

MINUTES
RESILIENT SAANICH TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

Via Microsoft Teams
Municipal Hall, Council Chambers
March 29, 2022

Present: Councillor Rebecca Mersereau (Council Liaison); Tory Stevens (Chair); Kevin Brown (6:52 p.m.); Tim Ennis; Purnima Govindarajulu; Stewart Guy; Chris Lowe; Brian Wilkes; Jeremy Gye

Staff: Eva Riccius, Senior Manager of Parks; Adriane Pollard, Manager of Environmental Services; Nancy Chaggar, Senior Committee Clerk

Regrets: Bev Windjack

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m.

2. **TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT & DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION STATEMENT**

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

3. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

MOVED by C. Lowe and Seconded by T. Ennis: "That the Agenda for the March 29, 2022 Resilient Saanich Technical Committee meeting be approved."

CARRIED

4. **ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

MOVED by B. Wilkes and Seconded by J. Gye: "That the minutes of the February 22, 2022, Resilient Saanich Technical Committee meeting be adopted as amended."

CARRIED

5. **RECEIPT OF CORRESPONDENCE**

MOVED by B. Wilkes and Seconded by S. Guy: "That the correspondence be received for information."

CARRIED

6. **DISCUSSION ON FIRST NATIONS PRESENTATIONS**

The Chair led a discussion on the recent First Nations presentation with Elder Eric Pelkey and the two workshop sessions with Roundtable consulting. The following was noted:

- It may be that expectations for level of engagement from First Nations are unrealistic.
- It would have been ideal to have First Nations involvement from the beginning; however, at this stage, it is adequate to present documents in draft form and incorporate feedback.

- It will be key to determine how to engage First Nations People in the RSTC work.
- Eric Pelkey's presentation and the sessions with Roundhouse provided insight on First Nations viewpoints and outlooks.
- Reconciliation is a significant corporate priority for Saanich.

7. **UPDATE ON CONTRACT: STATE OF BIODIVERSITY REPORT CONTRACT**

The Manager of Environmental Services provided an update and the following was noted:

- Staff are currently in discussions with a consultant and may have a contract in place by the end of the week.
- The project timeline and deliverables will be delayed slightly as a result of the original RFQ process.
- When the contract is in place, the Committee members will be notified and work will start immediately thereafter. The contractor will be independent and will consider input and feedback from the RSTC, First Nations, and the general public.
- The Secretariat/Coordinator position will be included as part of a second contract.
- Concerns were expressed regarding exclusion of the Committee from the contractor selection process.
- An interdepartmental team evaluated the proposal. The company is reputable and, although not based in Greater Victoria, they do contract work locally.
- The Committee was involved in creating the Terms of Reference. Work from the biodiversity working group was also included in the bid package to the consultant.
- There will be a start-up meeting with the selected consultant once the process is finalized. It is likely that the consultant will attend the April RSTC meeting.
- Staff must follow the correct Purchasing processes.
- The selected contractor will incorporate the Conservation Standards methodology per the Committee's preferences, in combination with other methodologies.
- A separate discussion around the precision of methodology details for the contract will be conducted between Council Liaison, The Chair, and Staff.

8. **DISCUSSION ON PRINCIPLES, GOALS, AND OBJECTIVES REPORTS**

C. Lowe provided an update from the Stewardship Working Group and noted the following:

- The working group has met twice since the last RSTC meeting.
- The group compiled known sources of stewardship ideas and information, and drafted a table of contents for recommendations to the Committee.
- Stewardship as a concept should be voluntary and should take place on public and private properties.
- More proactive advocacy for stewardship is needed in order for it to be successful.
- Good mapping is important to assess the baseline for biodiversity and to have the ability to monitor success over time.

B. Wilkes provided an update from the Mapping Working Group and noted the following:

- There should be emphasis on establishing a credible baseline for evaluating change over time and to help focus on priority areas for stewardship.
- Mapping is out of date and needs to be updated to correct errors, with a priority inside the Urban Containment Boundary.
- Provincial standards should be used for at-risk ecosystem mapping updates.
- There are areas that are not mapped that ought to be.
- It is recommended that the RSTC endorse the findings of the working group and refer them to Staff and the consultant for purposes of the State of Biodiversity report.

The Manager of Environmental Services provided an update on Saanich GIS mapping and noted the following:

- Layers that were only in the ESA atlas will now be published, including Saanich Wetlands and Natural State Covenants.
- Meta data and attributes associated with these inventories will provide more details about polygons and verification levels.
- Work to tidy up the TEM CDF product is complete and will be published soon.
- Staff are currently teasing out the Coastal Bluff and Terrestrial Herbaceous from the CDF TEM to show them as different types of ecosystems. SEI and TEM polygons will be brought in line with the marine highest high water mark.

MOVED by B. Wilkes and Seconded by J. Gye: “That the Resilient Saanich Technical Committee endorse the findings of the Mapping Working Group in the March 28, 2022 briefing notes and refer it to Staff and the Biodiversity consultants for action.”

The Motion was then Put and CARRIED

The Chair provided an update from the Environmental Policy Framework (EPF) Working Group and noted the following:

- The Terms of Reference state that “the final Environmental Policy Framework will be completed by Staff for consideration by Council.”
- The goal is for Staff to complete the EPF by Milestone 3.
- The working group has completed an outline which is comprised of much of the previous work done, including the previously established goals.
- The principles require more work.
- Committee members are to review the draft and provide feedback prior to the next meeting, preferably by April 12th. Staff are invited to comment as well.
- Once the Committee completes its review, the draft document will be presented to First Nations for their input.
- A sense of urgency was expressed regarding the slow progress of the EPF document.
- There may be an opportunity to integrate the EPF in the Official Community Plan update. Council Liaison will explore this opportunity with Staff and report back to the Committee.

9. ACTION ITEMS IN MILESTONE 2

The Chair added this item to the Agenda at this point during the meeting.

The Chair listed the action items for Milestone 2 and noted the following:

- Review and evaluate GIS environmental mapping layers and atlas – *in progress*
- Develop State of Biodiversity Report – *consultant to take over*
- Review and evaluate existing stewardship program and recommend improvements – *in progress*
- Review and evaluate Saanich’s Urban Forest Strategy*
- Begin drafting an outline for the EPF – *in progress*
- Produce Terms of Reference for consulting team to do the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy – *complete*
- Test and refine the draft Environmental Policy Evaluation Tool on existing environmental policy – *incomplete*
- Draft Milestone 3 work plan – *incomplete*

*The Senior Manager of Parks provided an update on Saanich’s Urban Forest Strategy and noted the following:

- Diamond Head consulting is completing the update for the Urban Forest Strategy.
- The project is currently in the data transfer stage.
- A draft engagement strategy has been received.
- Public engagement is anticipated to occur in June, and an engagement report will be drafted.
- It has been communicated to the consultant that the final strategy should be balanced and thoughtful.

10. **ADJOURNMENT**

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

CARRIED

The meeting was adjourned at 8:24 p.m.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is scheduled for April 26, 2022 at 6:30 p.m.

Tory Stevens, Chair

I hereby certify these Minutes are accurate.

Committee Secretary