

**MINUTES**  
**PARKS, TRAILS AND RECREATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Via Microsoft Teams  
February 21, 2023, at 4:00 p.m.

Present: Pam Carroll (Acting Chair); Rachel Corder; David Little; Darrell Wick

Staff: Becky Goodall, Park Planner Designer; Paul de Greeff, Parks Manager of Planning & Development; Eva Riccius, Senior Manager, Parks; Kirsten Brazier, Committee Clerk.

Regrets: Dex Owen; Ted Austin; Amy-Jade Louie; Leigh Campbell; Councillor Judy Brownoff

Guests: Connie McCann, President, Victoria Regional Pickleball Association

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**ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

**As quorum was not met, the minutes were not adopted.**

**Councillor Brownoff was unable to attend; Pam Carroll Acting Chair**

**VICTORIA REGIONAL PICKLEBALL PRESENTATION**

The President of the Victoria Regional Pickleball Association (VPRA) presented on Pickleball in Saanich.

- The Association started in 2016 with 33 founding members, today there are 570 members. Membership has seen a 100% increase in the past 12 months.
- Pickleball is on track to be a demo sport in the Olympics.
- It was the third largest sport in the 2022 BC 55+ Games.
- Over 30% of the association's members are from Saanich.
- The largest growth has been in the under 35 age group.
- Players are looking for dedicated pickleball courts in the region.
- Pearkes Recreation Centre is full of bookings from Pickleball players.
- VPRA recently partnered with the Oak Bay municipality to help fund acoustic sound panels. Neighbours have noted that the sound has been reduced.
- VPRA would like to offer the same to Saanich, as well as netting.
- VPRA has been involved in the Fowler / Lochside park planning, and the Association would like to see dedicated parks in this area.
- The VPRA is willing to step up where appropriate.

**Committee Discussion**

- Sound studies were completed at Tolmie Park. None of the solutions explored at that time passed the test.
- The courts at Tolmie are too close to the neighbours. It would be helpful there were more courts that were accessible in the region, as these courts are overused.
- In Oak Bay the courts were moved further away from the neighbours. "Acoustifence" Panels have made a difference. The distance of the courts from the neighbours does make a difference.

**PICKLEBALL (SAANICH INITIATIVES)**

The Manager, Parks Planning and Development provided an update on Pickleball initiatives taking place in Saanich.

- Limited hours of play are currently in place at Tolmie Park.

- An acoustic assessment has been completed at Fowler. A Noise Assessment report is being reviewed.
- The City of Victoria has issued a request for proposal to hire a consultant to do a regional Pickleball strategy. Saanich is an equal funding partner in this work.
- The BC Recreation and Parks Association is working on publishing a strategy which staff have commented on. This will be released soon.

#### **Committee Discussion**

- Staff are exploring options for the park that will be brought to the community as a public engagement process that is tentatively scheduled for this summer.
- How are other sports who are looking to grow being treated in an equitable manner. Staff are working on a Diversity Equity and Inclusion Strategy as well as a Parks, Recreation and Community Services review of the master plan. The latter will have a significant public consultation process.
- We are hoping to get a demand analysis and a strategy in a regional assessment through the joint initiative with City of Victoria.
- A geotechnical assessment is being completed at Fowler as it is a fill site. This will give a better sense of how many courts could be accommodated.

#### **POP-UP DOG PARK PILOT PROGRAM SUMMARY & 2023 PROPOSAL**

The Park Planner/Designer, provided a Pop-Up Dog Parks update.

- The program started in 2021 to address the issue of dogs in parks.
- Pop-up areas must be appropriately zoned, be at least .14ha, and have parking available.
- Conflicting uses are being considered, as well as the suitability of the terrain and density.
- The proposal for this year is to utilize fewer parks for a longer period of time.
- Three parks would host a pop-up for five months.
- Staff have solicited feedback from park users and area residents which have been passed along to the consultants.
- Overall, the program has been very popular.
- Saanich has received some complaints from neighbours where the pop-up was close (10 m) to a property line.
- Hyacinth, Rudd and Lambrick parks have been proposed as options for this year.
- Parks have been chosen in densely populated areas in order to serve residents in those neighbourhoods.

#### **Committee Discussion**

- The Capital Regional District area near Beaver Lake will be explored as part of the People, Pets and Parks project. Other jurisdictions are also being explored along with private land.
- Emergency services have been offered the area at the Salvation Army to use in case of emergency. It would be ideal if a dog park area would be near to where residents would be evacuated in an emergency.

#### **URBAN FOREST STRATEGY UPDATE**

The Senior Manager, Parks provided an update on the Urban Forest Strategy.

- The State of Urban Forest Report has just been completed. We are currently in phase 3 of 7, with the report to Council being targeted for Winter 2023.
- The consultant is looking at how much forest cover there is in Saanich.

- Saanich has 43% urban forest in the municipality.
- Neighbourhoods that are experiencing high growth have lower forest cover.
- The urban forest in each local area was identified.
- Of the 10 trees that are planted in the municipality, 9 are replacement trees. Status quo is being maintained.
- If we continue as we currently are, the forest will be at risk due to climate change.
- Saanich parks have 50% cover and roads have 28% cover.
- There may be opportunities to plant more trees along roadways.
- This draft sets the stage nicely for round 1 of Public Engagement.

#### **Committee Discussion**

- PKOLS Park comprises a large part of the urban forest statistic in the Gordon Head area.

#### **BIRD CITY UPDATE**

The Senior Manager, Parks, presented an update on Bird City.

- Bird Friendly Cities is a Nature Canada initiative that we have applied to.
- Following COP in Montreal in December the federal Minister of Environment, named Saanich as a Bird Friendly City.
- Public engagement on what our Saanich bird is will be spearheaded by Swan Lake in consultation with an Indigenous artist.

#### **General Committee Discussion**

- To bring forward to next meeting: Youth Strategy.
- Compliments to staff for a successful consultation for People, Pets and Parks.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 5:20 p.m.

#### **NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting is March 16, 2023, at 4 pm.

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Councillor Brownoff, Chair

I hereby certify these Minutes are accurate.

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Committee Secretary