

MINUTES
ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL AREAS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Held at Saanich Municipal Hall, Council Chambers
February 17, 2021 at 6:00 pm

Present: Councillor Rebecca Mersereau (Chair), Kevin Brown (via telephone), Anqian Wei (via telephone), Karthik Narayan (via telephone), Carmel Thomson (via telephone), Jennifer Grant (via telephone), Ryan Senechal (via telephone), George Klima (via telephone), Al-Nashir Charania (via telephone), Braedan Drouillard (via telephone) Tiffany Joseph (6:08, via telephone).

Guest: Ann Topp.

Staff: Adriane Pollard, Manager of Environmental Services; Nathalie Dechaine, Manager of Community Development/Business Systems; Megan MacDonald, Committee Clerk.

MINUTES

MOVED by K. Brown and Seconded by A. Charania: "That the Minutes of the Environment and Natural Areas Advisory Committee meeting held January 20, 2021, be adopted as circulated."

CARRIED

CHAIR'S REMARKS

The Chair stated that the topics identified as being of interest to members of the committee will be scheduled on upcoming agendas.

INTRODUCTION OF NEW MEMBER (TIFFANY JOSEPH)

Tiffany Joseph was appointed by Council to the Environment and Natural Areas Advisory Committee in January.

NEW FIELD GUIDE: PLANTS & ANIMALS IN SAANICH PARKS

The Manager of Community Development/Business Systems announced the launch of the Saanich Field Guide, which details some of the plants and animals that are found in Saanich Parks. The following was noted:

- The field guide will help users identify plants and animals in the region based on visual characteristics.
- The guide was launched to increase education, support restoration efforts and recognize park ambassadors, each of whom received a guide.
- There may be companion pieces in the future, which could include suggested activities to learn more about the environment.
- Future plans include translating the guide to SENĆOŦEN and lək'wəŋən.

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

- It is important to document and monitor the species in parks. There is technology and mobile apps that could be used, such as iNaturalist. Park ambassadors will be learning how to use iNaturalist in the near future.

- The field guide will be shared with local schools and stakeholder groups.

 N. Dechaine exited the meeting at 6:36 p.m.

THE 1972 SAANICH GREENBELT PROPOSAL

Ann Topp presented information on the Saanich Greenbelt Proposal, the following was noted:

- The 50 year anniversary of the study is approaching.
- There has been great success with the acquisition of land and implementation of the plan. Some areas where progress was made include along Colquitz River, within the Swan Lake area and the Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary.
- The progress made towards the greenbelt by way of environmental acquisitions and protections should be recognized.

Members of the committee noted the following:

- There is the potential to partner with the WSÁNEĆ Leadership Council Lands Trust for future land acquisitions.
- The Greenbelt Proposal is a great example of what can be achieved over time if you have a plan and start working towards the goal. Perseverance pays off.
- The aim of acknowledging the 50 year anniversary of the study would be to inform people about the progress that has been made, and inspire future efforts to restore and preserve diverse ecosystems.
- The greenbelt study is inspirational as it shows what can be accomplished over time.
- There are current ongoing initiatives that have been influenced and inspired by the greenbelt study, such as the Capital Regional District (CRD) Bowker Creek Blueprint, which is a 100 year plan to restore Bowker Creek.
- The study is a testament to the legacy of Saanich environmental leadership.
- Information boards or a news release on the Saanich website to the community would be suitable.

MOVED by K. Brown and Seconded by A. Charania: “That the Environment and Natural Areas Advisory Committee recommends that in 2022 Council acknowledges the 50th anniversary of the 1972 Saanich Greenbelt Proposal, to recognize successes in its implementation and to highlight the need for continued environmental leadership.”

CARRIED

 A. Topp exited the meeting at 7:28 p.m.

ROUNDTABLE UPDATES

The following updates were shared with the committee:

- The engagement for Resilient Saanich Draft Goals and Objectives is about half way complete. There has been a virtual open house, mail outs, posters, and pamphlets available at the Saanich Recreation Centers. The materials have been translated, and the targeted stakeholder and partner groups that are listed in the Committee Terms of Reference have been contacted.
- The general public feedback surveys have been successful so far. The ongoing pandemic is effecting the ability to have open houses and information booths.

- The equity and inclusion questions on the survey are valuable. It would be beneficial if the responses could be used to determine the type of response by set of people.
- The CRD has recently initiated a Transportation Committee to develop regional transportation priorities. Saanich staff are working with BC Transit to explore options for a multi modal transportation hub in Saanich.
- Panama Flats Concept Plan and the Climate Plan Report Card will be going to Council next week. Committee members are encouraged to share their input with Council.
- The CRD website on Expansion of Hartland Landfill includes information that the CRD will be presenting to local municipal Councils. Members of the committee are interested in any information or presentation that may be available.
- There is a webinar hosted by The University of Victoria, titled Living Lands and Indigenous Climate Solutions - Beyond Territorial Acknowledgements on February 24, 2021 from 12:00 p.m. – 1:30 p.m, which may be of interest to committee members.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:02 p.m.

NEXT MEETING

Next meeting is Wednesday March 17, 2021.

Councillor Mersereau, Chair

I hereby certify these Minutes are accurate.

Committee Secretary