

**MINUTES**  
**PARKS, TRAILS AND RECREATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
Held at Saanich Municipal Hall, Council Chambers  
**September 13, 2021 at 4:03 pm**

Present: Councillor Judy Brownoff (Chair), Ted Austin (via Teams), Leigh Campbell, Pamela Carroll, Pat Danforth (via Teams), and Amy-Jade Louie

Staff: Eva Riccius, Senior Manager Parks; Cristina Caravaca, Senior Manager, Community Services (via Teams); Gary Darrah, Manager, Park Planning and Development; Julie Lommerse, Park Planner Designer; Chris Filler, Programmer II Recreation (via Teams); Regan Pemberton, Community Programmer II Child & Youth Services (via Teams); Lynn Merry and Megan MacDonald, Senior Committee Clerks

Regrets: Kathleen Burton, Annie Djijtsa, Lyndsay Edgar and Dexter Owen

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### **Minutes**

**MOVED by P. Carroll and Seconded by L. Campbell: "That the Minutes of the Parks, Trails and Recreation Advisory Committee meeting held May 26, 2021, be adopted as circulated."**

**CARRIED**

### **CHAIR'S REMARKS**

The Chair commented on the impact the heat has on the elderly and residents that live in homes that do not have means to combat the heat. She also made reference to the impact the heat has on certain species of trees.

### **SUMMER CAMP WRAP UP**

The Community Programmer and the Programmer II presented the Summer Camp Report 2021 (PowerPoint on file) and made the following comments:

- Over 500 summer camps and programs were offered in 2021 with over 8,000 registrants.
- Saanich received a 60% increase in the Canada Summer Jobs grant.
- Registration revenue was over \$1 million.
- The safety of the children attending and staff with respect to COVID was paramount.
- A mentored leadership program was offered this summer with each participant volunteering for 2-4 weeks.
- Parents commented that they appreciated a safe harbour during COVID times.
- The focus next summer will be on recruitment and retention and the provision of high quality programs; this summer, staffing was challenging due to the lack of University of Victoria students.

The committee made the following comments:

- It was appreciated that it was so easy to make changes in the reservation system.

## **PEOPLE, PETS AND PARKS TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The Park Planner Designer presented the People, Pets and Parks Update (PowerPoint on file) and made the following comments:

- A key objective of the project is to develop a framework that welcomes pets in parks in a manner that is acceptable to park users and protects wildlife and the environment.
- Consultation will take place to ensure residents' concerns are heard and reflected in the framework.
- A consultant will be selected in late 2021 with the work to start in January 2022.
- A statistically valid questionnaire will be part of the first consultation process in order to solicit a cross section of responses.
- The report will be finalized in 2023.
- The budget for the project is \$175,000 with \$20,000 earmarked for engagement.
- The final report will include the recommendations based on public engagement and a guide for monitoring success and progress.
- Animals at large are out of scope for this project.
- The report will come back to the committee prior to it going to Council.

The committee made the following comments:

- The Capital Regional District (CRD) has completed extensive work with respect to trail use; it would be helpful to include the CRD in the consultation process.
- Council should consider the creation of designated dog parks.

The Senior Manager, Parks stated:

- There were pop up dog parks in five parks this summer.
- Overall, the dog parks were well received by residents.
- The results of the survey with respect to the dog parks will feed into the consultant's work and could be presented to the committee at a future meeting.

## **PARKS AND ADAPTING TO HEAT**

The Manager, Park Planning and Development presented and made the following comments:

- During park renewal, tree planting is considered a design feature.
- Irrigation is installed for regular watering during the first few years to ensure the trees endure.
- Certain trees are better for specific areas; arborists have developed a parks and boulevard palette.
- Shade structures near play structures are incorporated into new park design.
- Misting stations could be considered next year as a pilot project.
- At least one large and one smaller park are renewed each year.
- Once the parks work plan and budgeting for 2022 is complete, staff could present to the committee on what parks renewals are coming up.

## **CHURCHILL DRIVE GATE CLOSURE ON LONG WEEKENDS**

The Senior Manager, Parks presented:

- Traditionally, the Churchill Drive gate is closed to vehicles until noon every day.
- During COVID, residents requested that the gate be closed during long weekends because of increased park use and safety concerns; this is equivalent to 10 holidays and long weekends per year and works out to about 26 of 365 days (depending on which day of the week some holidays falls, e.g. Remembrance Day).
- Less than ten complaints of the gate being closed during long weekends were received from residents.
- Trail use data, corrected to remove vehicle use show an average of about 1,000 visits per day, with Saturdays, Sundays and Mondays trending higher than other days of the week; staff estimate annual non-motorized visits on Churchill Drive to be close to 400,000.
- Residents are now used to the daily and long weekend closures.

The committee made the following comments:

- There is concern with the impact the closure has on those not physically able to walk to the top of Mount Douglas.
- There are approximately ten long weekends in a year that the gate would be closed.
- There are safety concerns with vehicles and the number of pedestrians at the summit.
- Communications to residents could emphasize the time that the gate is open for vehicles.

**MOVED by P. Carroll and Seconded by A. Louie: “That the Parks, Trails and Recreation Advisory Committee recommends that Council approve that the long weekend closures of the Churchill Drive gate be made permanent.”**

**CARRIED  
with P. Danforth OPPOSED**

## **COMMUNITY SERVICES AND PARKS UPDATES**

The Community Services and Parks updates were received by the committee.

Discussion took place on doing a park walk for the next meeting.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 5:28 p.m. The next meeting is October 27, 2021.

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Councillor Brownoff, Chair

I hereby certify these Minutes are accurate.

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Committee Secretary