

MINUTES
PLANNING, TRANSPORTATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Held at Saanich Municipal Hall, Committee Room No. 2
February 13, 2020 at 5:30 pm

Present: Councillor Zac de Vries (Chair), Taylor Alexander, Ericka Amador (6:50 pm), Sophia Baker-French, William Bedford, Sonja Cunningham, Lois-Leah Goodwin, Brittany Higginson, Peter Rantucci, Shawn Steele

Staff: Troy McKay, Senior Manager, Transportation and Development Services; Cameron Scott, Manager of Community Planning; Tania Douglas, Senior Committee Clerk

Regrets: Richard Michaels

Guest: Michael Goodwin, Goodwin Studios

Minutes

MOVED by L. Goodwin and Seconded by P. Rantucci: "That the Minutes of the Planning, Transportation and Economic Development Advisory Committee meeting held November 14, 2019, be adopted as circulated."

CARRIED

CHAIR'S REMARKS / WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair welcomed members and provided an update on the recommendations that went to Council from the November 2019 PTED meeting as follows:

- The item to investigate options for the creation of a new economic development position was referred to the Strategic Planning check-ins.
- The item to investigate options for the development of a strategic real estate function was referred to the Mayor's Standing Committee on Finance and Governance.
- The item regarding Development Cost Charges (DCC) was withdrawn as staff are currently working on waivers and reductions policy framework as part of phase two of the DCC process. This will be heard by Council in the future.
- The item to investigate options for regulating home sizes and home plates on agriculturally zoned properties was postponed, as staff will soon bring a report forward to Council that considers this.
- The item to investigate potential options for creating a cash-in-lieu policy was directed to staff for consideration when reviewing the off-street parking requirements.

Roundtable introductions were made and the Chair thanked members for their commitment to the committee.

SIGNAGE IMPROVEMENTS

M. Goodwin of Goodwin Studios presented information about improving signage on municipal borders so people know they have entered the District of Saanich. Mr. Goodwin has been working with the Mayor on bringing the film industry to Greater Victoria. During this process it became clear that Saanich's location is not posted clearly with the existing signage. Mr. Goodwin suggested that it would be beneficial to better define Saanich's boundaries because when scouting locations, people in the industry kept asking 'where is Saanich?', and knowing its location will attract tech work and film work.

Committee members discussed the presentation and the following was noted:

- It may be good to better define Saanich's boundaries. It is a district with many rural areas.
- Question raised how signage would look and be placed at the gateway heading south on TransCanada Highway #1.
- Knowing the purpose of having signs will help with designing and positioning signs in the most advantageous areas.
- This is relevant to the Uptown Douglas Corridor Plan (UDCP) which is to become the heart of Saanich.
- Many roads in Saanich are cut-through roads; Business Improvement Areas (BIA) need to be promoted and villages better identified.
- Amalgamation is an ongoing question and it may be of benefit to see if amalgamation will proceed prior to having signs made.
- Landmarks and BIA centres may be more appropriate areas for sign placement as opposed to municipal borders.
- A new logo may be of benefit. Does Council have an appetite to look at branding?
- On Douglas Street, signage would be needed for both Victoria and Saanich.
- Suggestion that transit hubs could be used as a municipal asset (eg. digital signs).
- Each village could have a sign and additionally could have its own individual look, depending on the area.

In reply a question, the Senior Manager of Transportation and Development Services stated that the Communications department is responsible for the Visual Identity Program in Saanich. He also noted that the Official Community Plan does focus on villages and centres as hubs, and that these core areas could be the focus of some signage placement. Regardless of the possibility of amalgamation, Saanich's centres and villages will remain.

The Manager of Community Planning stated that signage is just one element of creating gateways, along with public spaces and architecture. The transit hub and switch bridge is also a gateway site identified in the Uptown-Douglas Corridor plan.

The Chair suggested that Business Improvement Areas be placed on a future agenda for committee to further discuss.

Motion: MOVED by L. Goodwin and Seconded by P. Rantucci, "That the Planning, Transportation and Economic Development Advisory Committee receive the presentation entitled "Latitantes Invaderet or Hiding in Plain Sight" by Michael Goodwin for information, and that this presentation be included as reference material during economic development and strategic planning discussions."

CARRIED

2020 MEETING DATES/TERMS OF REFERENCE/COMMITTEE ORIENTATION MATERIALS

Members discussed the February 13, 2020 memo from the Senior Committee Clerk regarding 2020 advisory committee meeting options. Consensus was that regular meetings will continue to be held on the second Thursday of the month at 5:30 pm.

The Senior Committee Clerk noted that Council recently approved the revised Terms of Reference, which were circulated in the agenda package for information.

Motion: MOVED by P. Rantucci and Seconded by S. Cunningham, “That the Planning, Transportation and Economic Development Advisory Committee receives the February 13, 2020 memo from the Senior Committee Clerk regarding 2020 advisory committee meeting options.”

CARRIED

INTRODUCTION – PLANNING AND ENGINEERING LIAISONS

The Manager of Community Planning noted he will be the primary point of contact as a staff liaison to the committee and noted the following:

- The Planning department is comprised of four divisions including Community Planning, Current Planning, Environmental Services and Sustainability.
- There will be a number of projects brought forward from staff for feedback, including input on draft Local Area Plans and the UDCP.
- A Housing Strategy is being developed within the next two years, in addition Council has directed a development process review and a housing needs report.
- Council has identified the need to look at increasing height and density in RA zones along with the development of a new micro-unit zone. This committee may be asked to help by providing input on certain initiatives.

The Senior Manager of Transportation and Development Services reported he will be an alternate staff liaison to the committee and provided information about the Transportation and Development division:

- The division is responsible for looking after pipes (water and sewage); transportation, including parking and operations, processing permits for gas services and hydro poles.
- There are approximately 570 km of roads to manage in Saanich.
- They have recently completed and started implementation of the Active Transportation Plan.
- There are approximately \$500M of assets in Saanich and about \$8.5M is spent maintaining these assets.
- Capital investments are being made in good quality infrastructure for walking, cycling and transit.

SAANICH HOUSING AND DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

The Manager of Community Planning provided information regarding demographics, housing supply and affordability. The following was noted:

- Staff members were asked to provide a housing needs report to Council. They will do an initial data analysis in the spring and will report to Council in the fall.
- Much of the information in this presentation comes from 2016 census data.
- Statistics comparing population percentages within Capital Regional District (CRD) municipalities was provided. Projected growth shows Saanich is growing slower than the CRD average.
- Various housing statistics were provided, including housing types, percentage of renters vs owners, household characteristics, income, mobility of residents (people moving in and out of Saanich), and population density.
- The number of home owners spending over 30% of their income on housing costs is 18.7% versus 44.9% of renters. About 13% of residents in Saanich live in subsidized rentals.

- The population density map shows the effectiveness of the Urban Containment Boundary (UCB). Growth inside the UCB is a focus. There are no stats on employment density on this map however the Uptown area employs about 10,000 people.
- A map showing ages of constructions was discussed. Many older homes are located close to the City of Victoria. There is very little undeveloped land left to develop and staff will have to look at how to infill and re-develop older areas.
- There is a challenge with both the cost of land and construction. There needs to be a way to support people trying to get into the housing market.

The following comments from both staff and committee members was noted:

- Information on University housing demand is available from the CRD.
- Housing availability and costs are big factors for people wanting to live in Saanich. Costs of housing is rising in other places (eg. Sooke).
- Saanich is a good location in terms of minimal mobility costs. Opportunity should be focused to improve density/infill.
- The high price point of construction is a concern.
- The Uptown plan is a good opportunity to incorporate density for residential and employment.
- We need to build housing geared towards work, home, and also include schools.
- Saanich does not own a lot of land that could be developed. There may be development options at the Public Works yard.
- Council would need to give direction for modular housing, and rezoning would have to occur. This will be considered during Strategic Planning.
- The community created at Simon Fraser University was given as an example of successful housing.
- The Nigel Valley development currently underway is a good development example.
- Kings Park area is an option for development and the area is a focus for growth.
- Have there been any thought to waiving Development Cost Charges or other incentives to encourage affordable development?
- Costs can be high for asbestos abatement and issues like oil tanks or other hazards when redeveloping older properties.
- Pre-zoning may be considered for the UDCP.
- Cooperatives are good for the diversity of a community. Maybe, with federal incentives, Saanich could have more co-ops. We could also look at DCC waivers for co-ops. If a proposal was received, staff would look at it favourably.
- In the past co-ops were constructed when land was much less expensive. Federal funding for co-ops has been in decline the last number of years. Our focus should be to protect existing co-ops that are in decline.
- When there is extra density, a percentage of affordable units can be requested. The Strategic Plan should include a community amenity policy and give guidance on this.
- It is important to ensure continuity with other Saanich strategies and policies.
- More density/residences means more tax base for Saanich.
- Staff shortages are a barrier to development applications; there is a development process to follow.
- It may be worthwhile to have more specific positions that are targeted to supporting development applications.

ROUNDTABLE

Committee members discussed possible topics for future meetings. Ideas presented include:

- Continuing the discussion on cannabis licenses.
- Urban Containment Boundary conflicts with density and potential garden suites.
- Camosun film production studio.

Roundtable discussion will be continued at a future meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:30 pm.

Councillor de Vries, Chair

I hereby certify these Minutes are accurate.

Committee Secretary

DRAFT