

MINUTES
ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL AREAS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Held at Saanich Municipal Hall, Committee Room No. 2
January 24, 2017 at 5:15 p.m.

Present: Councillor Leif Wergeland (Chair), Harry Drage, Hal Gibbard, Kevin Brown, Mary Haig-Brown, Roberta Hesselgrave, Al-Nashir Charania

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

Regrets: George Klima, Jude Coates

MINUTES

MOVED by K. Brown and Seconded by A. Charania: "That the Minutes of the Environment and Natural Areas Advisory Committee meeting held November 22, 2016."

CARRIED

INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair welcomed Committee members for the 2017 ENA Advisory Committee term.

2017 MEETING SCHEDULE

The ENA Advisory Committee will meet from 5:00-7:00 pm the second Thursday of the month, with no regular meetings schedule for July, August and December 2017.

CONSERVATION TAX CREDIT

The Manager of Environmental Services led a continuing discussion on the topic of conservation tax credits. The following highlights are noted:

- Conservation tax credits are good incentive to help encourage private landowners to protect environmentally sensitive areas on their land.
- If a conservation tax credit program is initiated it may be a provincial program.
- Currently the provincial government has allowed municipalities to allow conservation tax credits for riparian areas. Provincial legislation would be required to offer more comprehensive conservation tax credit opportunities for private landowners.
- Loss of development potential could be offset by the property tax break.
- Conservation tax credits are intended to support valuable environmental assets. Financial help to the individual to maintain environmental assets independent of land value.
- Financial implications to Saanich from a conservation tax credit program would potentially be minimal as Saanich has a municipal solicitor.
- BC Assessment Authority would determine the value of the covenanted land.
- If a conservation tax credit program was adopted would Saanich determine the land that would be appropriate to covenant or is it open to all land owners?
- Saanich has 300-500 properties with a natural state covenant attached. The majority of these properties were covenanted through the subdivision rezoning process.

- Ideally a Saanich conservation tax credit program would:
 - Enable Saanich to have flexibility to create the inclusion criteria
 - Enable Saanich to determine the funding mechanism
- Research the costs of EDPA implementation and associated costs to extrapolate what potential costs associated with a conservation tax credit program may be.
- Distinguish between the Conservation Tax Incentive Plan (CTIP) and the Natural Area Protection Tax Exemption Plan (NATEP) process. If the province goes forward with the CTIP, will the NATEP become obsolete?
- How many properties in Saanich that are not in the EDPA would be eligible for the CTIP?
- A list of the types of NATEPs and their associated financial implications should be compiled.
- Does local government have the capacity to undertake the work of a CTIP?

UPDATES

Gypsy Moth

The Manager of Environmental Services updated the Committee on the planned aerial spraying for the Gypsy moth. An application for Bear Hill Regional Park for an aerial spraying of BTK has been made. BTK is non-toxic to vertebrates and invertebrates. An open house is planned for assisting the public to understand the process and the benefits and risks of aerial BTK spraying. More information is available on the provincial web-site.

Tree Protection Bylaw

The Manager of Environmental Services updated the Committee on the Tree Protection Bylaw. Council requested that the Tree Protection Bylaw be considered by the ENA Committee. The Senior Manager Parks and the Acting Manager of Urban Forestry and Horticulture will be invited to speak further on the Tree Protection Bylaw.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 6:45 p.m.

NEXT MEETING

Next meeting is scheduled for February 28, 2017.

Councillor Wergeland, Chair

I hereby certify these Minutes are accurate.

Committee Secretary