

**MINUTES**  
**PLANNING, TRANSPORTATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
Held at Saanich Municipal Hall, Council Chambers  
**Friday, March 12, 2021 at 4:30 pm**

**Present:** Councillor Zac de Vries (Chair), Ericka Amador (via telephone), Sophia Baker-French (via telephone), Sonja Cunningham, Lisa Gunderson (via telephone), Brittany Higginson, Richard Michaels, Doug Pascoe (via telephone), Peter Rantucci (via telephone)

**Staff:** Cameron Scott, Manager of Community Planning (via telephone); Rebecca Newlove, Manager of Sustainability; Adriane Pollard, Manager of Environmental Services (via telephone); Tania Douglas, Senior Committee Clerk

**Regrets:** Taylor Alexander, Shawn Steele

**Guest:** Greg Gillespie, Royal Oak Broadmead Business Improvement Association (via telephone)

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**CHAIR'S REMARKS**

The Chair provided an update on the Cordova Bay Local Area Plan process, which has been delayed in order to allow for the completion of the Saanich Housing Strategy. More feedback and insight will be received from Advisory Committees on the Local Area Plan and depending upon the nature of the feedback it could either go back out to the public for further input or it could go to a Public Hearing.

**MINUTES**

**MOVED by E. Amador and Seconded by S. Baker-French: "That the Minutes of the Planning, Transportation and Economic Development Advisory Committee meeting held February 11, 2021, be adopted as circulated."**

**CARRIED**

**ROYAL OAK BROADMEAD BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION (ROBIA)**

Greg Gillespie, Founding President, provided information about ROBIA and the following was noted:

- ROBIA was formed by a handful of members about a year and half ago as it was felt that there was a lack of advocacy for businesses in Royal Oak. The Board is presently comprised of four members who represent wide variety of business types. A fifth member will be joining the Board next month.
- Their mission is to promote and support local businesses, strengthen economic partnerships and foster a vibrant and sustainable community. It is important to have complete communities and hear from all voices in the community.
- Major goals and objectives of ROBIA focus on economic development, education and community building.
- The BIA covers an area in a location that roughly follows the Royal Oak neighbourhood. Key hubs include the Royal Oak Shopping Centre, Broadmead Village, and also included are the Vancouver Island Tech Park, the Chatterton Way business park, and the Royal Oak Industrial Park which is a major source of employment for the CRD as a whole.
- Population figures were given which shows how Royal Oak fits into Saanich. A commercial business summary was provided: mixed 2013 development strategy look at populations/trends. Royal Oak has over 400,000 square feet of commercial space, not including the VI Tech Park, the Chatterton business park and the industrial park.
- Growth potential of proposed developments in the area show a mixed use residential commercial and/or light industrial space. With people moving into a region we will see an increase in economic growth.

- An in-person event was scheduled to occur in 2020 but then COVID occurred. ROBIA has since created monthly informational newsletters to stay relevant. They enjoy showcasing local business, providing information and links and generally reach out to see how they can help businesses.
- They have moved to an online speaker series where some members of Council have spoken. In May there will be another speaker series and they will continue to search for varying speakers.
- They are about to launch a buy local campaign to focus on shopping and supporting local businesses.
- Business surveys will be done to see what businesses would like to see from Saanich and from the BIA. Continuous engagement with business members is vital, and virtual minglers may be held in order for people to meet each other, and ask questions and provide a quick snapshot of the activities/services being offered. A roundtable with some of the other BIA's in the area may be held as well.
- In terms of next steps, they are looking to continue working together, and feel that it is not up to just one entity to make a difference, but that leverage can occur with the reach and expertise of multiple groups working together.
- In considering how the BIA can continue to be a stakeholder with economic development, community building and education discussions, they will continue to advocate for community building and economic development and they are pleased with the recent initiatives from this committee for an economic development strategy for Saanich.

Mr. Gillespie asked how ROBIA can become a major stakeholder within the district. He referenced a recent article in the local newspaper about development in Royal Oak which heard from developers, Council members and community association. Missing from this article was the voice of the BIA and businesses in Royal Oak. ROBIC would like to help businesses and also Saanich municipality in terms of their policies and economic initiatives.

The Chair noted that bringing forward a broad range of perspectives is good as there are not many BIAs in Saanich. There are many smaller businesses in Saanich and the pandemic opened up a broad range of retail challenges. A proposed Economic Development Officer staff position will be considered by Council during to budget discussions. He suggested there may be benefit in having the officer (if approved) visit businesses and take stock of what is out there and what the challenges are to help provide a foundation for a strategy. It would be good to look at how to get Saanich more involved in economic development as this committee has provided the majority of support in this regard.

Committee comments and replies to questions are noted:

- ROBIA has had discussions with the South Island Prosperity Partnership (SIPP). The BIA focusses more on local business and is eager to become more involved and make connections from a local perspective. The BIA has invited SIPP to be a guest speaker at a future speaker series. Strengthening relationships at a regional level will be useful.
- In reply to a question whether there is further information regarding the household demographic of Royal Oak, it was noted that ROBIA has not undertaken any other analysis of the available data but they are interested in this information. They have about 300 businesses in their local database and continue to reach out to these people. Saanich has provided ROBIA with a list of business licences and they are narrowing this down by area.
- It was noted that grants are available to businesses owned by equity deserving groups such as minority or female owners, and the question was asked if there are plans by the BIA to make this information available. Mr. Gillespie noted that this has been discussed by the Board and was also raised in the speaker series as this is an important lens to use. ROBIA does not have this level of detail about business owners yet as they are building their database from scratch. When chatting with business owners they are recording contact information along with some notes. This is a great initiative and has great value; more work is to be done.
- It was noted that it is difficult to rezone areas to commercial use with outdated Local Area Plans and strict parking requirements. The question was asked if there is enough

- commercial space in Royal Oak, and if not how do we increase this. Mr. Gillespie noted that ROBIA does want to become a major stakeholder for policy discussions and economic initiatives. One future speaker will be able to speak to the commercial retail/industrial zoning demand. There is a strong demand for spaces. One proposal of mixed use development is occurring at the Bird of Paradise site so they do not lose the commercial zoning. It was noted that office space is very much needed; Chatterton Way is full. There is also a demand for strata office space as well.
- In reply to a question whether there is enough supply for retail/commercial/office space, the Manager of Community Planning noted that a lot depends on the area. Some areas are over-supplied and some are under. Additionally, the type of retail is a consideration (e.g. grocery store vs coffee shop).
  - The “buy local” campaign is being run by two Board members and sponsorship was just obtained from local financial organizations. The idea is to reach out to local business to see who wants to participate. They would be provided with some marketing materials (stickers and/or posters showing them as a participating business). Customers can buy products, snap a photo and put on social media to get into a prize draw. They will do a trial for 2-3 months starting in April if possible. This is one way to have positive engagement between business and the public.
  - Saanich could provide BIA’s support in terms of permitting processes and also perhaps with the Economic Development Officer position that may become available. Some other municipalities have much deeper BIA structures and get involved in things like local improvement charges. The Cadboro Bay BIA is fairly self-sufficient and they take on initiatives and organize events. As issues arise, Saanich can work with ROBIA. As the business network grows, people can mutually support each other.
  - Home business are also underexplored but being brought into focus now for discussions.
  - Coming from an advocacy aspect on behalf of business and the community, Saanich could have a stronger role to play in the economic development side of things.

**Motion: MOVED by D. Pascoe and Seconded by P. Rantucci, “That the Planning, Transportation and Economic Development Advisory Committee receive the presentation from the Royal Oak Broadmead Business Improvement Association.”**

**CARRIED**

## **CLIMATE PLAN 2020 REPORT CARD**

The Manager of Sustainability provided a summary of the Climate Plan 2020 Report Card:

- The Climate Plan is a detailed plan to reduce Saanich’s greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs). There are six focus areas, which detail 131 actions to achieve the Climate Plan goals.
- The Climate Plan Report Card is an annual report on progress made towards the goals and actions outlined in the Climate Plan.
- Saanich received an “A” grade through the global Carbon Disclosure Project for monitoring and reporting on sustainability initiatives and environmental impacts.
- The latest community wide GHG emissions inventory was completed by the CRD on behalf of regional municipalities and electoral areas for the 2018 year. The global GPC Basic+ methodology is used but there were changes to the methodology and data sources for the latest reporting period. Saanich continues to work with the province, ICBC and others to improve access to more accurate data.
- Progress was made in 2020 on Climate Action despite the COVID-19 pandemic which impacted financing, resources and community engagement opportunities.
- Highlights of the actions taken were provided, along with progress on community corporate targets, overall progress on 2020 actions, progress by focus area and detailed summaries.
- A lot of work has been done on e-mobility including completion of the E-Mobility Strategy, implementing more EV charging stations, and EV infrastructure requirements.
- Some actions being done this year include: accelerating the Active Transportation Plan; e-bike incentive program pilot; lower speed limit pilot; looking at reviewing off-street

parking to encourage more people to use active transportation; working with Transit on the rapid bus project; updating guidelines to ensure buildings are high-performance and sustainably built and looking at the next steps of the BC Energy step code. Many corporate retrofit projects are underway as well.

- Planning is also looking for another staff member for the team who would be specifically working on adaptation.
- There are lots of rebates available to people for a variety of projects.

In reply to questions the Manager of Sustainability advised:

- Population growth is not a factor in target setting because climate targets are absolute regardless of population growth. Targets can still be achieved regardless of growth. Density must be placed in centres and corridors, aligned with the OCP, local area plans and the Regional Growth Strategy to support the development of sustainable, transit-oriented and walkable communities.
- Saanich and other municipalities have been engaged by the CRD to come forward with transportation priorities for the region. Sustainable land use decisions was the first priority identified, alongside transit and active transportation.
- Sustainability statement guidelines are being updated to align with the Climate Plan.
- There are many corporate projects in the design and constructions stage and some still seeking funding approval that will help Saanich get on track for the 50% GHG reduction target.
- Community engagement actions are on hold or have been modified because of COVID. Staff have been looking at ways to adapt but we are not achieving the level of engagement needed. This, along with resource needs, has resulted in being behind schedule on 32 actions.
- Only three actions are identified for food and materials because transportation and buildings cause more GHG emissions. Staff are learning from the City of Victoria's data on their zero waste strategy.
- Lots of work and progress has been done despite COVID, we are behind schedule and Council is aware. Key actions for 2021 were described.

\*\*\* E. Amador left the meeting at 5:57 pm \*\*\*

- Targets have not been met globally. Climate strikes and youth movements have been helpful to accelerate responsive actions.
- Local governments can do a lot but some key decisions are made at the provincial and federal level. We have to be focused on switching to renewables.
- The pandemic delayed some actions that could have been done globally but solutions can be achieved, governments just need to put money towards it.

\*\*\* P. Rantucci left the meeting at 6:06 pm \*\*\*

- Organics consumption is a big item on the inventory. Some data collection is to be done and a Zero Waste strategy is being developed.
- In reply to a question about ensuring that criteria in some policies are not missed, it was noted that Saanich has an integrated approach; there is a lot of communication between departments and a good knowledge of projects and plans at the management level as well as thorough engagement between teams.
- Many projects receive grant funding and they are now nearly always required to be looked at with a climate lens.

**Motion: MOVED by S. Baker-French and Seconded by L. Gunderson, "That the Planning, Transportation and Economic Development Advisory Committee receives the presentation from the Manager of Sustainability regarding the Climate Plan 2020 Report Card."**

**CARRIED**

## **SHELBOURNE VALLEY PLAN IMPLEMENTATION**

The Manager of Community Planning provided background information about the Shelbourne Valley Action Plan that was adopted in 2017.

- Three local areas in the plan include Quadra, Shelbourne, and Gordon Head and integrates three centres and one village.
- This is the first major land use planning doc out of the OCP and the biggest key issue was the design of Shelbourne Street.
- Shorter term transportation improvements have been identified for pedestrians and cyclists and are being implemented by the Shelbourne Street Improvement Project.
- There are three phases to the plan, from the following areas: Phase one is Torquay to McKenzie, phase two is North Dairy to Pear Street, and Phase three is from Pear Street to McKenzie Avenue.
- Construction work is underway for phase one and during this they are renewing underground infrastructure (storm and wastewater mains are being replaced.)
- Phase two is in the design phase, construction is to start in mid-2022 and will take about 18 months. We will see key improvements during this phase such as improved connections to UVic for bikes. Once design is done, then phase three design will be begin and the hope is to have the project completed by 2024 or 2025.
- Land use changes are significant. The focus on Shelbourne Street encourages frontage improvements to implement the long-term vision of Shelbourne and improve walking access to services and transit routes.
- In terms of development proposals, there are 1,100 units in 12 different townhouse and apartments projects. University Heights is separate from this, with 600 units and also commercial space. Saanich recently approved projects for rental apartments for Shelbourne/McKenzie and also for apartments along Shelbourne Street at Stockton.
- Coming to Council soon is a Bowker Creek feasibility study to daylight the creek as it runs parallel to Shelbourne and up to McKenzie along to UVic.
- A key development is the adoption of the new Development Cost Charges program which is effective this year. This identifies key infrastructure, park acquisition and transportation projects. Two primary areas were flagged for parks acquisition, which were Uptown and the Shelbourne valley area.
- It was noted that the land use framework from 2014 could use refreshing. Staff have been learning about the type of development that may be successful based on market changes.

In reply to questions, the Manager of Community Planning noted:

- There is not a lot of flexibility with a modified design on Shelbourne Street in the short term. Part of the work is to try to push forward what we think will be needed in the future. The longer term vision does line up with newer demands that we are seeing.
- A number of staff have looked at a possible roundabout at the Poplar intersection and there was public resistance to this. Staff will look at this area when the UVIC bike connector is upgraded in Phase two.

**Motion: MOVED by S. Baker-French and Seconded by D. Pascoe, “That the Planning, Transportation and Economic Development Advisory Committee receives the presentation from the Manager of Community Planning regarding the Shelbourne Valley Implementation Plan.”**

**CARRIED**

## **RESILIENT SAANICH ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY FRAMEWORK**

The Manager of Environmental Services provided an update after comments were received from committee at the last meeting. The engagement process has occurred over the past month with three focus group sessions. Staff also received 150 feedback forms and written submissions. There is nothing to report in terms of general trends or feedback as input closes next week.

On Monday March 15, 2021 at 6:30 pm, staff are hosting a focus group on the community development. Invitations were sent to 20-25 active developers and consultants, to join a focus group. If committee members are interested in joining this, they can do so by sending an email to Biodiversity@saanich.ca to register.

\*\*\* S. Baker-French left the meeting at 6:40 pm \*\*\*

In reply to a question the Manager of Environmental Services noted that this links to three pillars of the OCP; while this is focused on the natural environment, it is also about the built environment and is included in the vision for Resilient Saanich. Staff will focus on all other policies, bylaws and strategies for community resilience.

**Motion: MOVED by S. Cunningham and Seconded by B. Higginson, “That the Planning, Transportation and Economic Development Advisory Committee receives the presentation from the Manager of Sustainability regarding Resilient Saanich Environmental Policy Framework.”**

**CARRIED**

## **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 6:48 pm, the next meeting is Thursday, April 8, 2021.

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Councillor de Vries, Chair

I hereby certify these Minutes are accurate.

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Committee Secretary