

MINUTES
ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL AREAS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Held at Saanich Municipal Hall, Committee Room No. 2
April 19, 2017 at 5:15 p.m.

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

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

Regrets: Jude Coates

MINUTES

MOVED by M. Haig- Brown and Seconded by A. Charania: “That the Minutes of the Environment and Natural Areas Advisory Committee meeting held March 28, 2017 be adopted as amended.”

CARRIED

COMMUNITY ENERGY RETROFIT PROGRAM-DRAFT FINANCING PILOT

The Sustainability Manager updated the Committee on the draft Community Energy Retrofit Financing Pilot. The following highlights are noted:

- GHG Targets have been set as 33% reduction in Community GHG by 2020 and a 50% reduction in Municipal GHG by 2020. Privilege
- Detached residential homes in Saanich account for 73% of the GHG building emissions.
- Detached homes produce four times more GHG than multi-family and commercial developments combined.
- 60% of Saanich housing stock was built before 1980's.
- Barriers to energy retrofits include:
 - Current lack of financing
 - Relatively low cost of energy
 - Moderate climate
 - Expensive real estate
 - Restricted borrowing
 - Lack of awareness/complex application process
 - Competing demand for time and resources on the homeowner
 - Investment not adequately valued-ROI messaging
- Best practices for municipal financing options include:
 - On bill financing-loan with upfront costs paid and payments typically attached to utility bills.
 - Property assessed financing: repayment on property tax and the debt runs with the property not the individual.
- Key elements of a successful pilot:
 - Affordability: low interest rates, upfront financing, repeat eligibility, payback.
 - Accessibility: low barriers to entry, broad eligibility.
 - Stability/duration

- Simplicity: easy to administer and apply.
 - Flexibility: range of retrofit options, relaxed amortization schedule.
 - Quality
 - Management and monitoring: potential third party administration.
 - Marketing
- Additional benefits- reduced risk of oil spills, move to renewable energy, accessible to low income and first time home owners, improves existing housing stock and supports the business community.

Committee discussion occurred and the following highlights are noted:

- The social justice lens of using municipal funds to fund a program like this should be explored.
- Public benefits may outweigh the potential issues with wealthier home owners accessing the retrofit financing.
- As part of the eligibility criteria a pre-retrofit energy efficiency study should be required.
- Older homeowners may not live long enough to reap the benefits of the retrofit financing.
- Older homes may have additional environmental factors to consider that are costly to address-asbestos.
- Working with the real estate sector to educate the public.
- A grant program could also be considered.
- With the current low interest rates a financing program must have low interest rates to be attractive.

TREE PROTECTION BYLAW

The Senior Manager of Parks led a discussion on the Tree Protection Bylaw. The following highlights are noted:

- The Tree Protection Bylaw was revised in 2014.
- Since the recent revision of the bylaw, there has not been a significant amount of time to accumulate data.
- More time is needed to determine how the revised Tree Protection Bylaw is functioning.
- Tree height for some species to be offered protection should be considered. Some slow growing hardwood trees gain more in height than in diameter.
- The Committee requests that Parks provide regular updates on the Tree Protection Bylaw.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 6:45 p.m.

NEXT MEETING

Next meeting is scheduled for May 17, 2017.

Councillor Wergeland, Chair

I hereby certify these Minutes are accurate.

Committee Secretary