

MINUTES
RESILIENT SAANICH TECHNICAL COMMITTEE
Saanich Municipal Hall, 770 Vernon Avenue
Council Chambers
February 16, 2021 at 6:30 p.m.

Present: Councillor Rebecca Mersereau (Council Liaison), Kevin Brown (via teleconference), Tim Ennis (via teleconference), Purnima Govindarajulu (via teleconference), Stewart Guy (Chair), Tiffany Joseph (via teleconference), Tory Stevens, Brian Wilkes, Bev Windjack

Staff: Eva Riccius, Senior Manager of Parks (via teleconference); Thomas Munson, Senior Environmental Planner; Adriane Pollard, Manager of Environmental Services; and Lynn Merry, Senior Committee Clerk

1. CALL TO ORDER AND TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT & DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION STATEMENT

The meeting was called to order at 6:34 p.m.

Councillor Mersereau read the Territorial Acknowledgement and the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Statement.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOVED by B. Wilkes and Seconded by T. Stevens: "That the Agenda for the February 16, 2021 Resilient Saanich Technical Committee be approved, as amended."

CARRIED

Two items were added to the agenda as follows:

- Format of previous minutes
- Chair's workload

3. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

MOVED by K. Brown and Seconded by B. Windjack; "That the minutes of the Resilient Saanich Technical Committee meeting of December 8, 2020 be adopted."

Discussion took place as follows:

- The minutes should be concise and focus on decisions and actions.

**The Motion to Approve the Minutes was DEFEATED
with B. Emmett, S. Guy, J. Gye, T. Stevens, B. Wilkes, and B. Windjack OPPOSED**

MOVED by B. Emmett and Seconded by J. Gye: "That staff be requested to amend the minutes of the December 8, 2020 and January 19, 2021 Resilient Saanich Technical Committee meetings to ensure that they are a concise record of decisions and actions and to delete the reference to Eva Riccius in the December 8, 2020 meeting as she had not been invited to participate."

CARRIED

4. RECEIPT OF CORRESPONDENCE

MOVED by B. Emmett and Seconded by B. Windjack: “That the correspondence attached as part of the agenda for the February 16, 2021 Resilient Saanich Technical Committee meeting be received for information.”

The committee was appreciative of the opportunity to review the correspondence.

In response to questions, the Manager of Environmental Services stated:

- Emails received through the biodiversity@saanich.ca email address are acknowledged upon receipt; Environmental Services staff respond to matters of process or forward emails to various departments for response.

The Motion was then Put and CARRIED

5. UPDATE FROM STAFF

The Manager of Environmental Services presented the February 8, 2021 Staff Update and stated:

- The webpage has been updated to direct visitors to the virtual Open House.
- International and National biodiversity targets have changed and will come to the committee to review before updates are made.
- 62 surveys have been received to date.
- An Environmental GIS Analyst has been hired and is working towards the completion of Action Item 11 (Milestone 2).
- Enhancements to the Stewardship Program are in progress; staff are looking at producing a set of booklets similar to Our Backyard on topics such as native plant choices, naturescaping and information for developers.
- More stewardship enhancements are a part of Milestone 2.
- A facilitator has been retained to work on the video project as staff do not have the equipment or expertise.
- The results of the engagement process will be provided to the committee for review.
- There is a demographic question in the survey requesting if the respondent lives and/or works in Saanich.

6. OPTIONAL UPDATES FROM WORKING GROUPS

Biodiversity Conservation Group

- Comments from committee members were incorporated into the foundation document; there were some comments that may be more appropriate in the strategy document.
- It may be helpful to know what information staff can provide and what information would be provided by a contractor.
- A meeting with staff needs to happen sooner than later to discuss what needs to go into the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy.

The Manager of Environmental Services stated:

- The GIS Analyst has begun preliminary work on Action Item 11 in Milestone 2; it may be helpful to have the Analyst attend a future meeting to present to the committee on the data collected, data sources and potential databases to store the information.

Stewardship Working Group

- There is an overarching need for a coordinated stewardship program within Saanich.
- Stewardship elements will be evident in other themes.
- Saanich needs to lead by example through stewardship.
- Important aspects of an enhanced stewardship program include a stewardship program leader/manager who will coordinate efforts, continuous funding, and relationships with First Nations.
- Stewardship should be considered by all Saanich Departments; there may be linkages between different program areas.

The Senior Manager, Parks stated:

- There are numerous stewardship activities already being done in Saanich parks and there are more coming; staff could meet with the committee to outline what is already being done.

Climate Plan, EPF Gaps Working Group

- The committee approached the framework as a series of thematic focuses such as the Climate Plan and the Biodiversity Plan.
- Besides looking at gaps in policies and regulations, there is a need to consider gaps in data and science.
- Each working group should identify gaps that are relative to their thematic focus.
- It is not the committee's job to write the plans for each thematic area but to provide expert advice and input towards a Request for Proposal for a contractor to draft the plans.
- In 2021, work on biodiversity, stewardship, marine shorelines and review of the Environment Section in the Climate Action Plan could be undertaken.
- Having a work plan for the committee may be helpful; it may identify if there is duplication in work.
- There is interest in prioritizing urban forestry work.

Councillor Mersereau stated:

- Through documenting a work plan, the committee can prioritize the tasks outlined in the Terms of Reference and can identify other areas of interest such as urban forestry and marine shorelines.
- There may not be funds available for new strategies but providing advice and expertise on those areas would be welcomed.
- The committee should develop a work plan that identifies what the committee plans on focusing its efforts on this year; after that, the work can be reconciled with the work staff have been directed to move forward with and any contradictions with the Terms of Reference.
- Council has approved funding to update the Urban Forestry Strategy.

7. DISCUSSION ABOUT MAPPING

GIS and Atlas Mapping

The submission to the RSTC regarding new mapping was presented and discussion ensued as follows:

- There is a need to know where Environmental Sensitive or Significant Areas (ESAs) are and what condition they are in.
- There is concern that polygons in the Saanich Ecosystem Mapping (SEM) have not been verified on the ground; they were drawn using the tree canopy but without reference to what is on the ground beneath the trees.
- These areas have been flagged for a closer look.

- If an area is special or has ecological value, it needs to be protected; a parcel may not meet the standards of an ESA but may still have value.
- A proactive approach should be taken in identifying and protecting ESAs.
- A property owner can enhance biodiversity on their own property.
- There are bylaws in place to protect trees.
- There is a need for a dispute resolution mechanism
- The mapping needs to be right to support the Biodiversity Strategy.
- Restoration work and the urban forest need to be considered.
- The TEM mapping is at a scale of 1/20,000 and is not adequate for decision making at a property level scale.
- Saanich parks need to be included in the strategy.

The Senior Manager, Parks stated:

- The Capital Regional District will be doing a tree canopy assessment for the region and will be comparing it to the data from 10 years ago.
- Land, that may not have an ESA, may be valuable for pollinators or birds.
- There will be some drip line restoration work on Garry oak trees in Saanich parks to start in the summer 2021.

Coastal Mapping

Committee discussion ensued with the following comments:

- There is a data gap in that the SEI does not address coastal sensitivity.
- To move ahead with coastal stewardship, background information is needed.
- Shores-Zone mapping could be used for data collection; as well, Trail Mark has worked with First Nations to map out harvesting sites.
- A co-op student could be considered to help with updating mapping.
- Updating the mapping should be a priority.

The Manager of Environmental Services stated:

- A gap has been identified in near shore and intertidal mapping.
- The Capital Region District has done some Sea Level Rise mapping which may be helpful.

Councillor Mersereau stated:

- Coastal mapping could be added to the committee's work plan.
- Committee members can meet with staff to further discuss the recommendations and comments from the submission on mapping document.

8. **WORK PLANNING DISCUSSION**

The draft work plan was reviewed and committee discussion ensued with the following comments:

- The work plan could be considered a project management tool.
- It is important to ensure that the themes are within the scope of the committee.
- It may be appropriate to include the work for the entire project period in the work plan.
- The Word document will be circulated to the committee for comment.
- It will be important that each working group communicates to ensure that there is no duplication in work.
- It may be appropriate that the Senior Manager, Parks presents to the committee on what is being done in Saanich parks.
- It may be helpful to have a graphic included that shows the components of Resilient Saanich and where the committee fits in.

The Senior Manager, Parks stated:

- The expertise of the committee will bolster the work already being done by staff.
- It will be important to have strong recommendations to bring to Council.

9. **CHAIR'S WORKLOAD**

Discussion took place on the need to recognize the additional work of the Chair with a higher level of honorarium.

MOVED by B. Emmett and Seconded by J. Gye: "That it be recommended that, retroactively, the additional work of the Chairs be recognized at double the amount of the honorarium during the time served."

**The Motion was then Put and CARRIED
with K. Brown OPPOSED**

MOVED by T. Ennis and Seconded by B. Emmett: "That S. Guy remain Chair for an additional three months to June 30, 2021 after which time the position of Chair would be re-evaluated."

CARRIED

10. **ADJOURNMENT**

MOVED by T. Stevens and Seconded by J. Gye: "That the meeting of the Resilient Saanich Technical Committee be adjourned."

CARRIED

The meeting adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

NEXT MEETING

March 18, 2021 at 6:30 p.m. in Council Chambers.

Stewart Guy, Chair

I hereby certify these Minutes are accurate.

Committee Secretary