

MINUTES
PARKS, TRAILS AND RECREATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Held at Saanich Municipal Hall, Committee Room #2
April 26, 2018

Present: Chair: Councillor Dean Murdock

Members: Ted Austin, Pamela Caroll, Connie Laroche, Dave Marecek, Dex Owen, Chris Spicer and Stefanie Yao

Staff: Suzanne Samborski, Director Parks and Recreation; Eva Riccius Senior Manager Parks; Graham Thomson, (A) Senior Manager Recreation; Gary Darrah, Manager Park Planning & Development; Cristina Caravaca, Manager Community Services; Becky Goodall, Park Planner Designer; Chris Filler, Programmer II – GR Pearkes Recreation Centre; Julie Wallace – Programmer II (Recreation); Maddie Parks, Programmer I – GR Pearkes Recreation Centre and Jeff Keays, Committee Clerk

Absent: Elise Cote, Daryl Dagneault, Ann Whiteaker (SD61 Representative)

Guests: Sorcha Collins, Mary Collins, Katrina Madsen, Harry Draege

MINUTES

MOVED by C. Laroche and seconded by C. Spicer, “That the minutes of the Parks, Trails and Recreation Advisory Committee meeting held March 22, 2018 be adopted as circulated.”

CARRIED

CHAIR’S REPORT

The Chair provided a brief update on Council related activities including the adoption of the 2018 Budget and the amendment to the Parks Management and Control Bylaw, Amendment Bylaw, 2018, No. 9489 to authorize the seizure, removal and disposal of Chattels from Saanich parks.

HARO WOODS

The Senior Manager of Parks provided a brief overview on the status of the Haro Woods Draft management Plan noting that staff and the working group had engaged in further dialogue regarding biking in the park; however, staff were not at the point in the conversations where they felt comfortable bringing forward a final recommendation.

The Senior Manager then turned the presentation over to the Manager of Park Planning who provided the committee with an update on the plan since the last meeting. The following highlights are noted:

- Difficult issues remain since the last committee update:
 - Biking – Cyclists building trails and jumps is a problem.

- Parks staff and members of the Advisory Group held an on-site meeting with representatives from the cycling community on March 15.
 - Riders are diverse group from young kids to older adults.
 - They care about pedestrians and the environment.
 - Riding has been going on in the park for many years.
 - The cycling community would be grateful if allowed to use specific areas.
 - Not all mountain biking is the same.
 - Type of riding taking place in the woods is free riding which is a combination of downhill trail riding and dirt jumping. Each requires different terrain.
 - Haro Woods is attractive to these riders due to the long, gentle downhill slope and varied terrain.
 - Biking does not comply with park zoning (P4N)
- Can Biking be managed?
 - Management practices and tools include (but not limited to):
 - Separate areas for downhill and a dirt jumping.
 - Establish a group of biking volunteers to work in partnership with parks staff on common interests.
 - Jumps allowed in designated areas only.
 - Delineate cycling areas with signage, split rail fencing, and marker posts.
- Trails – The existing trail network is ineffective and confusing to visitors.
 - Community wants to minimize number of trails, their width and the amount of gravel surface.
 - Existing trails are based on desire lines, and are classified rustic multi-use (bare earth).
 - Approximately 68 m of new trails are required to connect loops.
 - 260 m of speciality bike trails are being considered.
- Staff have developed an options matrix for accommodating biking, options include:
 - Do nothing.
 - Allow 'biking' area in N-E lot.
 - Allow 'bike run' in N-W corner.
 - Allow both biking features.
 - Prohibit everywhere.
- The matrix presents the pros and cons for each option.
- Staff do not wish to prohibit recreational and family cycling in the park, not the intent.

Committee discussion followed the presentation, the following comments are highlighted:

- Biking has been a longstanding issue. Public opinion has not shifted on the matter.
- Consensus has been achieved for the majority of the draft plan.
- Enforcement is an issue as there are only 2 dedicated Bylaw officers in Saanich.
- The makeup of the group is very diverse.

- Staff have reviewed the current inventory of parks for a possible alternate location; however, there is nothing suitable in the immediate vicinity of Haro Woods.
- Noticeable increase in cycling at Mt. Douglas and Madrona Farm.
- Providing the material for building jumps, similar to the Surrey model, is a manageable risk and could help minimize the disruptive and damaging practices of jump building
- The CRD is required to maintain public access across their property as specified by the land sales/transfer agreement with Saanich.
- Attenuation tank project is slated for 2019.
- CRD is not keen on cycling facilities being built over the attenuation tanks. The area is not considered parkland and will be secured post-construction.
- CRD is not opposed to post-construction discussions for trail development in areas outside the underground attenuation tank area.
- Staff could work with the CRD to develop a plan for the entire area post construction.
- UVIC's interest in the area is limited to maintaining access for student research.

Following the committee discussion the Chair invented comments from the guests in attendance. The following highlights are noted:

- The N-E parcel of the Woods is a wetland.
- There has been significant damage to the trees, the (N-E) area needs to be restored.
- Concern with the degradation of the forest area. Restoration is required.
- Biking is impacting the use of the area by local daycares.
- No efforts to manage to the invasive species in the woods.
- Status quo is not acceptable going forward.
- Bikers are emboldened.

COMMUNITY SERVICES OVERVIEW

The Director of Parks and Recreation introduced the members of the Saanich Community Services (CS) team before turning the floor over to Chris Filler, Programmer II who provided an update on the team's initiatives and accomplishments. The following highlights are noted:

- The department facilitates access to recreation programs, parks and facilities, while supporting local initiatives which assist our community to participate in healthy active lifestyles.

The CS department oversees:

- Older Adult Recreation
 - Older Adult Strategy – 2017
 - Cedar Hill Social Club – Opened in January 2018 and provides more social opportunities to the older adult community.
 - Social drop-in – Free social time in Gordon Head, Commonwealth Place and GR Pearkes Recreation Centres.
 - Caregiver Respite Program – supporting caregivers and parents. Expansion of this program planned for other centres and municipalities.
- Youth Services

- Youth Development Strategy – Mid way through the 5yr plan. There are 70+ outcomes with 6 strategic priorities:
 - Increase Participation – marginalized / LGBTQ youth.
 - Collaboration – with schools (administration and teachers) to develop community specific programs: eg. Aboriginal dinner, Artemis place – trauma informed yoga.
 - Risk and Outdoor Play – getting youth aged 12-17 out and into greenspaces to carve out spaces for challenging or risky play.
 - Social Wellbeing – programs aimed at improving social wellbeing, health and sexual health
 - Youth Spaces – unconventional lens, parks, teen centres, gender groups, LGBTQ drop-in programs. Currently no dedicated space at Cedar Hill.
 - Communication – not getting the message through to the audience (youth), not an easy when working with youth. Engagement is mutually beneficial.
- Summer Neighbourhood Playground Program
- Parks Programs
 - Music in the Park Concert Series - Free concerts held in various Saanich Parks from July 3 – August 21.
- Multicultural Services
 - Saanich is home to the largest population of new immigrants in the CRD, programming initiatives for these communities include: Chinese Community Drop-in; SpeakWell Conversation Group and the Muslim Girls Group.
- Access and Inclusion
 - Saanich helps low income residents access recreation services and programs.
 - Leisure Involvement for Everyone (L.I.F.E.).
 - Discounted program registrations and annual memberships.
 - New opportunity: IPAL, Intergenerational Physical Activity Leadership Program.
 - Grant Funding Support: Canadian Tire Jump Start (\$80K in 2017) and Saanich KidsFUNd.
- Special Events
 - 25 plus events per year.
 - Opportunities to connect and celebrate our diversity, showcase our values and highlight local talents.
 - Network with residents, enhance community spirit and pride.
- Volunteer Program
 - Meaningful opportunities, significant benefits.
 - New volunteer coordinator in place.
 - Re-engage and recognize volunteers, re-organize the volunteer database
 - Utilize new platforms and networks to attract positive volunteers.
 - Expand opportunities for youth and older adult volunteers.

Committee discussion followed the presentation, the following comments are highlighted:

- One of the biggest challenges in programming for youth is the ability to reach the various groups.

- Programming is geared towards meeting the youth where they are at.
- Inevitably when lifting one group up, another drops – this is an ongoing programming challenge.
- Face-to-face and youth leadership efforts are the main points for communication.
- Youth programming is free.
- Cost is not the only barrier to participation across all recreation programs.
- Youth have access to group and club sports.
- Some marginalized youth are not being integrated into the club sports as transportation remains a significant barrier.
- Website and iPads being utilized to provide information in multiple languages at various recreation facilities.

DIVISION UPDATE – PARKS

The Senior Manager – Parks provided an overview of the Parks Division Update – April 2018, Memo, and dated April 26, 2018.

Committee discussion followed the presentation, the following highlights were noted:

- Mt. Douglas Park Ambassador Pilot Program approved by Council. Volunteer recruitment efforts underway on the District's website.
- Rehabilitation of the football field is underway at Copley Park West.
- Rehabilitation of the playground structure and the sport court at Rainbow Park is underway.
- Tennis Courts at Gyro Park closed due to safety concerns, large cracks and uneven playing surface.
 - Staff to undertake design and geotechnical work as soon as possible.
- Park planning projects can be polarizing for communities.
- There is measureable growth in traditional sports like soccer and baseball. Field capacity is becoming an issue

DIVISION UPDATE – RECREATION

The (A) Senior Manager – Recreation provided an overview of the Recreation Division Update – April 2018, Memo, and dated April 17, 2018.

Committee discussion followed the presentation, the following highlights were noted:

- Community Services –update on the achievements of the departments many volunteers.
- April 15-21 is National Volunteer Week.
- Trans Swim at Gordon Head Recreation Centre (GHRC) – approximately 30 persons attended including young families and youth.
- Repairs made to the benches in one of the saunas at GHRC.
- Assisted chin-up/dip machine replaced in the GHRC weight room.
- Spring break camps at Pearkes ran at, or near capacity. Staff struggled to find qualified leaders as the break did not align with the University break.
- High Performance Sport funding ends in 2019. Bridge funding in place to carry the program through 2020. Conversations with the Province and Federal Govt. are ongoing.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 9:07 p.m.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is scheduled for May 24, 2018

Chair

I hereby certify these minutes are accurate.

Committee Secretary