indicators are:
 - Hectares of sensitive ecosystems present. Data could be obtained from the Sensitive Ecosystems Inventory (ESA-Atlas).
 - Hectares of sensitive ecosystem protected. The ESA Atlas and GIS layers of parkland, covenants and DPAs can be sources of data for this metric.
 - Bird diversity as an indicator. The Christmas Bird Count has been occurring for many years and the data from these counts could be used for an indicator.
- The Strategic Plan indicator for urban forest cover does not distinguish between riparian forests and other forest types, and there are no stream health indicators.

- Potential data sources that could be considered for stream/stream health indicators are:
 - Hectares of riparian tree cover. Data is available via the Urban Forest Stewardship Initiative (UFSI).
 - Hectares of riparian restoration. Streamside Development Permit Area permits could potentially be a data source.
 - Adherence to water quality standards. Metrics could be collected from measurements of outfall water quality.
 - Overall stream condition. Proper functioning condition data was not recommended, because only a few of the streams in Saanich have data and this data is rarely updated.
 - Impervious cover-this data would be sourced from the UFSI.
- Assessment of protection of marine shoreline is difficult due the variety of ecosystems present and the lack of monitoring.
- Marine shoreline protection could be covered by a biodiversity indicator based on sensitive ecosystems that would include Coastal Bluffs.
- Potential data sources that could be considered for marine shoreline protection are:
 - Hectares of marine backshore restored or number of trees planted and monitored for survival. Data would be available from the Environmental Development Permit Area permits.
 - Marine water quality could be measured from outfall water quality sampling reports.

Committee discussion occurred and the following was noted:

- Tracking hectares of protected sensitive ecosystem compared with hectares of sensitive ecosystem lost should be reported. It would be insightful to know how much sensitive ecosystem Saanich is gaining or losing.
- Bird biodiversity is measured as a long term trend and care needs to be taken to control for statistical sampling errors.
- A more robust definition of what an endangered species is should be considered.
- Saanich would use the Sensitive Ecosystem Inventory for inventorying Saanich ecosystems.
- Monitoring changes in ecosystem types as opposed to endangered species could be considered.
- Indicators should be comprised of items that Saanich has jurisdictional control over.
- Water quality should be an indicator if a SMART metric can be developed for measurement.
- Indicators should be reflective on items that Saanich policy has a large influence over.
- Indicator based upon riparian stream cover would have a strong linkage to existing Saanich policy.
- Indicators that are reflective of Saanich's ability to protect the environment should be measured.

The Corporate Projects Coordinator facilitated a discussion on possible gaps in the Vision Statement and Theme Paragraph. Committee discussion occurred and the following was noted:

- Gap exists between the vision statement and the theme paragraph with respect to the principles of planning urban centres and villages to reduce emissions.

- Broadening the vision statement to be more proactive to the community at large. Currently the vision statement refers solely to the municipality itself.
- The feasibility of improving the environment while simultaneously growing the community was questioned.
- Planning for centres and villages is necessary.
- Broaden statement to include the community-at-large and proactive planning (incentivizing).
- Quality of life.
- How are we going to balance growth with environmental improvements (stability, integrity)?
- Urban forests and farmland are missing from the theme paragraph.
- Travel modes should include walking, cycling and public transit.
- Green building practices need to be comprehensive to entire community.
- Only rural land is identified in the Urban Containment Boundary; should be urban as well.
- Invasive program is missing.
- Farmland is missing.

SUSTAINABILITY UPDATE

The Sustainability Coordinator introduced two new members of the Saanich Planning department Lee Johnson, Sustainable Energy Planner and Shannon Jamison, Sustainable Community Planner. The Sustainability Coordinator then provided an update on Saanich Sustainability and Climate Action Programs and the following was noted:

- Saanich's Climate Action Plan goals are;
 - A 33% reduction in community GHG emissions by 2020.
 - A 50% reduction in operations emissions by 2020.
- Overall a 3.3% reduction in community emissions from 2007 -2010. A range of community actions have been explored and implemented.
- Transportation emissions remain the biggest challenge.
- Waste emissions will decrease significantly with the Greener Garbage Program.
- The GHG inventory for 2012 will be finalized in late 2014.
- Community sustainability is being promoted by;
 - Saanich Carbon Champions Website videos-this website promotes positive climate action stories in the community.
 - Providing support to residents on home energy incentives.
 - Education on alternative transportation options, solar PV, solar hot water and energy Passive Homes.
 - Efficient Heritage Homes-Saanich has a significant supply of older building stock. Saanich owned heritage homes were used to test building energy improvements through energy audits and thermal imaging.
 - Electric vehicle charging stations are provided at 6 Saanich facilities. Installation of the units were funded 75% by the Province.
 - Currently these are free for users, with the policy being reviewed in 2015.
 - Food security initiatives.
 - Heating oil tank awareness in the community.
- Saanich Operations are promoting sustainability by;
 - A 700 tonne reduction in fleet GHG emissions achieved by switching to high-efficiency diesel vehicles, right-sizing vehicles for duties and the integration of electric vehicles.
 - Renewed focus on energy management within the Saanich organization.
 - A Strategic Energy Management Plan developed in 2014.

- Energy audits completed in the summer of 2014 and energy efficiency upgrades planned for 2015, utilizing the Carbon Fund.
- Composting and recycling moving towards a goal of zero waste in all Saanich facilities.
- Green Procurement Policy.
- Cycling and bike kitchen for increased support of staff cycling.

****** The Chair left the meeting at 7:00 pm and the Committee appointed Jude Coates as Acting Chair******

INTEGRATED STORMWATER MANAGEMENT PLANNING

Mr. Ian Bruce, Executive Coordinator, Peninsula Streams Society presented the Committee with an introductory discussion about a proposed Integrated Stormwater Management Plan (ISMP) for Swan and Blenkinsop Watersheds. Stormwater can be considered a resource that can be used to enhance and protect watershed health. Urban salmon habitats and other ecological restoration activities are dependent on ISMP results/plans. An ISMP uses a holistic approach to balance land use needs of society with the natural values and functions of the watershed. The following was noted:

- The components of an Integrated Stormwater Management Plan are;
 - Saanich Official Community Plan and the Local Area Plans
 - Stormwater Infrastructure
 - Hydrological Assessment
 - Biophysical Assessment
 - Water Quality
 - Consolidated Watershed Data
 - Public Consultation
- Blenkinsop Creek is primarily agricultural. Swan Creek/Lake is a more urban watershed.
- Cumberland Dam controls the flow for Blenkinsop Creek. Currently there is no flow regulation on Swan Creek/Lake.
- Both watersheds have a variety of water quality and quantity issues, invasive species and restoration opportunities.
- Development of an ISMP requires a collaborative public goal setting process with senior levels of government, general public, municipal staff and members of the communities to determine watershed priorities.
- Several jurisdictions are currently developing ISMPs (Central Saanich, and Metro Vancouver).
- Development of an ISMP will alter the method in which stormwater is managed to avoid degradation at the watershed scale.
- Long-term cost savings to the municipality can be realized if an ISMP is integrated into overall water management plans.
- Next steps involve:
 - Applying for partnership funding and beginning selection process for a primary consultant.
 - Working with Saanich staff to identify and address data gaps.

ENVIRONMENTAL BILL OF RIGHTS

Ms. J. Coates provided an update to the Committee on the proposed Environment Bill of Rights and the following was noted:

- The Blue Dot Tour November 7, 2014 at the University of Victoria is sold out. The selling out of this event demonstrates a keen local interest in environment health.
- Saanich could consider ways/events to complement the momentum created by the Blue Dot Tour.
- Locally the Environmental Bill of Rights has been advocated by the Green Space Group. Currently this group is not active.
- A guest speaker should be arranged for the January 2015 ENA meeting.

SIGNIFICANT TREE #143: 1383 SCOLAR PLACE

Update from the Manager of Urban Forestry, Horticulture and Natural Areas on the grant for work to Significant Tree tag #143.

GRANT APPROVAL FOR SIGNIFICANT TREE # 143 – 1383 Scoular Place (OAK)

The following quotes were considered for hazard abatement pruning:

- Davey Tree Services (\$900.00)
- Dogwood Tree Services (\$945.00)
- Bartlett Tree Services (\$892.00)

Motion:

MOVED by K. Brown and Seconded by R. Hesselgrave: “That a grant of 50% of the estimate of \$892.00 provided by Bartlett Tree Services be paid to the applicant.”

CARRIED

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

NEXT MEETING

Next meeting is Tuesday, October 28, 2014.

Saanich Councillor Murdock, Chair

I hereby certify these Minutes are accurate.

Committee Secretary