

MINUTES
RESILIENT SAANICH TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

Via Microsoft Teams
August 30, 2022

Present: Tory Stevens (Chair); Councillor Rebecca Mersereau; Kevin Brown; Tim Ennis; Purnima Govindarajulu; Stewart Guy; Chris Lowe; Brian Wilkes; Bev Windjack; Jeremy Gye

Staff: Eva Riccius, Senior Manager of Parks; Thomas Munson, Senior Environmental Planner; Megan MacDonald, Senior Committee Clerk

CALL TO ORDER

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

TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT & DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION STATEMENT

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

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOVED by B. Wilkes and Seconded by B. Windjack: “That the Agenda for the August 30, 2022, Resilient Saanich Technical Committee meeting be approved.”

The following was noted by the Chair:

- The presentation on Private Land Stewardship Options will be postponed until September 15 as the presenter is not able to attend the meeting.
- Coordinating the expert for State of Biodiversity Report was added to the agenda.

The Motion was then Put and CARRIED

ADOPTION OF MINUTES

MOVED by C. Lowe and Seconded by T. Ennis: “That the minutes of the June 28, 2022 Resilient Saanich Technical Committee meeting be adopted as amended.”

The following business arising from the June 28, 2022, minutes was noted to be discussed in future:

- Page 2 includes a motion to hold a workshop with external experts. A fulsome discussion will need to take place to determine the scope of this recommendation.
- The Milestone 3 workplan was amended to add a line item for completing the gap analysis on the Environmental Policy Framework. It is important to update the document and share the latest version with members of the committee.
- The committee made a motion to hire a Secretariat, an update on this topic will be provided at the September 15 meeting.

The Motion was then Put and CARRIED

PRESENTATION ON PRIVATE LAND STEWARDSHIP OPTIONS

This topic was postponed to the September 15, 2022 meeting.

UPDATE ON COUNCIL RESPONSE TO RESILIENT SAANICH TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MILESTONE 2 REPORT

The Milestone 2 report was considered by Council on August 22, 2022. Councillor R. Mersereau provided an update on the discussion, the following was noted:

- Council made a Motion to receive the report for information; and to direct Planning staff to consider the draft Principles and Goals for the Environmental Policy Framework in the proposed Official Community Plan Update.
- Concerns were expressed about the lack of First Nations involvement, a lack of ecological values of private lands and stewardship. The Chair, the Council Liaison and the consultant were able to address these concerns, leading to a unanimous vote of approval by Council.
- The draft Principles and Goals will be posted publicly on the website soon.
- There are several items in the Terms of Reference that are out of date. Staff will be bringing forward a memo to ensure that clarification is provided on these items.

UPDATE ON FIRST NATIONS RELATIONS

The Draft Principals and Goals have been provided to the W̱SÁNEĆ Leadership Council (WLC). The Chair has not yet gotten feedback. Staff have also reached out to the Songhees Nation and the Esquimalt First Nation, with no response yet. The draft Principals and Goals are at a place where amendments can still happen if comments or suggestions are received.

UPDATE ON URBAN FOREST STRATEGY

Diamond Head Consulting has been contracted to review and update the Urban Forest Strategy (UFS). The following updates were noted:

- The public will be engaged using a story map, which is a GIS mapping system where people can note areas of significant trees, areas of concern and other comments.
- DHC is currently working on a State of Urban Forest Report using recent LiDAR data and internal resources. The draft report will be provided in September/October. RSTC will have an opportunity to provide comment on the draft, along with the community and stakeholders. Revisions will be made prior to Council consideration.
- Council will receive the report for consideration in the Spring of 2023.
- The Urban Forest Strategy Review webpage and social media will be updated regularly.

The following was noted during discussion with the committee:

- There is interest in statistics on permeable surfaces, this data may be included in the LiDAR data which was recently obtained. This was identified as a key indicator for backyard biodiversity, and a request to include this information has been given to DHC.
- It would be beneficial to track statistics related to the Tree Bylaw; such as how many trees have been planted on private land. Metrics to track success would be ideal.
- Committee members appreciate having the opportunity to provide input on the subject prior to public engagement.
- Space to plant trees is important. Considerations should be made to implement a guideline for a minimum soil volume or a minimum space for trees during development.

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY FILTER WORKING GROUP

A working group for the Environmental Policy evaluation matrix was formed at the previous meeting. B. Wilkes provided information about the draft evaluation matrix; the following was noted:

- This matrix will be helpful to determine if new and existing policies comply with the principals of the Environmental Policy Framework (EPF).
- The matrix is based on a sum of scores, the higher the score - the better compliance with the EPF. Lower score policies and programs may need more work to ensure they align with the goals and objectives set out in the EPF.
- Feedback is required from the committee to ensure this matrix achieves the goal.

The following was noted during discussion with the committee:

- Once the committee provides feedback and the draft matrix is finalized, the working group will do a trial run with existing and/or proposed policies.
- Principal 1 may require further definition of biodiversity, hopefully this can be achieved with the State of Biodiversity Report.
- Principal 9 emphasizes a one-way flow of ideas, a tweaking of wording could encourage more community driven initiatives and supporting engaged residents in doing so.
- Testing the matrix will help to identify any blind spots or areas to be improved.
- This filter helps to refine thinking, not all policies or programs need to reach the highest possible score of 27. There will always be exceptions, this helps clarify what is best.
- This is a useful tool for staff to gauge success of policies prior to Council consideration.
- Members of the committee were invited to provide further feedback and written comments to the working group within the next week for incorporation in the document.

COORDINATING EXPERT INPUT FOR STATE OF BIODIVERSITY REPORT

There is interest in gathering feedback from experts on the technical mapping tool, which will inform the State of Biodiversity Report. The following was noted during discussion:

- An invitation to provide comments on the map could be sent to experts to provide feedback; areas of high ecological value may otherwise be missed.
- It would be beneficial to understand where Saanich would like to go with land use planning long term to fully, having a staff presentation would be helpful.
- There may be benefit in putting out a call for expertise to network contacts rather than compiling a list where some may be excluded or missed.
- The timeframe is short, having professionals advise within the timeline will be difficult.
- There should be a continuous tracking mechanism for the State of Biodiversity Report.
- More opportunities for expert opinions will exist following the release of the report.
- An adaptive management approach will be taken for the Biodiversity Strategy where actions are taken to reach goals, progress will be monitored, areas for improvement will be identified and the procedure will be adapted for best results in the future.
- More information for the experts on how to use the map, as well as what information we are looking for would be beneficial.

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion from Brian, the meeting adjourned at 8:36 p.m.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is scheduled for September 15, 2022 at 6:30 p.m.

Tory Stevens, Chair

I hereby certify these Minutes are accurate.

Committee Secretary