

MINUTES
ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL AREAS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Held virtually via Microsoft Teams
September 28, 2021 at 6:03pm

Present: Councillor Rebecca Mersereau (Chair), Kevin Brown, Al-Nashir Charania, Braedan Drouillard, Jennifer Grant, George Klima, Karthik Narayan, and Ryan Senechal.

Guests: Adam Corneil, Founder and CEO of Unbuilders and Heritage Lumber; Kelly Loch and Andrea McDonald of Stewardship Center of British Columbia.

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

Regrets: Tiffany Joseph and Anqian Wei.

MINUTES

MOVED by A. Charania and Seconded by J. Grant: “That the Minutes of the Environment and Natural Areas Advisory Committee meeting held June 16, 2021, be adopted as amended.”

CHAIR’S REMARKS

The Chair discussed the presentation that the committee received at the June meeting regarding equity and the urban forest. It was noted that the opportunity exists for the committee to make a motion related to the Saanich Urban Forestry Strategy.

MOVED by K. Narayan and Seconded by R. Senechal: “That the Environment and Natural Areas Advisory Committee recommend that Council direct staff, consultants, and the Resilient Saanich Technical Committee to implement an intersectionality lens in the update of the Urban Forestry Strategy, the development of the Biodiversity Strategy, and the Environmental Policy Framework.

CARRIED

REDUCING SOLID WASTE THROUGH BUILDING DECONSTRUCTION

Adam Corneil presented information about Unbuilders and Heritage Lumber, specializing in deconstruction and recycling of reclaimed wood. The following was noted:

- Unbuilders was founded in Vancouver, inspiration came from a love for heritage buildings and watching useful products go to landfill.
- Nationally, there is approximately 1.5 million tonnes of lumber waste, most of which is old growth lumber. There are currently groups working to stop the logging of old growth lumber, however society allows demolition of existing buildings, which includes sending existing premium old growth lumber material to the landfill.
- Vancouver has made some progress with bylaws to encourage “green” demolition,

- however the policies in place do not mandate true deconstruction.
- Reusing old growth lumber is an homage to the past, making sure we salvage and reuse what has already been cut rather than sending it to the landfill.
 - Reclaimed wood is the greenest building material, old growth lumber is stronger.
 - History can be preserved through salvaging materials.
 - Materials are provided to Habitat for Humanity, the owners receive a tax receipt for the charitable donation, and the materials are sold to help supply affordable housing.
 - Barriers to reusing existing materials include cost, time, material outlets and policy. Unbuilders is working to come up with creative ways to combat these barriers.
 - There are numerous social and environmental benefits to deconstruction, including reducing waste, contributions to affordable housing and preserving history.
 - Deconstruction could provide economic benefits as well, with jobs being created directly and indirectly in areas such as material sales, recycling and transport.
 - Policy changes which favor deconstruction and house moving could help encourage deconstruction over demolition. Incentivizing owners would be beneficial.

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

- Policies need to change in order for deconstruction and recycling materials to become the standard procedure, as deconstruction is more expensive up front.
- Charitable donations receipts can provide financial benefits to deconstruction.
- Requiring deconstruction may cause an increase in costs. It would be beneficial to incentivize developers rather than impose additional costs. Prioritizing permits for those who choose to deconstruct rather than demolish could prove beneficial.
- Some homes in the region as recent as the 1980s were built with old growth lumber.

GREEN SHORES PROGRAM

Andrea McDonald and Kelly Loch of the Stewardship Centre for British Columbia (SCBC) presented on the Green Shores Program. The following was noted:

- Green Shores has the broad objective of increasing capacity to address impacts of climate change and sea-level rise on shoreline structure and ecology, benefiting shorelines physical properties, wildlife communities and human well-being.
- The vision of SCBC is to help British Columbians understand, enjoy and sustain healthy ecosystems through stewardship. Green Shores programs are offered in collaboration with many partner groups and organizations.
- Green Shores is a nature based approach to help communities to become more resilient and better able to the effects of climate change.
- This is a framework for designing and applying nature based approaches that are sustainable to restore and enhance the shores on coastal and lake settings.
- The guiding principles are: to preserve reserve the integrity and connectivity of formal processes, maintain and enhance habitat diversity and function, minimize and reduce pollutants, and to reduce and reverse impacts to the shoreline system. These processes highlight trying to maintain natural shoreline ecosystems.
- Green Shores is a multifaceted approach which can help in any situation, from single family homes to large scale developments and parks.
- There are many certified sites across Vancouver Island and the Lower Mainland.
- The Stewardship Centre for BC aims to increase the number of certified sites to help municipalities adapt to climate change and protect vulnerable and valuable shorelines.
- Training is available to groups, as well as a Green Shores Local Government working group, which Saanich staff could participate in. Many Resources are available for municipalities and residents who participate in the working group.

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

- Some Saanich staff have received Green Shore Certification of level one and two.
- The Green Shores for Salmon partnership is being monitored closely and data will be useful to quantify the benefits of implementing the green shore methodology.
- The Gorge Waterway is home to at least one Green Shores for Salmon project which is currently underway, which will be a visible site for the public to gain interest at.

ROUNDTABLE UPDATES

A roundtable discussion among members took place. The following was noted:

- The Environment Awards will be presented at Council on October 25, 2021.
- Progress is being made towards the implementation fo the Elk Lake/Beaver Lake implementation plan, additional resources will be needed in the next budget cycle.
- The RSTC is considering the creation of a Request for Proposal to help create a State of Biodiversity Report, as well as a Biodiversity Strategy.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:12 p.m.

NEXT MEETING

Next meeting is Wednesday October 20, 2021.

Councillor Mersereau, Chair

I hereby certify these Minutes are accurate.

Committee Secretary