

**MINUTES**  
**RESILIENT SAANICH TECHNICAL COMMITTEE**  
Via Microsoft Teams  
May 18, 2023 at 6:34 p.m.

Present: Tory Stevens (Chair); Councillor Zac de Vries; Kevin Brown; Tim Ennis; Purnima Govindarajulu; Chris Lowe and Brian Wilkes

Regrets: Jeremy Gye and Stewart Guy

Guests: Judith Cullington Secretariat

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

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

The Chair read the Territorial Acknowledgement and the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Statement.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**MOVED by T. Ennis and Seconded by K. Brown: “That the Agenda for the May 18, 2023, Resilient Saanich Technical Committee meeting be approved.”**

**CARRIED**

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**MOVED by C. Lowe and Seconded by P. Govindarajulu: “That the Minutes for the April 20, 2023, Resilient Saanich Technical Committee meeting, as amended, be approved.”**

**CARRIED**

Note: Bullet #5 in the April 20, 2023 minutes was amended to read: Biodiversity of an island depends on its size, the amount of edges/shoreline, how species move. Biodiversity remnants in a terrestrial setting act in a similar fashion depending on their tolerance for and ability to move through urban areas.

**PRESENTATION OF 2<sup>ND</sup> DRAFT CONNECTIVITY MAPPING – BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION STRATEGY**

C. Cummings and A. Kwan of Diamond Head Consulting updated the committee on actions taken since the last meeting including:

- The habitat network concept was reviewed and refinements continue to be done; riparian and foreshore legislation already provides some habitat protection.
- There is a need to understand the amount of remaining habitat there is, prioritize habitat that supports biodiversity, identify missing travel corridors, understand isolated habitat patches and provide mapping that informs land use planning, conservation and rehabilitation.
- Core habitat hubs are the larger continuous features; habitat sites are usually smaller;

connectors connect the hubs and sites.

- It is important to consider agricultural lands but it is harder to regulate and enforce on these properties.
- Feedback on the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy has been received via a survey and an Open House; comments included nature based play, execution of the strategy, connectivity, learning opportunities, enhancement of understorey, management of threats and the importance of having science-based decision-making and data transparency.
- Based on the comments, the Vision for the strategy will be refined.
- Policy tools from other municipalities are being gathered to determine best practices for Saanich.
- Next steps include continuing with the remaining engagement work, creation of the engagement summary, continuing with the habitat network work and a completing a policy gap analysis.
- The next update will tentatively be given at the July meeting.
- The engagement summary will be completed by approximately the end of June.
- The policy gap analysis includes reviewing the existing policy framework and best practices from other municipalities.
- Possible targets and goals will be discussed after the engagement summary and gap analysis are completed.
- The next round of public engagement will take place in either June or September.
- There may be pockets of land in Saanich that is within the Agricultural Land Reserve where regulation may not be possible.
- Consideration could be given on how to protect lands within versus outside the Urban Containment Boundary.
- Property owners can continue to donate or sell land to Saanich if they choose but those lands would not be included in the mapping.

Committee members made the following comments:

- There is a need to ensure the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy is consistent with the overarching Environmental Policy Framework.
- It is important that First Nations sites are highlighted in the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy.
- Consideration could be given to including future opportunity hubs in the strategy.
- Acquisition targets cannot be made public in advance as it could harm the interests of the municipality.

The committee will review the document and send any comments to the consultant by May 27, 2023.

## **REVIEW OF STEWARDSHIP WORKING GROUP DRAFT**

Discussion took place and the following was noted:

- The recommendations could be summarized at the beginning of the document rather than dispersed throughout the document.
- Clarification is needed on what is meant by “regulated” and “voluntary”.
- The focus could be on voluntary stewardship, the strengths and weaknesses and who is doing what.
- There is a need to determine who are stewards and how the municipality can support them; a current “State of Stewardship” could be considered.
- Consideration could be given to having an incentivized stewardship program for private properties within the Urban Containment Boundary.
- Stewardship should be elevated to a higher standard within the municipality and be better resourced for the management of public lands and covenants.

- There is a need to understand what municipality-led and community-led stewardship initiatives are already being undertaken.
- It may be appropriate to group items in the draft document by who is leading the initiative or by focus.

### **REVIEW OF ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY FRAMEWORK DRAFT**

Discussion took place and the following was noted:

- Further discussion of the Working Group is needed.
- The Policy Filter Working Group will continue once the principles in the Draft Framework are consolidated.
- The text in the framework is more or less done; there are appendices, including the gap analysis, still to be completed.

### **DEBRIEF OF WSÁNEĆ COMMUNITY MEETING**

Discussion took place and the following was noted:

- A meeting took place on May 12, 2023 but several key people were not available to attend due to funeral services.
- The Diamond Head storyboards on Urban Forestry and Biodiversity were presented.
- Suggestions on how to improve communications were discussed including the need for regular community meetings.
- A longer term working relationship with the WSÁNEĆ people is necessary.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

On a motion from K. Brown the meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

### **NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting is scheduled for June 15, 2023 at 6:30 p.m.

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Tory Stevens, Chair

I hereby certify these Minutes are accurate.

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Committee Secretary