

**MINUTES OF THE
ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL AREAS ADVISORY COMMITTEE**
Held at Saanich Municipal Hall, Council Chambers
September 16, 2020

Present: Chair: Councillor Rebecca Mersereau

Members: Kevin Brown, Jane Cameron, Al-Nashir Charania, Braedan Drouillard, George Klima, Karthik Narayan, Carmel Thomson and Anqian Wei.

Staff: Eva Riccius, Senior Manager Parks; Rebecca Newlove, Manager of Sustainability; Adriane Pollard, Manager of Environmental Services; and Lynn Merry, Senior Committee Clerk

Regrets: Nicholas Loughton, Ryan Senechal

IN CAMERA MOTION:

MOVED by K. Brown and Seconded by C. Thomson: “That the meeting be closed in accordance with the *Community Charter*, Part 4, Division 3, Section 90 (1) (b) as the matter relates to personal information about an identifiable individual who is being considered for a District award or honour (Saanich Environmental Award) or who has offered to provide a gift to the District on condition of anonymity.”

CARRIED

The meeting adjourned at 5:15 p.m.

The meeting reconvened at 6:04 p.m.

AGENDA

MOVED by G. Klima and Seconded by K. Brown: “That the agenda be amended to add an item – Chair’s Report.”

CARRIED

CHAIR’S REPORT

- Municipal operations are now back to normal and the Municipal Hall open to the public.
- Council and committee meetings have resumed.
- Council approved a status quo budget for 2020 which may have implications on work on the Climate Plan.
- Because of the decreased number of committee meetings due to COVID, Council made a motion to ask committee members if they wished to extend their appointments until December 31, 2021.

- Councillor Mersereau has been appointed as the Council Liaison to the Resilient Saanich Technical Committee; she will be tasked with communicating to the committee and to Council.
- Of the recommendations made at the February 19, 2020 ENA meeting, only the final recommendation to update the Investment Policy needs to be actioned; the Municipal Finance Authority has proceeded with the Bond Fund and the product is available to municipalities.
- Councillor Mersereau will prepare correspondence on the recommendation to be brought to Council in the Fall.

UPDATE: PARKS NATURAL INTELLIGENCE SUMMER CAMPAIGN

The Senior Manager, Parks presented the Parks Natural Intelligence – Foundations of Stewardship (PowerPoint on file) and answered questions from the committee as follows:

- Data shows that residents are spending on average 1-2 hours outside every day walking, running, gardening, and hiking; most are women between 35-65 years of age.
- Young people are not being reached.
- Respondents stated that nature to them means life, happiness, joy, peace, calming, health, making connections and finding happiness.
- CTV Vancouver Island aired the Natural Saanich segment and included links to the Saanich webpages.
- Further data will be provided on the reach of the advertising.
- Metrics will continue to frame projects around Natural Intelligence and focus on what people can do; partnerships will be sought with like-minded organizations such as schools.
- The committee is encouraged to look for interesting projects and feed ideas to staff.
- The municipality is open to the development of more community gardens; interested groups are encouraged to discuss with staff.
- Parking near some neighbourhood parks continues to be a challenge but parks were not designed to allow for parking.
- There may be the potential for more tree planting near Wilkinson Road and Quick's Bottom Park.
- A First Nations story teller and historian was engaged and staff were educated on how the land was viewed historically and the resources that were used.
- Discussion took place on how to get the stories out to the broader public and reaching out to First Nations to see if they are interested in working on Saanich projects.

The committee made the following comments:

- The media clips were informative; more clips would be appreciated.
- There are long wait lists for spots at community gardens.
- Parks could be more accessible with more parking.
- There may be opportunities to engage young people and encourage them to integrate with nature.
- First Nations could be brought in as partners.

The Chair made the following comments:

- A new position of Agriculture and Food Security Planner has been created and could address renewed interest in community gardens.
- Council is interested in developing more meaningful relationships with First Nations.
- Local Area Planning processes are underway and there has been some engagement and discussions on better incorporating and including First Nations in those processes.

The Senior Manager, Parks exited the meeting at 7:02 p.m.

EV CHARGING USER FEES & E-MOBILITY STRATEGY

The Manager of Sustainability presented the Electric Mobility Strategy (PowerPoint on file) and answered questions from the committee as follows:

- There has been an increase in EV sales in the past years with 1,200 EVs in Saanich as of 2019.
- The E-Mobility Action Plan includes 38 actions in five focus areas: EVs, E-bikes and other e-mobility devices, home and workplace charging, public charging network and District leadership.
- E-bikes and other e-mobility devices present opportunities to reach/exceed Active Transportation Plan targets.
- EV Charging Infrastructure require 1 on-site parking space per unit to be energized in single-family, duplex or townhouse development; require all off-street parking spaces to be energized in multi-family development and require 0-5% of parking spaces to be energized in institutional, commercial and industrial.
- Saanich currently has 12 public level 2 EV charging stations located at key facilities with 20 new public level 2 charging stations are proposed.
- A user fee of \$1 per hour has been approved by Council; this is consistent with neighbouring municipalities.
- Revenue will be used to offset costs of operating the charging stations and for climate action initiatives.
- A review will take place after one year.
- Currently, there is a three hour time limit in place but it is not enforced; it is proposed that the time limit remain the same but enforced with a \$30 fine.
- A NRCan grant application has been submitted for 24 Level 2 EV Charging stations for fleet.
- Staff are looking at Federal and Provincial grants.
- There is a need for fast-charging stations throughout the CRD.
- It is noted that Gas Tax money is currently used for road infrastructure improvements and it may no longer be available once the move to EV takes place.

The committee made the following comments:

- Marketing is important in that revenue can help to offset capital costs.
- Policy and strategy has to include safety considerations.
- Hybrid vehicles should be considered in the data as well.

- There may be a need for legislative changes for insurance for E-Bikes.

The Manager of Sustainability exited the meeting at 7:39 p.m.

BOWKER CREEK DAYLIGHTING FEASIBILITY STUDY

The Manager of Environmental Services presented the Bowker Creek Daylighting Feasibility Study (PowerPoint on file) and answered questions from the committee as follows:

- 87% of the Bowker Creek watershed is now developed.
- 2.5 kms of the 8 km creek is above ground.
- If an opportunity comes along through redevelopment, daylighting could be considered.
- Next steps – the study will be considered by Council, and if adopted, staff would work towards achieving the plan when opportunities arise; greenways would be updated based on the plan; and the Bowker Creek Blueprint would be updated with new information.
- 5-6 kms of the creek is left to be daylighted.

The committee made the following comments:

- Broader and bolder statements are needed for daylighting.

The Chair made the following comment:

- The Kings Park fundraising deadline has been extended to April 2021 in light of COVID-19.

MOVED by C. Thomson and Seconded by G. Klima: “That the Environment and Natural Areas Advisory Committee recommend that Council adopt the Bowker Creek Daylighting Feasibility Study.”

CARRIED

UPDATE: RESILIENT SAANICH TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

The Manager of Environmental Services stated:

- Residents can sign up for E Bulletins.
- The committee has started the work and new fact sheets will be posted this week on the website.
- There will be more opportunities for public engagement.
- The committee has been tasked with drafting goals and objectives which will be made available to the public.

ADJOURNMENT

MOVED by C. Thomson and Seconded by G. Klima: “That the meeting adjourn at 8:10 p.m.”

CARRIED

Councillor Mersereau, Chair

I hereby certify these Minutes are accurate.

Committee Secretary