

MINUTES
ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL AREAS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Held at Saanich Municipal Hall, Council Chambers
November 25, 2020 at 6:30 p.m.

Present: Chair: Councillor Rebecca Mersereau

Members: Via Teleconference:
Kevin Brown, Jane Cameron, Al-Nashir Charania, George Klima,
Karthik Narayan, and Ryan Senechal.

Staff: Adriane Pollard, Manager of Environmental Services; and Megan
MacDonald, Committee Clerk.

Guests: Jake Enns, John Roe, UVic Environmental Law Centre: and Frances
Ankenman, UVic Environmental Law Centre.

Regrets: Nicholas Loughton, Carmel Thomson, Angian Wei and Braedan
Drouillard.

MINUTES

MOVED by K. Brown and Seconded by K. Narayan. “That the minutes of the Environment and Natural Areas Advisory Committee meeting held October 21, 2020, be adopted as circulated.”

CARRIED

CHAIR’S REMARKS

The Mayor recently shuffled the Chair for some advisory committees. Councillor Mersereau will continue to be the chair of the Environment and Natural Areas Advisory Committee until further notice. There are no committee meetings in December.

PRESENTATION – PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN ENVIRONMENTAL LEADERSHIP

Jake Enns presented on ways to engage the public in environmental leadership, the following was noted:

- To be human is to be amazing, we can enjoy the world with all senses. Climate action requires collaboration. Engagement is more than a word. Every viewpoint is essential for longevity and impact in what we do.
- Decisions are made on beliefs and values, not reason. Common ground encompasses all of what is important. Humans need to find common ground to overcome issues together.
- The capacity of reason does not make us reasonable. Evolution did not prioritize logic or reason, evolution prioritized survival and security.
- The goal is to bring everyone together for meaningful climate action. Ways to develop the capacity for meaningful conversations include shared positive experiences, learning together, laughter, sharing of meals, working together and solving conflicts.

- Many are not equipped with communication skills to talk about what is important to them.
- If Saanich was to create a community dome for people to learn in, communicate, and foster a deeper connection, it would be beneficial to the community. The dome could be a hands on learning centre where residents could come together to move ahead with climate action.

In response to questions from the committee, the following was noted:

- The dome could be located in parks or community areas, it could be mobile to move to different areas. It could be an area of refuge that is safe, sustainable and independent.
- The dome would encourage people to come together and move forward to bring positive changes and new ideas.
- The Greater Victoria Place Making Network would likely be receptive to this project, and there may also be grants available through Saanich.
- Climate Change anxiety is becoming an issue for many. It helps to bring awareness of the solutions and positive changes that are being applied such as stream restorations and restoring of ocean habitats.

J. Enns exited the meeting at 7:05 p.m.

PRESENTATION – RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE OPTIMAL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ELK/BEAVER LAKE WATERSHED MANAGEMENT PLAN

Frances Ankenman, Articled Student of UVic Environmental Law Centre (ELC) and John Roe, Executive Director of Veins of Life Watershed Society (VOLWS), presented on ways to engage the public in environmental leadership, the following was noted:

- Elk/Beaver Lake water quality has drastically deteriorated in quality, in large part due to a surplus of nutrients washing into the lake from farms and residential properties in the surrounding area. This contributes to regular toxic algae blooms.
- The Capital Regional District (CRD) Parks Committee approved the Elk/Beaver Lake Watershed Management Plan (ELWMP) in September 2020.
- The ELC has prepared a detailed report on behalf of the VOLWS, to put forward a number of recommendations to support the implementation of the draft management plan in a cost effective, priority based manner. The ELC report can be found at: <https://elc.uvic.ca/publications/elk-beaver-watershed-management/>
- The primary recommendations of the ELC report include:
 - Consider Additional Strategies to Reduce Residential Sources of Phosphorus.
 - Consider Additional Strategies to Reduce Agricultural Sources of Phosphorus.
 - Integrate Principles of Community-Based Watershed Management
 - Manage Internal and External Nutrient Sources Together, and Make Source Control a Priority
 - Enhance Cyanobacterial Monitoring and Warning Signage
 - Create Opportunities for Indigenous Co-Management and Co-Governance
 - Increase Level of Detail in Draft Plan Proposed Actions
- The ELC report draws upon diverse sources of expertise, which provides staff across local government and other management plan partners with a valuable source of information and ideas that can be used to guide the implementation of the ELWMP.

In response to questions from members of the committee, the following was noted:

- The ELWMP details moving through each action item and identifies areas of responsibility.
- The ELC report details specific areas where the District of Saanich could become more involved, including promotion of bylaw awareness.
- There was an intergovernmental working group which has talked about what the problems were and how to address the excess nutrients.
- The CRD is currently working on securing funding of an aeration system, and implementing the ELWMP. Saanich has a role in the ELWMP as we have jurisdiction over land use in the watershed, and the ability to engage the public.
- Now that the ELWMP has been endorsed by the CRD, Saanich staff will prepare a report for Council consideration to endorse the plan.
- Saanich has an established First Nations group who may be able to contribute feedback on the ELWMP. It would be beneficial for Saanich and CRD to consult with interested First Nations parties to see how they can take on a greater role in implementing the ELWMP.
- The ELC report recommendation of a community roundtable would be beneficial to create a formal structure to bring stakeholder groups together.

MOVED by G. Klima and Seconded by R. Senechal. “That the Environment and Natural Areas Advisory Committee recommend that council direct staff to include consideration of the Environmental Law Centre report titled Recommendations for Optimal Implementation of the Elk/Beaver Lake Watershed Management Plan when the Elk/Beaver Lake Watershed Management Plan is considered by Saanich for implementation.”

CARRIED

URBAN FORESTRY STRATEGY: TRACKING & MONITORING TREES

Motion from the meeting of November 25, 2020:

“That the Environment and Natural Areas Advisory Committee recommend that Council approve resource requests for the 2021 budget for updating the Urban Forestry Strategy and for prioritizing updated information systems and public mapping of tree assets to monitor the status of the urban forest.”

Councillor Mersereau advised that there was recently a report to Saanich Council to include resource requests for tracking and monitoring the urban forest. There is still value in the committee recommending support of these items as Council deliberates the 2021 budget. During discussion with the committee, the following was noted:

- Saanich is collaborating with the CRD tree mapping initiative to maximize value in the CRD study and to avoid duplication where possible. Saanich will have additional specific analysis of the canopy cover components with the resource requests from Parks.
- It would be beneficial to fully understand the details of the resource request prior to recommending approval.

MOVED by K. Brown and Seconded by K. Narayan: “That the previous motion be tabled until the January 2021 meeting, when more information on coordination between Saanich Parks and CRD can be provided.

CARRIED

ROUNDTABLE UPDATE

Adriane Pollard, Manager of Environmental Services gave an update on the following items:

- The Resilient Saanich process is gearing up for the public engagement phase. The Resilient Saanich Technical Committee is finalizing high level goals and objectives for the environmental policy framework that staff will facilitate public engagement on.
- The Saanich Environmental Atlas has now been published on GIS. A PDF has been created and is available publicly. New layers include the Coastal Douglas Fir Terrestrial Ecosystem and Saanich Ecosystem Mapping.
- The E-Mobility Strategy was approved at Council recently.

ADJOURNMENT

MOVED by K. Brown and Seconded by A. Charania: “That the meeting adjourn at 8:25 p.m.”

CARRIED

Councillor Mersereau, Chair

I hereby certify these Minutes are accurate.

Committee Secretary