

MINUTES
ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL AREAS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Held at Saanich Municipal Hall, Committee Room No. 2
October 25, 2016 at 5:15 p.m.

Present: Councillor Dean Murdock (Chair), Harry Drage, Hal Gibbard, Kevin Brown, Mary Haig-Brown, Roberta Hesselgrave

Staff: Elizabeth van den Hengel, Committee Clerk

Regrets: George Klima, Jude Coates, Al-Nashir Charania

Guests: Alf Birch, Land Trust Alliance of BC; Larry Leyne

Minutes

MOVED by K. Brown and Seconded by R. Hesselgrave: "That the Minutes of the Environment and Natural Areas Advisory Committee meeting held September 27, 2016, be adopted as amended."

CARRIED

MOUNT DOUGLAS ACCESS STUDY

The Manager of Parks Planning and Design gave the Committee an update on the Mount Douglas Access Study and the highlights are noted:

- On February 15, 2016 Council endorsed a staff recommendation to develop options to address concerns regarding access to Mount Douglas Park by some members of the public. With particular interest into to parking restrictions at the north end of Glendenning Road.
- Council requested that access options should minimize impacts to the special nature, character and access routes themselves.
- Pedestrian, bicycle, transit and vehicular access were included in the study.
- Public survey results are available on the Saanich website.
- Feedback on the draft recommendations via the online survey will be accepted until October 31, 2016.
- The data gathered throughout the summer identifies a number of ways to improve visitor access facilities to the park.
- These included enhancements to infrastructure for all transportation modes.
- Several key findings were revealed from the data gathering and analysis and draft recommendations have been compiled:
 - 6 recommendations to improve pedestrian access
 - 6 recommendations to improve cycling access
 - 4 recommendations to improve transit access
 - 10 recommendations to improve vehicle access

Committee discussion occurred and the following was noted:

- Overall the parking issue in the park is a distribution issue. There is adequate parking for park access, but limited parking in some key access points.
- Glendenning and Churchill have the most challenges with parking availability.

- Glendenning is popular as it the parking area with access to an “easy” trail and is popular with persons with mobility concerns and dog walkers.
- Committee is uncertain if the recommendation to formalize 5 parking spots on Glendenning will alleviate to parking issues.
- Formalizing the 5 parking spots on Glendenning will require relocating the trailhead to the left of the current trailhead.

CONSERVATION TAX INCENTIVE PROGRAM

The Chair introduced Alf Birch, Land Trust of British Columbia Volunteer. A. Birch presented the Committee with and overview on an initiative for a province wide “Conservation Tax Incentive Program” (CTIP). The following was noted:

- The CTIP would create incentive for voluntary conservation of valuable natural areas on private lands.
- Incentives like the ones proposed by the CTIP are important as rising land values and increased development on ecologically sensitive areas are impacting the protection of valuable natural areas.
- A voluntary conservation of natural areas is a tool to meet municipal and regional environmental goals.
- The successful “Natural Areas Protection Tax Exemption Program” (NAPTEP) in the Gulf Islands would be the model for the proposed CTIP.
- The NAPTEP has been successfully operating for 10 years and has helped to offset costs to land owners for voluntary conservation covenants.
- The NAPTEP has not created adverse effects on local governments or non-participating landowners.
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Committee discussion occurred and the following was noted:

- Provincial funding would not be required as the CTIP shifts the tax burden to other members of the community.
- Saanich has a riparian tax incentive program that is currently not advantageous for property owners.
- Enforcement of the CTIP would be done through the Land Trust of British Columbia and the landowner.
- Similar to the heritage tax exemption where the land approved for conservation would be deducted from the tax bill-permissive tax exemption.
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The Committee thanked the speaker for the presentation.

ENVIRONMENTAL BILL OF RIGHTS

The Chair updated the Committee with the motion that the Committee passed at the September 27, 2016 ENA meeting on the Environmental Bill of Rights. The Motion went before Council and Council referred the motion to Strategic Planning for consideration. Council expressed thanks to the excellent work ENA members did towards supporting Saanich’s fulfilment in producing an Environmental Bill of Rights.

TRANS-PACIFIC PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

The Chair gave the Committee an update on the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPP), and reported that Council has forwarded a letter on behalf of the Municipality of Saanich stating opposition to the TPP.

STORMWATER

The Chair asked the CAO if stormwater management could be included with the Strategic Plan discussions.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

NEXT MEETING

Next meeting is scheduled for November 22, 2017.

Councillor Murdock, Chair

I hereby certify these Minutes are accurate.

Committee Secretary