

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

Present: Chair: Councillor Rebecca Mersereau

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

Staff: Adriane Pollard, Manager of Environmental Services; Ting Pan, Manager of Sustainability and, Jeff Keays, Committee Clerk

Regrets: Kyle Empringham, Ryan Senechal, Emily Truman

MINUTES

MOVED by K. Brown and Seconded by A. Charania “That the minutes of the Environment and Natural Areas Advisory Committee meeting held May 15, 2019, be adopted as amended.”

Committee discussion ensued, the following was noted:

- Concern that the committee’s concerns regarding the Chair’s comments at the June 10th meeting of Council are not explicitly captured in the July 2, 2019 draft minutes.
- It was noted that there were inconsistencies between the Chair’s comments and the committee’s unanimous recommendation.
- It was felt that the committee’s views were not considered by Council, as they were not referenced or motivated by the Chair.
- The minutes should be amended to ensure the committee’s concerns are clearly noted.

As a point of clarification with regard to the notion that Council did not consider the Committee’s May 15, 2019 recommendation, the Clerk advised the following:

- The May 21, 2019 memo regarding the committee’s recommendation to Council was published to both the June 10, 2019 (Council) and the July 8, 2019 (Committee of the Whole) agendas, and forming part of the Environmental Policy Framework package.
- The memo is referenced in the minutes from both meetings.

AMENDMENT

MOVED by C. Thomson and Seconded by G. Klima “That the minutes of the Environment and Natural Areas Advisory Committee be amended to include the following points under Chair’s Remarks – Committee Discussion:

- It was noted that the Chair may have inconsistent views from the Committee; however, the view of the Committee should be presented.
- The Chair may present their views in a public meeting (i.e. Council), but the unanimous recommendation need also be presented.”

The Amendment was then PUT and CARRIED

The Main Motion, as Amended, was then PUT and CARRIED

CHAIR'S REMARKS

The Chair welcomed the members back after the summer break before providing several updates pertaining to committee related business. The following was noted:

- Member E. Truman has resigned their seat on the committee. The Chair thanked the member for their contribution and wished them well in their future endeavours.
- Sitting on the Mayor's Saanich Advisory Committee Working Group.
- The working group is reviewing the various aspects of the advisory committee structures including makeup of membership, mandates, expectations and the application and selection process.
- The working group will report back to Council in mid-October.
- Committee member feedback and comments with respect to personal experiences with ACs were invited by the Chair.
- Council received two appeals of their July 10, 2019 decision regarding the Environmental Policy Framework. Both appeals were sought on matters of procedure.
- Council considered each appeal independently; however, the decision of the July 8, 2019 meeting was upheld.

In response to a question from the committee the Chair noted the following:

- The short-term improvements to the Tree Protection Bylaw were approved at Council.
- Broader, sweeping changes will be brought forward in 2020 for Council's consideration.
- The updated bylaw could consider the real value of trees through a comprehensive appraisal process that considers a number factors when determining value.
- This lens would help to determine more accurate and appropriate replacement requirements/costs for trees removed with the benefit or a permit, or for those removed in contravention of the bylaw.
- Staff will report back to Council on the history of tree removal on rural property.

The Chair continued:

- Recently joined the National Climate Caucus, which is a national body comprised of Municipal Councillors from across Canada.
- The caucus holds bi-weekly conference calls to discuss a myriad of climate related topics.
- Caucus is currently reviewing each party's (Federal) environmental platforms in advance of the Federal Election
- The community fundraising target for King's Park has been set.
- Saanich Council will seek financial contributions from other local governments, community associations and organizations and residents to raise \$2.75 million of the purchase price
- Over \$15,000 was raised at the kick-off event.
- All donations will receive a tax receipt.

CLIMATE ACTION STATUS REPORT

The Manager of Sustainability provided the committee with a progress update on Saanich’s Climate Action Plan. The following highlights were noted.

- In 2007 Council endorsed the following 2050 climate targets:
 - A 100% renewable community.
 - An 80% reduction in GHG emissions below 2007 levels.
- In October 2018 the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) published a Special Report recommending global warming be limited to 1.5°C.
- To ensure this target global net emissions will need to decline by 45% (of 2010 levels) by 2030, and reach net zero by 2050.
- At their March 25, 2019 meeting Saanich Council declared a climate emergency.

The Manager of Sustainability referenced the report from the Director of Planning, Response to Saanich’s Climate Emergency – New 2030 Target, and dated, August 2019. The following was noted:

- On August 19, 2019 Council approved new climate targets that are aligned with the IPCC’s recommendations. The new targets are:
 - Achieving a 50% reduction of Community GHG emissions below 2007 levels by 2030.
 - Reaching net zero emissions before 2050 as a complement to the target of becoming a 100% Renewable Energy Community.
- Significant change is required to meet the 2030 target:
 - 1/3 of all vehicles be zero emissions;
 - 100% of oil tanks replaced with low-carbon systems;
 - 40% of homes and businesses retrofit their heating and hot water systems to high-efficiency, renewable energy systems.
- At their September 30, 2019 meeting Council will consider a suite of accelerated actions that will help achieve their new targets.
- The proposed actions were considered against the following criteria:
 - Impact on climate mitigation and adaptation
 - Window of opportunity for acceleration
 - Feasibility of an initiation/implementation timeline within the next 6 to 24 months
 - Potential to maximize synergies of mitigation and adaptation.

Council will consider the following actions:

Corporate Climate Actions	Community Climate Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Implement a climate friendly commuter program for Saanich employees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Accelerate personal transportation electrification
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Include a climate alignment scorecard in development application reports to Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Convert all oil heating to renewable heating systems by 2030 or sooner
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Incorporate carbon pricing into business case analysis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Enhance support for energy upgrades in existing buildings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop a corporate fleet strategy to reduce carbon emissions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Double the rate of planting trees to enhance urban forest
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Model a low-carbon diet through corporate catering 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Catalyze community actions

In addition to the proposed accelerated actions, Council will also consider:

- The establishment of a new Climate Action Reserve Fund;
- The launch of the Home Energy Retrofit Municipal Financing Pilot;
- Implementation of the Electrical Vehicle (EV) Infrastructure Requirements for New Developments;
- Supporting the creation of the Greater Victoria 2030 Resilient District (commercial building retrofits); and,
- Application to Natural Resources Canada for 20 new public charging stations.

Committee discussion ensued, the following was highlighted:

- The District has an estimate of the canopy coverage of the municipality; however, a detailed inventory (numbers, species) does not exist.
- Council would like to see this improved.
- The role of transit should be given greater consideration as it can deliver significant reductions in GHG's through nominal increases in ridership.
- Policies, programs, grants and volunteer opportunities should be better promoted.
- Using the video screen in the Hall's foyer and other facilities (i.e. community and recreation centres) would be a great start.
- The new targets and accelerated actions are great; however, more still needs to be done.
- More information, engagement, partners and resources will help to bring community together – discourse based on facts, not hyperbole – if we are to succeed.

The Manager of Sustainability noted:

- In 2010 Saanich became the first municipality to implement a Climate Action and Mitigation Plan.
- As of 2019 Saanich has achieved 83% of the 2010 targets.
- It is true, change can often appear incremental, slow or fraught with conflict; however, no persons working on the plan in 2010 could have imagined or foreseen the naturally evolving synergy growing between residents, stewards, First Nations, climate and environmental scientists and business community.

Committee discussion resumed:

- Staff endeavor to determine per unit cost/value (when and where possible) when developing policy, programs and incentives.
- It remains a challenge for staff to measure or model the financial implications of these policies/programs through an equity lens as there is very little consolidated, qualitative data currently available.
- The District of Saanich and the City of Victoria are the only municipalities in the CRD that have enacted comprehensive Climate Action Plans.

ENA AWARDS GUIDELINES & RECEPTION WRAP UP

Due to time constraints this item was deferred to the October Agenda

CRD ELK/BEAVER LAKE INITIATIVE

The Manager of Environmental Services, provided the committee with a status-update on the January 16, 2019 presentation by the CRD's Elk/Beaver Lake Project Coordinator, Jill Robinson. The following was highlighted:

- The Elk/Beaver Lake Initiative (EBLI) was created by the Capital Regional District (CRD) in 2016 to address a number of issues including: significant nutrient loading, cyanobacteria (a.k.a. blue-green algae, 'BGA'), invasive aquatic plants, and low levels of oxygen.
- The intended outcome of the EBLI is to reduce the frequency and toxicity of blue-green alga blooms in Elk and Beaver Lakes, restore/improve the fish habitat, manage weed growth, and ensure continued recreational use.
- After careful consideration, the CRD has commissioned the installation of a Space Cone (Side Stream Supersaturation Hypolimnetic Oxygenation System).
- The land based system will efficiently deliver, at low-cost, highly concentrated oxygen to the lake bed with minimum disruption to recreational users, wildlife and the natural environment. The system will facilitate the effective management of all of the identified issues except the invasive aquatic plants.
- The CRD is developing a management plan for the invasive aquatic plans.
- The CRD is hosting two workshops in late September and early October.
- Saanich's influence is more directly associated with the stewardship of the sub-watershed through policies and initiatives like stream and creek restoration, maintaining low-density housing through appropriate land-use policy.

UPDATES

The committee received the following reports for information:

- BC Government Action Plan: Policy Consultation Paper – District of Saanich's Formal Submission
- New Report: Environmental Law Centre, University of Victoria – Cleaning up CRD Waterways and Beaches

The Chair will extend an invitation to the Environmental Law Centre, University of Victoria to attend and present at a future meeting.

The noted that they would be interested in receiving updates on: potential risks to the coastal marine environment and specifically Saanich's various natural area interfaces; Panama Flats; and, P4N (Natural Area) designated Parks.

The meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

NEXT MEETING

Next meeting is scheduled for October 16, 2019

Councillor Mersereau, Chair

I hereby certify these Minutes are accurate.

Committee Secretary