

MINUTES
RESILIENT SAANICH TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

Via Microsoft Teams
September 15, 2022

Present: Tory Stevens (Chair); Councillor Rebecca Mersereau; Kevin Brown; Purnima Govindarajulu; Chris Lowe and Brian Wilkes

Regrets: Stewart Guy; Tim Ennis; Bev Windjack and Jeremy Gye

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

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:32 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 K. Brown and Seconded by C. Lowe: "That the Agenda for the September 15, 2022, Resilient Saanich Technical Committee meeting be approved."

CARRIED

ADOPTION OF MINUTES

MOVED by B. Wilkes and Seconded by K. Brown: "That the minutes of the June 28, 2022 Resilient Saanich Technical Committee meeting be adopted as amended."

CARRIED

PRESENTATION ON PRIVATE LAND STEWARDSHIP OPTIONS

D. Copley, Environmental Education Coordinator presented information on Saanich's Enhanced Stewardship on Private Lands and a proposal to build on the Native Plant Salvage Program. The following was noted:

- Saanich implemented a Native Plant Salvage Program in 2001 to encourage community involvement and environmental stewardship.
- Currently there are ~500 trained volunteer members involved in native plant rescue from development sites in Saanich.
- Salvaged plants are used in local restoration projects and on private property.
- Benefits of this program include increasing community cooperation, education about native plants, restores natural systems/habitats, encouraging Naturscaping and protecting biodiversity.
- There are opportunities to improve the program by training residents to propagate

- native plants, creating ambassadors to expand the reach of the program and create a network of native plant enthusiasts who can contribute to biodiversity.
- Healing the land using indigenous plants can be part of Saanich's commitment to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action.
 - This could also help build and enhance partnerships with local organizations and connect members to their projects (such as the GOMPS Garry Oak Nursery, Habitat Acquisition Trust and Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary).
 - Proposed Program Components could include:
 - Core Members Program:
 - Native plant/seed "stock exchange".
 - A tool sharing shed (with a project partner).
 - Bulletin board to post projects that require plants, contacts for donating plant material and crowd-source your planting needs.
 - Propagation info/videos.
 - Stewardship/Naturescape Training – Creating Resilient Residents:
 - New Member Orientation program.
 - Native Plant Propagation Techniques.
 - iNaturalist instructions for monitoring and learning.
 - Advanced Training and Speakers/Topics:
 - Native plant propagation techniques.
 - Restoration techniques.
 - Naturescaping for wildlife habitat.
 - Planting for climate change.
 - Pollinator-friendly gardening.
 - Identifying species visiting the restoration areas.
 - Members Corner, Mentoring, Q&A
 - Members provide programs to the group.
 - Restoration projects, new ideas, showcasing their own yards.
 - Accreditation for:
 - Program members.
 - Program mentors.
 - Ambassadors/Teachers.
 - There are numerous potential partners who have been identified.

The following was noted in response to questions and comments from the committee:

- Currently there is not a similar program that is regional, each municipality handles this topic differently. Regional coordination could improve this initiative.
- Portland Oregon has an accreditation program; committee members will share this example with the Environmental Education Coordinator.
- This program could be promoted by influencers such as landscapers. There is great benefit in having local contractors and landscapers becoming more aware of why Naturescaping is so important. Many landscapers are completely unaware of the risk of invasive plants or the benefits of native plantings.
- Native plants are extremely important to feed beneficial native insects and pollinators.

STEWARDSHIP WORKING GROUP SUMMARY

C. Lowe provided a brief overview of the recent work by the stewardship working group (Briefing note included with the agenda), the following was noted:

- The current assessment of existing and potential stewardship opportunities has been summarized in the briefing note.
- For the purpose of the working group; stewardship has been defined as the efforts taken

to protect, maintain, enhance and restore biodiversity and associated ecosystem functions to ensure a healthy environment for future generations.

- The committee was welcomed to provide feedback for further revisions.

The following was noted during committee discussion:

- The briefing note provides a great summary.
- A member noted that there is reference to development being the greatest driver for biodiversity loss, it was noted that invasive species also drives the loss of biodiversity.
- Members will send comments to C. Lowe for incorporation in the briefing note. Feedback will be compiled and further discussed at the next meeting.

BIODIVERSITY WORKING GROUP – NEXT DRAFT OF ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY FILTER

B. Wilkes provided information about the updated Environmental Policy Filter, which was included as part of the agenda; the following was noted:

- The next step will be to test the filter with existing policies to see if it is effective.
- Testing may also lead to the realization of blind spots or areas for improvement.
- Chair T. Stevens will discuss testing with P. Govindarajulu and another committee member and provide an update at the next meeting.

UPDATE FROM COUNCIL LIAISON (AND MEMO)

Council Liaison R. Mersereau provided a memo with the motions that were passed by Saanich Council since the creation of RSTC, to ensure these recommendations are top of mind for the committee moving forward. It was also noted that following the election, the committee may not have a Council Liaison immediately. A new liaison will be appointed at some point by the Mayor following the election.

UPDATE ON SECRETARIAT POSITION

The Senior Manager of Parks provided information about the secretariat position; the following was noted:

- The scope of work for this position has been determined.
- A targeted request has been sent to 3 consultants for consideration, currently the selection is still in progress. The committee will receive a further update in future.

UPDATE ON DIAMOND HEAD STORY MAP / STAFF UPDATE

The Senior Manager of Parks provided information about the Diamond Head Story Map. The following was noted during discussion:

- The Story Map is available until mid-October. Committee members are encouraged to provide input and promote the map via social media, news release, and to share the opportunity within their network.
- Knockan Hill was identified as being 20% native species, it was noted that this number may vary significantly based on which area of Knockan Hill is being considered.
- The consultant, Diamond Head, is also working on the State of Urban Forest report, a draft of which is anticipated in late September or early October. There will be an opportunity for public will review and comments prior to the report going to Council.

UPDATE ON TECHNICAL EXPERTS MAPPING

Chair T. Stevens noted that the opportunity to provide input for the Technical Experts Mapping closes soon, comments should be provided as soon as possible.

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion from Brian, the meeting adjourned at 8:01 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