

MINUTES
ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL AREAS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Held via MS Teams

January 18, 2023, 6:03 pm

Present: Councillor Karen Harper (Chair), Kaden Callenberg, Kurban Ali Keshvani, Spencer Gillis, Braedan Drouillard

Staff: Rick Hatch, Supervisor of Natural Areas, Parks; Eva Riccius, Senior Manager, Parks; Alix Link, Manager of Urban Forestry and Nature Area, Parks; Kirsten Brazier, Committee Clerk and Megan MacDonald, Senior Committee Clerk.

Regrets: Jennifer Grant; Sarah Anderson; Ryan Senechal; Katie Turner, Parks Stewardship Coordinator

ADOPTION OF MINUTES

MOVED by K. Ali Keshvani and Seconded by S. Gills “That the Minutes of the Special Environment and Natural Areas Advisory Committee meeting held May 19, 2022, and that the Minutes of the Environment and Natural Areas Advisory Committee meeting held June 15, 2022, be adopted as circulated.”

CARRIED

CHAIRS REMARKS

The Chair provided a welcome back to the committee, and thanked to members for serving until the end of March.

- Members were invited to the Salmon Throw at PLKOS this past weekend.
- Cuthbert Park tour is taking place in March. Please consider attending.
- Council has recently heard a presentation on the Resilient Saanich Technical Committee. Staff will come back to the committee for specific input, pending the completions of the consultant’s work.
- Council is considering how to support retrofitting apartment buildings and warehouses off natural gas and onto electric.

CUTHBERT HOLMES RESTORATION PROJECT

The Supervisor of Natural Areas, Rick Hatch, gave a presentation on the Cuthbert Holmes Restoration Project. Highlights include:

- This is the team’s second year working on this project. Staff are looking forward to hosting the tour.
- Seasonal flooding was causing issues on the trail.
- Funding was received from Ministry of Transportation & Infrastructure as part of the highway project. Other funds have been supplied from the Cuthbert Holmes management plan.
- 600 trees have been planted along with many other plants. Many invasive Hawthorn trees have been removed.
- Staff have been removing invasives along with the Pulling Together program.

- A large flood occurred in November 2021. This area typically floods every year.
- Staff completed the removal of invasive vegetation and truck loads of clay.
- Habitat logs were salvaged from other areas in the district and were placed in the project.
- Native species were planted that are suited to being in the flood area. As many native species as possible were saved during construction.
- The old blacktop trail was removed, and a settling pond has been established in the area.
- Split rail fences were installed and are effectively being used to keep people & pets away from wildlife.
- New bird species are now coming to the park. Public education on birds that can be seen in the park has been published.
- A destination natural playground is being installed.
- Natural habitats for a variety of species are being established. Many are a community and staff collaboration.
- The Gary Oak meadow restoration is underway.

Questions from Committee

Committee members asked if there will there be a place in the park that will present information on the revived riparian area.

- Parks Planning is working on some signs for entrances to the park.
- QR code will be reinstalled. This provides visitors of a tour of the area. Staff are working with a videographer to tell the story of the area.
- A communications plan is being worked on, and social media is planned to spread the word.

Members noted their thanks to Rick and the Parks team for their work on a fantastic project. It was noted that staff have been key in developing the project.

A tour of Cuthbert Holmes Park is on March 2nd at 1:30. Please consider attending.

PULLING TOGETHER PARKS

Staff were unable to attend to present. This item will be added to an upcoming agenda.

COMMITTEE ROUNDTABLE & HOUSEKEEPING

The chair asked members for topics that they would like the committee to be involved in for its next mandate. Members noted the following;

- An update on the Shelbourne project and the environmental considerations that are taking place.
- A presentation related to Bowker Creek and the revision of the 100-year plan.
- Parks is working with engineering on how to put active transportation on streets and create a tree canopy. This would be brought forward to the committee
- A presentation and discussion on Stormwater management.

Possible social after our next meeting on Feb. 15.

Applications for reapplying to the committee will be going out shortly.

Members asked for an update on Elk/Beaver Lake Park water restoration.

- Parks staff are working with engineering to begin outreach in the community. The focus is currently on property owners with septic. This will be taken up again after the stormwater management is further along.

A member inquired as to if there are any further discussions/action on Kings Park.

- This is going through a planning process. A possible presentation could be brought forward this spring.
- Portions of the park are quite natural and other areas may be designated for typical parks usage. Neighbours are interested in restoration of the area to support the native plant and animal species.

Updates that are coming soon to the committee include;

- Climate Report Card
- Official Community Plan
- Urban Forest Strategy and Biodiversity Strategy

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:07 p.m.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting date will be February 15, 2023.

Councillor Harper, Chair

I hereby certify these Minutes are accurate.

Kirsten Brazier, Committee Clerk