

**MINUTES**  
**ENVIRONMENTAL AND NATURAL AREAS ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
Held at Saanich Municipal Hall, Committee Room #2  
**April 17, 2019 at 6:03 p.m.**

Present: Chair: Councillor Rebecca Mersereau

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

Staff: Adriane Pollard, Manager Environmental Services, Eva Riccius, Senior Manager, Parks, Andrew Burger, Manager, Park Operations and Jeff Keys, Committee Clerk

Regrets: George Klima, Ryan Senechal and Emily Truman

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**MINUTES**

**MOVED by A. Birch and Seconded by A. Charania “That the minutes of the Environmental and Natural Areas Advisory Committee meeting held March 20, 2019, be adopted as amended.”**

**CARRIED**

**INVASIVE SPECIES MANAGEMENT IN SAANICH**

Andrew Burger, Manager, Park Operations provided the committee with an overview of the Districts invasive species management practices for area parks and public lands. The following was highlighted:

- Parks manage invasive species on all public land.
- Staff work in conjunction with volunteers from Pulling Together in an effort to manage and eliminate invasive species.
- Saanich has developed a priority species list and contributes and coordinates with the invasive species management efforts of both the CRD and the Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development.
- Herbicide is used in a limited (selective) and responsible manner.
- Staff use a mixture that is only 1% Glyphosate, this is lower than recommended concentration.
- The District uses less than 2.5L of Herbicide to treat over 35 acres of public lands where invasive species are present.
- District staff do not broadcast spray, species are treated in accordance with industry best practices; as example, Knotweed treatment is localized with the herbicide being injected into the plant. Other usages of the herbicide is limited to close proximity hand spraying, or other appropriate manual applications.
- Areas where herbicides are used are signed accordingly.
- Invasive species treatment methods are science based.
- Staff continue to innovate and explore new products and treatment methods.
- Many species, such as Poison-hemlock are removed by hand.
- To help residents with their own management efforts staff have posted a number of tools and resources to [saanich.ca](http://saanich.ca)

- Disposal of invasive species remains a challenge.

Committee discussion ensued, the following was highlighted:

- Saanich is contributing partner with Capital Region Invasive Species Partnership (CRISP).
- Partnering municipalities use the forum to share best practices and coordinate efforts to ensure eradication efforts are applied consistently across the region.
- Saanich is considered the leader amongst the partner members and provides training to a number partner municipalities.
- The Pulling Together group have spent over 18,000 volunteer hours removing invasive species.
- A barrier to effective management remains the continued appearance/discovery of new species, and the associated trial and error process to determine effective strategies for emergent species where none already exist.
- There is no provincial funding program for municipal invasive species operations.
- The Province sponsors CRISP, and has taken the lead on eradication efforts related to Shiny Geranium.
- In some instances there isn't much that can be done as the invasive species is too far spread for effective eradication/management efforts.

#### **CHAIR'S REMARKS**

The Chair provided a brief update of Council related initiatives, and highlighted the The Capital Regional District (CRD) Board's Foodlands Trust initiative and Association of Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities 2019 Convention (AVICC). The following was highlighted:

- The Capital Regional District (CRD) Board received the Regional Foodlands Access Program Feasibility Study.
- Recommendations to help address farmland access and increase local food production across the region.
- CRD to send letter to member municipalities in order to gauge interest in a Regional Foodlands Trust.
- Municipalities will be asked to assess their inventory of land in order to identify lands that could be made available.
- Some Saanich Councillor's travelled to Powell River for the AVICC 2019 Convention held April 12-14.
- AVICC provides member communities an opportunity to discuss and address issues of common and mutual interest.
- Recommendations arising are brought forward to Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) for consideration.
- AVICC endorsed a resolution declaring a Climate Emergency (Resolution 16).
- Resolutions recommending extending voting rights for local government elections to both permanent residents (Resolution 1) and youth aged 16 (Resolution 2) were endorsed.

#### **AN ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR SAANICH**

Adriane Pollard, Manager Environmental Services provided the committee members with a high-level overview of the Environmental Policy Framework for Saanich. Eva Riccius, Senior Manager Parks, was also on hand to speak to any questions pertaining to Saanich Parks and Natural Areas. The following was noted:

- Council provided direction and funding (\$250,000) for the development of an policy framework for environmental policies and programs, including:
  - Climate Adaptation
  - A Biodiversity Conservation Strategy
  - A Stewardship Program
  - Potential of a new Environmental Development Permit Area, using the Diamond Report.
- The Stewardship program would include incentives and resources (e.g. Riparian Tax Incentive), education and awareness (e.g. Outreach Events, Speaker Series) and opportunities and actions (e.g. Native Plant Salvage Program).
- The Climate Action Plan has 4 key areas of interaction between biodiversity and climate mitigation or adaptation to be addressed. The 4 key areas are:
  - The value of biodiversity and local ecosystems in mitigating climate change;
  - The contribution biodiversity and local ecosystems make to the resiliency of Saanich in adapting;
  - The costs (environmental, social and financial) of ecosystem/biodiversity destruction; and
  - The impacts of climate change on biodiversity.
- A Policy Gap Analysis will identify:
  - What goals have we set for ourselves?
  - What do we have in place to meet them?
  - What is missing?
  - How can the gaps be filled?
  - Is the picture complete for the future?
- The Biodiversity Strategy has a number of identified milestones, including:
  - Initiate – webpage, summary of examples of municipal biodiversity strategies, summary of biodiversity goals (international, national, provincial and local), set objectives through public engagement and a progress report to Council (2019).
  - Assess – data collation and identified gaps, design/implementation of a data collection program, potential for additional studies (e.g. natural asset valuation), preliminary document on state of biodiversity in Saanich, progress report to Council. (2021)
  - During the assessment phase staff will utilize citizen science to augment and inform the process.
  - Plan – identify conservation options (biodiversity), apply predictors (climate change, demographics and development), application of Green Infrastructure and Ecosystem Service elements, complete Biodiversity Conservation Strategy, present to Council (2022)
- The report to Council (targeted for 2022) will include:
  - The Natural Saanich environmental policy framework.
  - A potential Environmental Development Permit Area (EDPA) and other policies, bylaws, programs etc. to complete the framework
  - A Biodiversity Conservation Strategy (integrated with Climate Plan)
  - A Stewardship Program
  - A tangible action plan for Milestones 4 (Implement) and 5 (Monitor and Review)

- The framework will be developed through a multi-faceted team approach.
- The 4<sup>th</sup> addition of the Environmentally Significant Areas Atlas will be published soon. The 5<sup>th</sup> addition will be published after the initial data collection and citizen science has been compiled and synthesized.
- The next steps, to be undertaken over the next 6 months, will consist of:
  - Initiating the policy gap analysis
  - Preparation of the website and background documents for the public
  - Preparation of the contracts for the consultants
  - Assembly of the Technical Advisory Team
  - Initiating public engagement efforts to set objectives
  - Increase stewardship opportunities

Committee discussion ensued, the following was highlighted:

- District is discussing developing nation-to-nation protocols with indigenous community.
- This protocol will lay out what future engagement with First Nation governments will look like.
- The body of knowledge held by these communities is very important, particularly with regard to conservation.
- Council has allocated \$250,000 towards the start-up of the framework
- There will be regular budget check-ins throughout the process.
- There will be a request for a dedicated Geographic Information Systems staff person to support the development of the framework.
- A number of British Columbia municipalities have completed the first phase of their respective framework initiatives, others are currently working on phase 2.
- A number of models (local, national and international) are appropriate for Saanich's consideration, others are not.
- The inventory and value of ecosystem services and natural services should be considered and incorporated.
- The inventory assessment process is difficult to measure qualitatively; however, what is to be considered is subject to the identified needs (gap analysis) and objectives.
- The implementation of science based policy recommendations will be considered as part of Milestone 3. Education events, engagement and feedback will help inform and shape any outcomes.
- Educational institutions would be included in the data collection.
- Any proposed bylaws or policies are complimentary to stewardship.
- The stewardship program will embody positive habitat management.
- The scope of the stewardship program will be broad.

The Chair provided an opportunity for those members of the public seated in the gallery to ask questions of staff. In response to questions from the public (as identified below) the Manager of Environmental Services replied as follows:

A. Bickerton, W. Burnside

- The funding allocated to the framework's development is \$250,000.
- The Environmental Policy Framework, as presented, is not an EDPA
- An EDPA may or may not be recommended.
- Grants will be leveraged when and where possible.
- If components of the objectives are found to be too large in scope additional funding may be required.

Councillor Mersereau further noted:

- Council approved and allocated \$250,000.
- Any additional funding request would come before Council for consideration, at which time there would be an opportunity for public input.
- The noted check-ins will also be an opportunity for public input.

Patrick, Beach Drive

- Staff will give consideration to apps and other technologies to assist with the collection of citizen science and natural assets inventory.

A. Bull, Saanich Resident

- Milestone 1 will compile a broad cross-section of relevant background information and best practices.
- Experts will help translate citizen input and comments to inform objectives.
- Public engagement will be used in Phase I to determine study objectives, and how the public wants to be engaged.

L. Young, Saanich Resident

- Biodiversity cannot be looked at in isolation, all issues must be considered due to the potential for cumulative impact.
- Balancing multiple needs is central to the frameworks objectives.
- ALR lands already employ a number of restrictions, the most recent was the reduction in the maximum allowable house size. (this was a comment by the chair)

N. James, West Saanich Road

- Stewardship has multiple interpretations, and one size does not fit all.
- It is not without its challenges to find balance between the juxtaposition of private property/land rights and climate change.

J. Baron, Treetop Heights

- Per Council's direction the framework (as presented) is the only policy under development at this time.
- Consultants may recommend an EDPA as part of the suite of options for Council's consideration.
- A balanced engagement process that will include citizen science, and community perspectives will be utilized.
- The proposed process will take at least 3 years. Council may provide alternate direction, or change timelines at any point during the process.
- An EDPA may be requested at any time by Council.

Councillor Mersereau further noted:

- The policy objectives of the framework will be informed by community input.
- Meeting these objectives will require the review and consideration of all possible tools.
- Criteria for selecting the appropriate tools will include (but not limited to): cost, practicality and efficacy.
- Council will look at the options holistically before providing additional direction.

G. Tripp, Cordova Bay Rd.

- A good process is key to the development of good policy.
- Keeping the destination in mind will be vital to the policy development.
- Process will allow for the community to the framework going forward.

T. Lahey, Burnham Rd.

- The website will be accessible to Saanich residents.
- It will be a hub for all resources and information pertaining to the policy framework.

**UPDATES**

Treated Agricultural Posts:

- Further discussion was deferred as G. Klima was not in attendance.

Environmental Awards:

- The awards are scheduled for June 17, 2019.
- The nominations will be considered by committee on May 7, 2019 at 5:30 p.m.
- There were 14 nominations this year.
- The Clerk will send out notice advising members when their meeting packages will be ready for pickup.

Other items:

- Our Backyard circulation has decreased as a result of budgetary restrictions; however, staff will look at providing hard copies at Saanich libraries and recreation centres.

**NEW BUSINESS**

K. Brown brought forward the Peninsula and Agricultural Commissions 2018 Annual Report for the committee's information. A future discussion will be scheduled if required. An electronic version will be circulated to the committee.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 8:03 PM

**NEXT MEETING**

Next meeting is scheduled for May 15, 2019

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Councillor Mersereau, Chair

I hereby certify these Minutes are accurate.

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Committee Secretary