

MINUTES
ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL AREAS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Held at Saanich Municipal Hall, Committee Room No. 1

April 26, 2016 at 5:15 p.m.

Present: Councillor Dean Murdock (Chair), Harry Drage, Hal Gibbard, Kevin Brown, George Klima, Mary Haig-Brown, Roberta Hesselgrave, Al-Nashir Charania, Jude Coates

Staff: Adriane Pollard, Manager Environmental Services; Elizabeth van den Hengel, Committee Clerk

Guests: Rob Wickson, President GTCA; Matt Huse, Our Horizon Society; Larry Layne

Minutes

MOVED by K. Brown and Seconded by R. Hesselgrave: "That the Minutes of the Environment and Natural Areas Advisory Committee meeting held March 22, 2016, be adopted."

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 travel times now and forecasted?
 - 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).
- Mr. Wickson presented an alternative design that addresses inbound and outbound traffic, congestion, the environment, and it allows for changes in the future if needed to address Admirals/McKenzie movement.
- The Ministry plan focuses on single occupant vehicles and does not support transit or cyclist/pedestrian priorities.
- The \$85 Million earmarked for this project could be used instead for a light rail project.
- There are big changes coming in the next five years in terms of transportation; electric vehicles and light rail are the future.
- The Ministry project will not solve the congestion problem, but shift it elsewhere.

A discussion occurred and the following comments were noted:

- The Ministry's public comment period ends in mid-March; they plan to start construction in the fall of 2016.
- The Ministry has engaged with Saanich staff a couple of times.
- If the Ministry is given Cuthbert Holmes Park, then some Crown lands should be transferred to Saanich. Council will need to be approached for land acquisition.
- The Ministry doesn't seem to understand the problems with their option and, despite their public participation process, will not listen to any suggestions.
- Committee agreed it would be desirable to get the Ministry to measure the impacts of travel time, noise, and the environment for Mr. Wickson's proposal and compare this to their own proposed project.
- A Garry oak ecosystem will be impacted by the proposed interchange.
- Request for monetary support for environmental remediation could be made.
- LED signage for managing traffic flow could be installed to assist with volume.
- Traffic modelling software is available to assist with evaluating changes to infrastructure.

MOTION MOVED by M. Haig-Brown and Seconded by A. Charania: "That the Environment and Natural Areas Advisory Committee supports in principle the recommendations from BiPed with respect to the McKenzie Interchange project; and requests a more rigorous environmental assessment be undertaken, that would include a variety of environmental offsets resulting in a net benefit to the natural environment."

CARRIED

AIR POLLUTION RISK DISCLOSURES ON GAS PUMPS

Matt Hulse, Our Horizon Society, and the Committee continued the discussion on air pollution risk disclosures on gas pumps. The following was noted:

- The legal opinion from Lidstone and Company is clear that Saanich has the legal authority to create a bylaw or amend the current bylaw to require the labeling of gas pumps as a requirement for gas station business licenses.
- Penalties and enforcement of a bylaw requiring the labeling of gas pumps would be decided on by Saanich.
- The University of British Columbia is running a study examining the impact of labels on gas pumps.
- There is likely an intangible aspect to labels on gas pumps.
- Small steps, like labeling gas pumps help to increase awareness and build the momentum needed to change attitudes and behaviour.
- Gas pump labels should be revenue neutral to help withstand potential legal challenges.

MOTION MOVED by A. Charania and Seconded by J. Coates: "That the Environment and Natural Areas Advisory Committee recommends that Council request staff explore the financial feasibility and the legal implications with regard to the labeling of gas pump handles; and, the materials distributed at the April 26, 2016 ENA Advisory Committee meeting be provided to staff as supporting information."

CARRIED

PRIORITY SETTING

The Committee will have ongoing discussions during the year on setting priorities and the following was noted:

- Food security in Saanich.
- Integrated storm-water management plans.
- A Farm Lands Trust.
- Rain-drought cycles and effects on Saanich's urban forests.
- Watershed issues.
- Update on Urban forestry suitable species and correct planting locations.

UPDATE ON POLLINATORS:

Larry Lane provided a brief update to last months' discussion on pollinators.

ENVIRONMENTAL BILL OF RIGHTS WORKING GROUP

Committee member A. Charania updated the Committee on the next Environmental Bill of Rights working group meeting scheduled for Wednesday May 3, 2016 at 1019 Warf Street from 3-4:30 pm.

ENVIRONMENTAL AWARDS

The Manager of Environmental Services updated the Committee on the progress of the 2016 Environmental Awards event. The special meeting to determine the award recipients will be held on Tuesday May 10 at 5:15 pm in Committee Room #1.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:25 p.m.

NEXT MEETING

Next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, May 24, 2016.

Councillor Murdock, Chair

I hereby certify these Minutes are accurate.

Committee Secretary