

Council Update
June 26, 2017

Mayor and Council:

I am pleased to provide an update on the progress of the Governance Review Citizen Advisory Committee. Since I last briefed you six months ago a significant amount of work has been completed and a lot of valuable information has been collected.

Highlights of the Committee's work to date include:

- Engagement – February to June
 - Official launch of formal public engagement process on February 9
 - Public survey and other online consultation from March 1 to June 15, resulting in 250 survey responses
 - Two public workshops and two town hall meetings between April and May, involving 122 participants
 - “Pop-up” events at shopping centres (Tuscany Village, Uptown), UVic, Camosun College, Saanich Cycling Festival between April and June
 - Targeted engagement with groups such as students (UVic), seniors, Community Associations, Saanich Community Association Network (SCAN), Saanich Advisory Committees
 - The survey and online consultation concluded on June 15. We extended the deadline from May 31 and conducted a last communications push to get the message out about the final opportunities for feedback; a marked increase in submissions was noted during the final two weeks
 - Regional government outreach through a presentation at the CRD Governance Committee and invitation to a focus group
 - Presentations and discussion at the GRCAC monthly meetings
- Awareness Raising – February – June
 - Ads in the Saanich News, Facebook and Twitter posts, and website updates were important methods of getting our message out and making people aware of the multiple ways they could provide input.
 - Informational materials were available on the website and at all engagement sessions. One provided important background information on governance, and context for the committee's review, such as the areas of governance we would be focusing on. A second handout detailed the various opportunities to get involved, including meetings, the survey and other online consultation tools, and email submissions direct to the committee.
 - Chair interviews with radio (CFAX) and print media

We have been impressed with the amount of thoughtful, considered input we have received, and appreciate the time that people have taken to complete the survey, either online or in hard copy, to share their ideas at meetings and to email us information, comments and suggestions.

Although the quality of the feedback has been good, the number of participants in the survey and the public meetings has not been as high as we had hoped. Some people participated in more than one type of engagement, so we cannot say how many unique voices we actually heard from. There are any number of reasons for low participation levels in public processes like citizen engagement, and voting, and we cannot be certain of the reasons in the case of the Governance Review.

Next Steps:

While the broader public consultation process has concluded, the GRCAC and our consultants from Sirius Strategic Solutions, will continue with targeted engagements over the next few weeks. We are holding more sessions than contemplated in the budget, as we aim to conduct as comprehensive a process as possible within the time available. Outreach has already begun for most of the following consultations:

- Individual meetings with Saanich Mayor and Councillors
- Saanich management and staff
- Saanich Police Department
- Saanich Fire Department
- Elected officials from other local municipalities
- Saanich youth advisory group
- Accessibility community
- Business community
- Academic/research community

In addition, the GRCAC and consultants will now be turning our attention to research, and the review and analysis of the data collected from all of the different streams. This includes survey responses, consisting of both quantitative and qualitative data; feedback from engagement sessions; and comments and submissions provided to the committee's email address.

Conclusion:

As you can see, it has been a busy six months since we last met, and a considerable amount of progress has been made. We have talked to a lot of individuals and groups, have heard from a few hundred people, and will continue to be available to those who wish to share their ideas. We look forward to reviewing the feedback and incorporating it in our deliberations and the development of recommendations for Council.

I extend my appreciation to the GRCAC and our consultants for their dedication to this project and for their support and assistance in keeping the process on track and moving forward. I would also like to offer our sincere thanks to Saanich staff, who have provided us with excellent support and advice over the last several months. In particular, Kelsie McLeod and Tara Zajac in Communications, who have assisted in taking our social media and website updates and ensuring they are posted and made available as widely as possible. And of course our committee secretary, Penny Masse in Legislative Services continues to be prime resource for us.

The committee will continue to hold regular monthly meetings until the end of September. These meetings occur on the last Wednesday of each month (June 28, July 26, Aug 30, Sept 27) in the Kirby Room, Saanich Police Station, at 760 Vernon Avenue, and are open to the public. Schedules, agendas, and minutes are published on the Saanich website. Speakers and guest submitters are scheduled and the public are invited to attend as observers.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide a brief update on our work to date. The GRCAC is committed to making this governance review a success and providing positive and meaningful input that benefits Council and the municipality.

Respectfully submitted,

John Schmuck
Chair, Saanich Governance Review Citizens Advisory Committee