

MINUTES
ENVIRONMENTAL AND NATURAL AREAS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Held at Saanich Municipal Hall, Committee Room #2
February 20, 2019 at 6:00 p.m.

Present: Chair: Councillor Rebecca Mersereau

Members: Alfred Birch, Kevin Brown, Al-Nashir Charania, Kyle Empringham, George Klima, Ryan Senechal, and Carmel Thomson.

Staff: Thomas Munson, Sr. Environmental Planner; Ting Pan, Manager of Sustainability, Maggie Baynham, Sr. Sustainability Planner and Jeff Keys, Committee Clerk

Regrets: Emily Truman

MINUTES

MOVED by K. Brown and Seconded by R. Senechal, “That the minutes of the Environmental and Natural Areas Advisory Committee meeting held January 16, 2019, be adopted as amended.”

CARRIED

CHAIR’S REMARKS

The Chair gave a brief overview of the evening’s agenda and noted that Thomas Munson, Sr. Environmental Planner, was in attendance and would serve as staff liaison for the meeting.

HOME ENERGY RETROFIT MUNICIPAL FINANCING PILOT

The Manager of Sustainability, Ting Pan, introduced the item before providing the committee with a high-level overview of the February 5, 2019 memo titled, Home Energy Retrofit Municipal Financing Pilot before turning the floor over to the Sr. Sustainability Planner, Maggie Baynham. The Sr. Sustainability Planner provided the committee with a detailed presentation, the following was highlighted:

- Program is aimed at helping the District to meet the OCP target of a 33% reduction in GHG by 2020, as well as the newly endorsed targets as part of the updated Climate Plan, currently under development (100% Renewable Energy Community and 80% GHG reduction below 2007 levels by 2050)
- Affordability, and overcoming the capital cost is a barrier.
- Approximately 18%, or over 6,000 homeowners in Saanich are spending more than 30% of their income on shelter costs (2015 Census)
- Consumers are very sensitive to interest rates when considering taking a loan for a renovation or retrofit; to be truly enticing, interest rates should be set at less than 2%
- Homeowners typically move every 5 -10 years, making them reluctant to invest in energy efficiency upgrades in case it doesn’t pay off before they move. Using a

- property-assessed financing model, the debt runs with the property, and not the individual, overcoming that barrier of short-term home ownership.
- A municipal financing program allows us to impose fewer eligibility criteria than might be required for a traditional loan (which poses barriers for those that need it the most), streamline the process into the program design, while still maintaining a low level of risk as the financing is tied to the property, not the individual
 - The proposed Home Energy Retrofit Municipal Financing Pilot would:
 - Finance the replacement of oil heating systems with air source heat pumps;
 - Offer zero interest financing up to \$12,000 to be repaid over 10 years;
 - Prioritize lower-income households that may otherwise be unable to participate in rebate programs due to the large upfront capital cost; and
 - Streamline the contractor selection and financing processes to help homeowners overcome administrative and time barriers.
 - The program would utilize a Local Area Services bylaw for participating properties which would tie the financing to the property, and be recovered annually through a parcel tax.
 - Replacement of oil tanks with air source heat pumps would be considered by Council a benefit to the community for mitigating both environmental (oil spill) and climate risks. Accordingly the proposed financing model could be considered under the existing Community Charter.
 - The overarching program goals are:
 - Affordability: low/no interest and a good return on investment
 - Accessibility: low barriers to entry and effective outreach
 - Stability: sufficient program duration
 - Simplicity: easy to navigate and minimized administration for homeowner
 - Quality: contractor accreditation, minimize and address risks
 - Impact: best use of resources to maximize project goals
 - Program Design Concepts:
 - Two-year, 50 household pilot
 - Keep it simple. Limit the pilot to the replacement of oil heating with air-source heat pumps.
 - Offer funding up to \$12,000, to be repaid over 10 years
 - Make it irresistible: offer 0% interest financing
 - Prioritize lower-income households who may otherwise miss out
 - Create few hoops to jump through
 - Have a third party administer the program
 - Offset program costs with grant funding
 - Next steps:
 - Bring report with program concept to upcoming Council meeting, and recommend it be referred to an upcoming Council Strategic Planning Session
 - Seek direction from Council for staff to apply to FCM and REFBC for funding in preparation for the pilot to proceed, contingent on Council approval.

Committee discussion followed the presentation. The following comments were noted:

- There are an estimated 4600 oil tanks remaining throughout the District.

- Staff will utilize an RFP for a third party administrator.
- There is minimal risk to Saanich as defaults would be handled in the same manner as default property taxes.
- Program is currently limited to owner occupied properties.
- Applicants can also leverage funds (up to \$2700) from Efficiency BC. Grant would be applied against the loan.
- Switching from oil to air source heat pumps will result in a GHG reduction of approximately 7 tonnes per year, per household.
- BC Hydro is rated at 97% renewable, GHG levels would be at 2 tonnes per year, per household after the retrofit conversion.
- Program is limited to above ground tanks only.
- Potential unintended costs associated to the program i.e. liability associated to removal efforts, or the discovery of undetected/unreported spills.
- The program should be communicated and publicized from the perspective of why it is the right thing to do.
- Air source heat pumps are the only technology being considered.
- There is significant expertise and capacity within the sector (approximately 70 are being replaced per year in Saanich).
- Sector can accommodate growth.
- The permitting process for removal is embedded in the process.

MOTION

MOVED by K. Brown and Seconded by R. Senechal, “That the Environmental and Natural Areas Advisory Committee recommend that Council consider the development and launch of a Home Energy Retrofit Financing Pilot program as part of the upcoming strategic planning and budgeting process, and direct staff to take steps to secure financing and grant support through FCM’s Green Municipal Fund and the Real Estate Foundation of BC.”

CARRIED

ENAC 2019 COMMITTEE PRIORITIES

The Chair introduced the item and referenced their report, Summary of Committee Priorities (V2) dated February 20, 2019. The report would be used to help inform the committee’s work planning discussion regarding the committee’s priorities for 2019. The Chair opened the floor for discussion. The Chair opened the floor to committee discussion, following comments were noted:

- Member A. Birch circulated correspondence titled, Saanich – An Ecological and Sustainable Vision, dated March 16, 2016. The correspondence highlighted twelve components that could create an ecological and sustainable Saanich. The member inquired the following in regard to the impacts of climate on the ecosystem:
 - Where are the gaps?
 - What is staff currently addressing?
 - What are other groups doing?
 - How can we (committee) help to fill the gaps?
- It would be of benefit to the committee to receive regular and timely updates on previous committee items i.e. the strategic planning process. Beyond the initial

engagement the committee did not receive any additional follow-up or reporting on the status of the previous plan.

- A similar issue occurred with storm water management. The item was referred by the committee to the Strategic Planning process in 2016. There was no further follow-up or reporting on the matter.
- Council is currently undertaking a strategic plan update that will guide Council's work over the current term.
- Is the advisory committee considered a stakeholder?
- What linkages will exist between the plan and the mandate of the committee?
- The committee can provide informed perspectives on various District plans and Initiatives such as Local Area Plans and the now repealed EDPA.
- Regular progress updates, and check-ins on the Biodiversity Strategy would be welcomed. There is significant interest amongst the committee's membership with regard to the strategy's scope and community engagement process.
 - There will be early engagement opportunities. The item will come to the committee as part of the regular engagement process.
- Standing items to consider for future agendas could include:
 - Committee priorities such as Natural Areas and Urban Forests
 - Emerging Issues such as the Environmental Policy Framework
- The current strategic plan process is working well. Departmental work plans and Council priorities and municipal projects are identified and incorporated; however, not all projects i.e. emerging issues, are funded through this plan, but can be funded through Council's strategic initiatives fund.
- Council should look to develop a Municipal Natural Assets inventory.

Following the discussion the committee the following priorities (in no particular order) were identified:

- Water
- Urban forests
- GHG Reductions
- Natural areas
- EDPA (or future iterations)

The committee reached consensus that the following items would be considered on upcoming agendas and are tentatively scheduled as follows:

- March 20 – Status Update: Urban Forrest Policy, and Environmental Policy Framework.
- April 17 – Natural areas
- May 15 – Storm water management

TREATED AGRICULTURAL POST DISCUSSION

The committee furthered their discussions on the January 16, 2019 presentation by A. Galambos regarding the environmental and health impacts from the sale of unlabelled Chromated Copper Arsenate (CCA) treated agricultural posts. The following comments were noted:

- There are regulations, limitations and clear restrictions at the Federal Level.
- During a site-visit to a local hardware retailer unlabelled posts were observed.
- There are currently 7 types of treated materials being used by the industry.
- Agrees that any lumber containing CCA should be limited.

- A recent fact finding initiative by a member determined that their organization's large scale supplier could not immediately identify what treatment was used on their in-stock product.
 - Large scale suppliers include (but not limited to), SLEGG, Buckerfields, Integrity Sales and Distributors.
- There were no alternatives readily available.
- The organization has not ordered any additional products, and will utilize existing supply with the benefit of the appropriate personal protective equipment.
- CCA is categorized as a Pesticide by Canada's Pest Management Regulatory Agency.
- The committee could draft letters to the Federal Government and other agencies having oversight or regulatory authority.
- The committee would benefit from additional information with regard to additional information on other non-CCA treated products.

The committee will seek additional information and revisit the matter at a future meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

The Clerk provided the committee with a brief update on the 2019 ENAC awards. The following was noted:

- The awards are tentatively scheduled for June 10, 2019; however, the Committee Clerk is working with the Legislative Manager in attempt to include the awards in the June 17, 2019 Council Agenda.
- During the 2019 ENA Awards start-up meeting it was discussed that this year's correspondence would also include school trustees and area schools. The committee provided their concurrence for this expanded outreach effort.
- The Clerk polled the members in attendance for potential dates for the nomination review meeting. April 30, 2019 was identified as a potential date. The Clerk will confirm room availability and the Public Hearing scheduled for that date.
- The committee members reiterated the benefit of having the nomination packages in advance. The Clerk will advise the sustainability manager of this request.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:10PM

NEXT MEETING

Next meeting is scheduled for February 20, 2019

Councillor Mersereau, Chair

I hereby certify these Minutes are accurate.

Committee Secretary