

**MINUTES**  
**PARKS, TRAILS AND RECREATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
Held at Saanich Municipal Hall, Council Chambers  
**October 27, 2021 at 4:07 pm**

Present: Councillor Judy Brownoff (Chair), Kathleen Burton (via Teams), Leigh Campbell, Pamela Carroll, and Annie Dijotsa

Staff: Eva Riccius, Senior Manager Parks; Gary Darrah, Manager, Park Planning and Development; Nathalie Dechaine, Manager, Community Development/Business Systems; Pam Hartling, Senior Planner (Community Planning); Andrew Connell, Parks Development & Review Coordinator, Katie Turner, Park Stewardship Coordinator, Adeeb Noorani, Parks, Lynn Merry and Nancy Chaggar, Senior Committee Clerks

Regrets: Ted Austin, Pat Danforth, Lyndsay Edgar, Amy-Jade Louie and Dexter Owen

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### **CHAIR'S REMARKS**

The Chair commented that she will be re-appointed as Chair to the Parks, Trails and Recreation Advisory Committee (PTR) for a term ending fall 2022. The Senior Manager, Parks advised that Saanich won an international award for its digital communications campaign with respect to Natural Intelligence. There were over 400 applicants and Saanich's campaign focused on encouraging residents to get outside.

### **LOCAL AREA PLAN UPDATE**

The Senior Planning (Community Planning) stated:

- Staff previously presented an overview of the Local Area Plan (LAP) updates to PTR.
- The community has now provided input and the Housing Strategy has been completed.
- Council made a motion at its March 8, 2021 Special Committee of the Whole meeting to refer the LAP update to Saanich's Advisory Committees for review and requested committees reconfirm their support.
- Recommendations from the Housing Strategy have been incorporated into the LAP update.
- Over time, Saanich may adopt policies or practices in support of housing diversity and supply that go beyond LAPs.
- LAPs will be evaluated every five years to ensure relevancy.
- LAPs provide guidance and certainty to residents, staff and developers.

Committee members made the following comments:

- The Cordova Bay community put in a lot of work in the LAP update.
- It was the consensus of the PTR to re-confirm its support for the LAP.

### **BOULEVARD TREE UPDATE**

Councillor Brownoff introduced the item and stated that the right trees should be planted in the right locations. Boulevard trees assist with walkability, fight climate change and lower temperatures. There may be a need to consider that developers commit to increased watering requirements as part of development. The Boulevard Tree policy is outdated and needs to be refreshed. The 3-30-300 policy should be reflected in planning documents.

The Manager, Community Development/Business Systems and the Parks Development & Review Coordinator presented on Boulevard Trees in Saanich and stated:

- Trees provide a multitude of benefits including habitat, storm water management, reducing pollution and air and water purification.
- The Tree Protection Bylaw was strengthened in 2019.
- The Urban Forest Strategy was approved in 2009 with the goal to protect and enhance Saanich's urban forest.
- Other policies and guidelines including the Official Community Plan, Local Area Plans, Development Permit guidelines and the Subdivision Bylaw also have measures to protect the urban forest.
- Boulevard trees are considered trees that grow on the boulevards that are planted and/or maintained by Saanich.
- New builds, upgrades and maintenance can impact boulevard trees.
- Parks staff are tasked with planting and maintaining trees, seeking planting partnerships and restoring natural areas.
- It is necessary to ensure the right tree is planted in the right location; the suitable class and size of tree is considered when choosing trees to be planted.
- Staff also consider planting in terms of proximity to infrastructure both existing and future, sightlines and soil volume.
- The biggest challenge for staff is finding suitable planting areas.
- There may be a need for increased watering requirements due to increased drought.
- Opportunities include increased public support, more appreciation of trees, new technology and design features and a diversity of available tree species.
- The Urban Forest Strategy update will be in Q1 2022 and consider the Boulevard Tree Policy, Tree Protection Bylaw and other Saanich policies and initiatives.
- Going forward tree mapping and tracking is underway; staff are seeking additional partnerships to help get more trees into neighbourhoods.
- A boulevard is the area between the edge of the road and the property line; the size of the boulevard varies depending on the type of road.
- Staff are always refining the type of tree species that are appropriate and stay up to date in providing a diverse pallet of trees.

Committee members made the following comments:

- The walking environment should be enhanced with tree planting.
- The work of staff is appreciated.
- Planning and Engineering staff will be requested to attend the next meeting to discuss their part in the planting boulevard trees.

## **INVASIVE SPECIES IN PARKS UPDATE**

The Senior Manager, Parks presented Invasive Species Management in Parks and on Boulevards and stated:

- The Growing Natural Intelligence initiative takes into consideration invasive species management.
- The community and Council supports the growth of the program.
- The Invasive Species Strategy was adopted in 2013 and includes prevention, the active management of priority invasive species, public outreach and support, staff education, guidance for the proper removal of invasive species, enforcement of the Noxious Weed Bylaw and working with regional and provincial partners for effective management.
- Invasive species on private lands is managed by Environmental Services; Bylaw Enforcement deals with noxious weeds bylaws.
- There are over 500 sites that staff manage; there are also 44 official Pulling Together

- volunteer projects with volunteers logging more than 1500+ volunteer hours per year.
- Staff support Pulling Together by doing pick ups, mulch and chip requests for restoration sites, work party support and putting in plant and seed orders.
- There are demands for more data entry into the GIS system, better mapping and field surveys, Species at Risk surveys, expansion of the Garry oak and ecosystem protection fencing and support for work parties.
- The Pulling Together program has expanded by double; there is a need for dedicated support.
- Noxious weeds are incinerated; invasive species are composted.
- Through the Significant Tree program, residents can apply for tree trimming at a cost share of the lowest of three quotes.
- The work of the Resilient Saanich Technical Committee includes looking at incentives.
- Staff are working to build significant partnerships with school groups.
- It is likely that the Fire Department would not support controlled burns.

### **POP UP DOG PARK SUMMARY**

The Senior Manager, Parks presented the Pop Up Dog Park Summary and stated:

- Temporary pop up dog parks were set up in five Saanich parks for two weeks each as a pilot project; the pilot project was a result of concerns of dog owners and non-dog owners in parks.
- An online survey was conducted with a total of 585 responses collect.
- All five parks were well visited and owners stated that they would use an enclosed dog park if they were made permanent.
- Owners stated that they walked dogs off leash in Saanich parks daily.
- Verbal comments included the need for water, shade and seating and an improved gate system and fencing; most people said that additional signage is not needed.
- Concerns with having an enclosed dog park in their neighbourhood were identified as owners not controlling their dogs, possible aggressive dogs and cleanliness/owners not picking up after their dogs.
- The survey results will be considered as part of the People, Pets and Parks Strategy.
- Residents commented on the social nature of dog parks for humans.
- The pilot project was completed within approved budget.

Committee members made the following comments:

- This was a great opportunity and program.
- It is hoped that the People, Pets and Parks Strategy will ramp down the conflict with park users.

### **FIELD TRIP**

The Senior Manager, Parks advised that a walk through Cuthbert Holmes Park would take place on Friday, October 29, 2021 at noon.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 5:54 p.m. The next meeting is November 24, 2021.

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Councillor Brownoff, Chair

I hereby certify these Minutes are accurate.

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Committee Secretary