

MINUTES
PARKS TRAILS AND RECREATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Held at Gordon Head Recreation Centre – Multi-purpose Rm.
4100 Lambrick Park Way, Saanich
November 28, 2019, 7:20 p.m.

Present: Chair: Councillor Taylor

Members: Ted Austin; Pamela Carroll; Daryl Dagneault; Lyndsay Edgar; Peter Haddon; Dex Owen and Stefanie Yao

Staff: Suzanne Samborski, Director of Parks and Recreation; Kelli-Ann Armstrong, Senior Manager, Recreation; Cristina Caravaca, Manager Community Services; Jeff Keays, Committee Clerk.

Regrets: None

Guests: None

The committee received a tour of the Gordon Head Recreation Centre, before calling the meeting to order at 7:20 p.m.

MOTION

MOVED by T. Austin and Seconded by L. Edgar: “That the minutes of the Parks Trails and Recreation Advisory Committee meeting held October 24, 2019 be adopted as circulated.”

CARRIED

CHAIR’S REMARKS

The Chair thanked the members for their contributions over the past term, and noted that working with this group was one of the most enjoyable experiences of their first year as a Councillor. The Chair then recognized the accomplishments of the two outgoing members of the committee, Daryl Dagneault and Elise Cote. The following was noted:

- Mr. Dagneault served eighteen years on the committee, and has been a valuable resource to members, staff and Chairs over the years. The committee, along with staff wished Daryl the best in his future endeavours.
- Ms. Cote’s provided a valuable community perspective throughout her perspective. The committee offered Ms. Cote all the best in her work with her community association, and noted how fortunate her community is to have her working on their behalf.

Additionally, the Chair provided comment on the following Council initiatives:

1. Strategic Plan:
 - Proud of the work of Council in developing this document.

- The plan identifies what we (Saanich) does well, and what we need to address and improve.
- The Strategic Plan will be brought forward for committee's review and feedback in February or March (TBC)

2. Advisory Committee Working Group Recommendations:

- The recommendations of the working group were approved by Council and the November 4, 2019 meeting of Council.
- A number of the recommendations will be implemented in 2020, including, but not limited to:
 - Increase the number of members to 11
 - Inclusion of one youth (18-23) voting member
 - Development of a training manual for members
- Changes will be reflected in the revised 2020 Terms of Reference

SENIOR'S SUBSIDY

The Sr. Manager of Recreation provided the committee with an overview of the Senior's Subsidy Program. The following was noted:

- Council directed staff to undertake a review of the Senior Subsidy Program during the 2019 Financial Plan.
- A report for information will come forward to Council in January.
- The current price points are historical, and were developed in a very different context than today.
- The cohort of persons aging out of full-fee adult programming and into the Council subsidized senior's programming (60+) will result in a drop in revenue.
- Those aged 60 – 74 are the largest consumer of recreation services.
- The Saanich subsidy program kicks-in at age 60. This is congruent with similar programs throughout the CRD area; accordingly, any changes to Saanich's age requirements cannot be done in isolation.
- Saanich recreation revenues are considered in the broader regional market.

Committee discussion ensued, the following was highlighted:

- There are a number of best practices that Council can consider, the YMCA model is top-of-mind.
- The Recreation Market Analysis has provided the District with an abundance of data.
- The try before you buy program was extremely well received.
- Any committee feedback on the plan would be sought after Council has reviewed the item.

PARKS UPDATE: YEAR IN REVIEW

The Sr. Manager of Parks provided the committee with a review of Parks related activities in 2019, the following was highlighted:

- Parks undertook restoration efforts in Colquitz Creek, and Mt. Douglas.

- Field repairs undertaken at both Glanford and Layritz sports fields.
- Supported the work of the Friends of Phyllis Park through the restoration of the trail stairs.
- Operations staff are field testing a wide variety of electric powered equipment.
- Parks maintenance shop works tirelessly to keep equipment and tools in peak operating condition.
- Renovations to Gore Peace Park completed.
- King's Road fundraising committee established.
- Councillor Taylor's motion requesting a contribution from the CRD's Parks Acquisition Fund approved at the CRD Parks Committee.

HOULIHAN PARK

The Chair provided the committee with a brief slide show highlighting the many physical attributes of the park and its proximity to its immediate neighbours. Upon completion of the Chair's presentation the Clerk circulated on table, a hard-copy of the previously distributed correspondence from Member P. Haddon.

Committee discussion ensued, the following is noted:

- There is no active programming or use of the park.
- The meadow grows tall, and is cut for Hay approximately twice a year.
- The view of the strait is best from the top ridge. Properties below have obstructed views, if any at all.
- There are 172 Parks for which Saanich has in place processes and protocols for park planning.
- Houlihan Park is not in the Park's division work plan.

In response to a question regarding the planning process, the Director of Parks, Recreation and Community Services stated the following:

- Departmental work plans take their direction from the Council approved Strategic Plan.
- Parks are revitalized in accordance to their useful life-cycles, and available funds.
- Unexpected/unplanned projects and initiatives can arise i.e. Cuthbert Holmes post-interchange, and can impact funding priorities and previously approved work plans.
- If the committee opts to make a recommendation to Council with regard to the park, it would go forward for consideration. In the event that Council approves the recommendation the department would initiate the project, which (and referencing the aforementioned planning process) would be funded at the expense of another pre-approved project. This would have a downstream impact of the work plan and result in delays and/or defunding.

Committee discussion resumed:

- The area has the feel and aesthetic of a natural open-space, not a park.
- Passive use, natural areas are valued too.
- Concern over the potential impact that a small number of persons could have on future uses and potential enhancements.

- In the context of the housing crisis the land appears to be wasted opportunity; however, as previously noted natural open spaces are of benefit. A balance of demand and use must be achieved. The trade-off is always the challenge.
- Pollinators could be incorporated; however this would come with its own unique challenges.
- The discussion is a good starting point for future actions as appropriate as the committee has considered an abundance of information and background on the area.
- There are significant costs associated to simply doing something, regardless of the scale or scope.
- This is a blank slate, why not initiate the conversation now. If no action is taken 20 years will quickly become 30.
- Tree planting is a standalone initiative, Houlihan would be taken into consideration as a potential location.

DIVISION UPDATE RECREATION

The Sr. Manager of Recreation provided the committee with an overview of November Recreation Update report, date November 19, 2019.

DIVISION UPDATE PARKS

The Sr. Manager Parks provided and overview of the November Parks Division Update report dated, November 28, 2019.

DIVISION UPDATE COMMUNITY SERVICES

The Community Services Manager provided the committee with an overview of the November Community Services Division Update report dated, November 28, 2019.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is scheduled for January 23, 2020.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

Councillor Taylor, Chair

I hereby certify these Minutes are accurate.

Committee Secretary