

MINUTES
ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL AREAS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Held at Saanich Municipal Hall, Committee Room #2
November 20, 2019 at 6:04 p.m.

Present: Chair: Councillor Rebecca Mersereau

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

Staff: Adriane Pollard, Manager of Environmental Services; Lesley Hatch, Manager of Underground Services; Ben Bowker, Manager, Storm and Waste Water Systems; and, Jeff Keays, Committee Clerk

Regrets: Alfred Birch and Ryan Senechal

Guests: Erin Smith, University of Victoria, Environmental Law Centre, Amina Younas, University of Victoria, Environmental Law Centre

MINUTES

MOVED by K. Brown and Seconded by C. Thomson. “That the minutes of the Environment and Natural Areas Advisory Committee meeting held October 16, 2019, be adopted as circulated.”

CHAIR’S REMARKS

The Chair thanked both members and staff for their dedication and commitment over the past term. Councillor Mersereau noted that serving as Chair over the past term was an enjoyable experience. Mayor Haynes will be appointing committee Chairs at the December 2, 2019 meeting of Council.

CLEANING UP CRD WATERWAYS & BEACHES REPORT

Representatives from the Environmental Law Centre, University of Victoria provided the committee with a high level overview of their reports titled: *Cleaning up CRD Waterways and Beaches: Update of Reinventing Rainwater Management*, dated 2019; and, *Selected CRD Actions under Each University of Victoria Environmental Law Centre Recommendation*, and dated September 2019.

In addition to the verbal update, the committee also viewed a video, [Where it Falls – Reinventing Rainwater Management](#), featuring the friends of Mount Douglas Park Society and the discovery of pollution in Mt. Doug Creek.

The following was noted:

- The purpose of the presentation is to identify problems associated with storm-water pollution and provide an update on select CRD initiatives since the ELC’s 2010 report.
- Pollution discovered in Mt. Doug Creek area was attributed to a cross connection in the storm-water system.

- The District was involved in the cleanup and mitigated the potential of future contamination through the installation of rain gardens.
- Mismanagement of storm-water runoff can have a negative impact on marine life and human health.
- There has been a steady erosion of the salmon population, and PCBs have been discovered in Orcas.
- A trend towards low-impact housing will have an impact on management practices going forward.

The presenters provided a high-level overview of the Selected Actions as noted in the September 2019 Report. The following actions were highlighted:

- Update the CRD Model Storm Sewer and Watercourse Protection Bylaw to exempt currently accepted practices.
- Implement rainwater utility charge, use to finance drainage system, updated infrastructure and a commission.
- Fix and upgrade obsolete storm-water infrastructure.
- Create an overarching residential oil tank regulation.
- Create an integrated watershed management plan.
- Impose and strategically waive or reduce cost charges.

Committee discussion ensued, the following was highlighted:

- A full cost analysis would be required before we could state that any recommendation could be considered as revenue neutral.
- Province enacted legislation in 2012 that brought oil-tank regulations under municipal jurisdiction. Saanich Fire Service enforces the bylaw.
- The CRD developed an Integrated Watershed Management Plan.
- The CRD's Rainwater Commission works at a regional level.
- There is aggressive cooperation regionally towards source water control.

To provide members with updates on Saanich's related actions and initiatives, the Chair welcomed Lesley Hatch, Manager of Underground Services and Ben Bowker, Manager, Storm and Waste Water to the table.

The Manager of Underground services noted the following:

- The CRD has an integrated watershed management committee (official name is under consideration). Saanich is a participant.
- Staff working on Integrated Water Management Plan (IWMP)
- The IWMP has a mandate for cross-border initiatives.

Committee discussion resumed:

- A committee comprised of various community (watershed) organizations such as the GWI or the Colquitz, would provide an opportunity to communicate and inform staff of issues and initiatives in their local watersheds.
- Staff will return to committee with additional information on the draft IWMP later in the term.
- Local organizations can assist with flagging spills and reporting potential contamination.

Ben Bowker, Manager of Storm and Waste Water Management provided noted the following:

- Saanich works closely with the CRD to prioritize trouble areas in order to trace and identify the source.
- Cross-connections in the sewer system are a common problem; however, they are easy to identify by the presence of fecal matter as the sewer system is separated.
- The Liquid Waste Management Plan is the governing document for both storm and sanitary sewer planning and management.
- The CRD is monitoring for a wide range of contaminants. No need for this to be augmented at this time.
- Saanich staff in the field use “*qualified eyes*” (training, awareness etc.) to monitor roadways ditches and creeks for signs of contamination
- Overall, the number of spills have decreased; however, if there is a spill we are able to respond quickly.
- It is agreeable that the notion of monitoring quantity is equally important as quality.
- Roadside ditches, swales and rain-ditches are alternatives to catch basins.
- Catch basins are effective so long as they are regularly cleaned and maintained.
- Saanich has 13,000 catch basins, between 7000-8000 are cleaned annually.
- There are no inspection/maintenance protocols or policies for catch basins installed on private property (shopping malls).
- Marine quality monitoring involves multiple jurisdictions.
- Support from the Sr. levels of government is vital. It is imperative that we work together.
- Pleased to know that the Environmental Law Centre will be meeting with a number of local governments.

UPDATES

The committee received brief updates on the following items:

- 2019-2023 Draft Strategic Plan
- Environmental Policy Framework
- Provincial announcement on increased bottle deposits
- Kings Road Fundraising
- Advisory Committee Working Group Recommendations Adopted by Council

COMMITTEE ROUNDTABLE

The Chair invited committee discussion on the Amphibian Migration item that was brought forward by member C. Thomson.

Member C. Thomson provided the committee with a brief overview of the matter. The following was highlighted:

- The issues pertains to mitigating the road deaths of migrating amphibians.
- The matter stems from engineering’s summer works on Prospect Lake Rd.
- There were concerns that a previous study undertaken by Habitat Acquisition Trust with regard to areas of highly concentrated amphibian road deaths was not considered during the departments design phase.

- Community members advocated for the appropriate infrastructure to mitigate these deaths after the start of construction.

Councillor Mersereau, Chair

I hereby certify these Minutes are accurate.

Committee Secretary