

**MINUTES**  
**RESILIENT SAANICH TECHNICAL COMMITTEE**

Via Microsoft Teams  
November 16, 2023 at 7:00 p.m.

Present: Tory Stevens (Chair); Kevin Brown; Purnima Govindarajulu; Stewart Guy; Jeremy Gye; Chris Lowe and Brian Wilkes

Regrets: Tim Ennis

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 Senior Manager of Parks provided a Territorial Acknowledgement and the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Statement.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**MOVED by S. Guy and Seconded by B. Wilkes: “That the Agenda for the November 16, 2023, Resilient Saanich Technical Committee meeting be approved.”**

The following was noted during committee discussion:

- The addition of the topic of the Capital Regional District (CRD) Environmental Services Committee recent discussion on Biodiversity be added to the end of the agenda if time permits.

**The Motion was then Put and CARRIED**

**ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

**MOVED by J. Gye and Seconded by C. Lowe: “That the minutes of the September 28, 2023 Resilient Saanich Technical Committee meeting be adopted.”**

**CARRIED**

**MOVED by J. Gye and Seconded by C. Lowe: “That the minutes of the October 18, 2023 Resilient Saanich Technical Committee meeting be adopted.”**

**CARRIED**

## **DISCUSSION OF DRAFT 2 GAP ANALYSIS**

The members gave an overview of the recent work done by the revised draft Gap Analysis working group, the following was noted:

- The working group met to finalize the document which K. Brown had updated extensively from the 2020 draft Gap Analysis.
- A thorough and systematic index was created with policies, bylaws, strategic guidelines, and components of the natural environment and threats.
- While the document contains a lot of information, it is beyond the capacity of the committee to complete it within the current timeline and resources. Staff or consultant efforts would be needed to finalize the document.
- It was noted that biodiversity needs more protection from light and noise, as these items lack policy or bylaw protection. Some other overarching themes were also identified during the working group discussions.
- The Biodiversity Conservation Strategy (BCS) objectives may support protection of the natural environment in ways that are currently identified as gaps. It is not possible to identify all gaps prior to finalization of the BCS.
- Over 260 policies and bylaws have been reviewed to date.
- Adding parts of this document as an Appendix to the Environmental Policy Framework, as well the entire document as a stand-alone submission to Council would be preferred.
- Having the University of Victoria Environmental Law Centre review the document may be another opportunity to make further improvements without staff efforts.
- Including a summary of gaps that would be easy to address would be beneficial.
- The document is an important reference for items that need to be improved.

**MOVED by K. Brown and Seconded by B. Wilkes: "That the Resilient Saanich Technical Committee recommend that the Gap Analysis Methodology Summary presented on November 16, 2023 be included in the Environmental Policy Framework document and that a stand-alone document detailing rational be provided to staff."**

The following was noted during committee discussion:

- The document contains a list of gaps that have been identified by committee members as a result of the last few years of study and discussion.
- The full gap analysis with rational as a stand-alone document is also important.
- Working group members will work to fine tune the documents prior to submission.

**The Motion was then put and CARRIED**

## **ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY FRAMEWORK**

The Senior Manager of Parks gave an update on the Environmental Policy Framework (EPF) and the following was noted:

- The document was reviewed by staff over the summer. Feedback indicated that the document must be easy to use and to easy apply the principles.
- Changes were made to clarify how the document can be used, including additional information on the supporting documents and how to use them.
- Updates to the Official Community Plan (OCP) were incorporated in the document, as well as changes related to the *Housing Act* which was recently enacted by the Province.
- The Gap Analysis and the Policy Evaluation Tool will be added.
- Council will receive the framework along with a cover report from staff.
- Improvements by staff are appreciated and have led to an improved document.
- Comments on the EPF can be sent to the Chair, who will collate and send to staff.

## **POLICY EVALUATION TOOL APPLICATION TO THE DEVELOPMENT PERMIT GUIDELINES**

Chair T. Stevens and committee member P. Govindarajulu gave an overview of the Policy Evaluation Tool, which was used to evaluate the Development Permit Area Guidelines. The following was noted:

- This tool can be used to assess policies, strategies, programs and incentives.
- The question format is appropriate in situations where a new policy is being written.
- The matrix format helps to evaluate and improve policies that are being updated.
- Protection of the environment and existing features are not mentioned overtly.
- Ecosystem conservation and urban biodiversity initiatives should be made more explicit.
- Marine environment and protection of marine natural assets is not mentioned at all.
- The document does not indicate consultation or collaboration with Indigenous communities; this may be an oversight. There is only mention of using Indigenous art.
- Evidence based development and use of the precautionary principles was satisfactory.
- Background data and clear objectives were included, successes should be monitored.
- Resilient food systems will be promoted by including garden space in developments.
- Accessibility and diversity are not mentioned in the guidelines, these can foster diversity or act as a barrier. Improvements could be made in this realm.

The following was noted during committee discussion:

- The questions and the matrix tool are used to ensure the new or revised policy adheres to the EFP principles.
- A meeting will be set up by the working group members to discuss the findings with Sustainability staff.

## **REVIEW OF CORRESPONDENCE**

Committee member B. Wilkes highlighted the importance of the correspondence recently received that outlined some gaps and discrepancies in Saanich mapping. The following was noted during committee discussion:

- RSTC recommends that this report be used as a starting point once staff time and funding are available. This will help improve the inventory of Garry Oak ecosystems.
- The correspondence was also forwarded to Diamond Head Consulting for information.
- This information is helpful to identify the gaps; having it on file is important.
- The BCS recommendations may include additional resources for mapping.
- Having staff mapping experts be aware of this document is important during the update process, especially within the Urban Containment Boundary.
- Updates to the Saanich GIS map are ongoing, Parks has recently hired new staff to update information, including the additional points previously noted by the consultant.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

On a motion from P. Govindarajulu, the meeting adjourned at 8:47 p.m.

## **NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting is scheduled for December 7, 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