

MINUTES
SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE ACTION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Held at Saanich Municipal Hall, Committee Room 2 and via MS Teams
770 Vernon Avenue
June 12, 2025 at 4:00 PM

ROLL CALL

In Attendance: Councillor Judy Brownoff (Chair), Lesley Bainbridge, Diya Courty-Stephens, Spencer Graham, George Klima, Leslie Miller-Brooks, Karin Nelson and Barb Sharpe

Regrets: Jane Cameron

Staff: Rebecca Newlove, Manager of Sustainability (via Teams); Glenys Verhulst, Sustainability Specialist; Molly Rose, Agriculture and Food Security Planner; Angela Hawkshaw, Committee Clerk and Colton Whittaker, Committee Clerk (via Teams 4:19 p.m.)

ADOPTION OF MINUTES

MOVED by K. Nelson and Seconded by L. Miller-Brooks: “That the minutes of the Sustainability and Climate Action Advisory Committee held on May 8, 2025, be adopted as circulated.”

RESULT: Carried 8 TO 0

IN FAVOUR: Brownoff, Bainbridge, Courty-Stephens, Graham, Klima, Miller-Brooks, Nelson, Sharpe

OPPOSED: None

COMMITTEE BUSINESS ITEMS

CHAIR’S REMARKS

- The life-saving equipment pilot project at Thetis and Elk/Beaver Lakes continues to be a success.
- Oxygenation equipment at Elk and Beaver Lake is under review due to performance issues. Potential land use restrictions (e.g., limiting animal agriculture) could be considered to improve water quality.

****A.** Hawkshaw exited the meeting at 4:20 p.m.

AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SECURITY PLAN

The Agriculture and Food Security Planner gave a presentation on the Agriculture and Food Security Plan (PowerPoint on file). The following was noted in response to questions and during committee discussion:

- South Island Farmers Institute’s recent Farmer to Farmer Conference facilitated knowledge-sharing among the local farmers. The event featured regional farmers as speakers and covered both conventional and innovative farming practices.
- There is value in peer-to-peer learning to bridge generational perspectives when it comes to agriculture.
- Bear Hill Park includes agricultural land. A model similar to the Haliburton Community Organic Farm is being explored for this area.
- Public education on the environmental impacts of animal vs. plant-based agriculture is valuable.
- Branding and marketing strategies to promote local food (e.g., “Buy Local BC”) could be further explored.

**The Agriculture and Food Security Planner exited the meeting at 5:16 p.m.

ZERO EMISSION FLEET STRATEGY

The Manager of Sustainability gave a presentation on the Zero Emission Fleet Strategy (PowerPoint on file). The following was noted in response to questions and during committee discussion:

- Fire, police, and other departmental representatives contributed fleet information as part of a joint project, supported by a consultant.
- The project has involved extensive collaboration and discussion over time, factoring in evolving technologies and economic considerations such as inflation.
- An adjustment period is required when transitioning from gas/diesel to electric for some vehicle types, highlighting performance and cost challenges as the technology develops.
- Multiple fuel types and three resulting electrification scenarios were explored (Business as Usual, Cost Optimized and Technology Leadership).
- The recommended approach is for the Cost Optimized Scenario plus Renewable Diesel.
- While technology has pros and cons, ongoing collaboration with front line users helps guide equipment transitions.

MOVED by B. Sharpe and Seconded by D. Courty-Stephens: “That the Sustainability and Climate Action Advisory Committee recommend that Council endorse the Zero Emission Fleet Strategy.”

RESULT: Carried 8 TO 0

IN FAVOUR: Brownoff, Bainbridge, Courty-Stephens, Graham, Klima, Miller-Brooks, Nelson, Sharpe

OPPOSED: None

FLEET E-BIKE PROGRAM UPDATE

The Sustainability Specialist gave an update on the Fleet E-Bike Program (PowerPoint on file). The following was noted in response to questions and during committee discussion:

- More secure and visible parking for e-bikes could encourage greater use by staff and the public by highlighting the positive aspects of active transportation.
- Conversations around a climate-friendly commuter program for senior staff is ongoing.
- A staff incentive program to purchase e-bikes or cargo bikes through municipal purchasing channels could be explored.

SOLAR PHOTOVOLTAIC (PV) AND BATTERY STORAGE OPPORTUNITIES – UPDATE

The Manager of Sustainability provided an update on Solar Photovoltaic (PV) and Battery Storage Opportunities. The following was noted in response to questions and during committee discussion:

- Cost-effectiveness of energy upgrades depends on building type and the existing heating system.
- Heat pumps, especially when switching from oil or gas, can offer immediate operational cost savings.
- Compared to solar, heat pumps typically have faster payback periods and stronger financial returns, albeit the costs for solar are decreasing.
- Solar can be a selling point, potentially increasing property value.

- Victoria and Saanich have moved away from requiring “solar-ready” covenants in new construction, focusing instead on electrification and operational efficiency through the Energy and Zero Carbon Step Code.
- Europe sees more solar adoption due to utility-level greenhouse gas emission limits, higher energy prices, and strong national incentive programs.
- On larger buildings, rooftop space for solar panels is often limited by Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (HVAC) systems and other equipment.
- Saanich could explore expanding the Heat Pump Financing Program (HPF) to include solar.
- Saanich’s Climate Action Tax Exemption (CATE) Program offers a capital incentive for electrification retrofits in commercial, multi-unit residential, and mixed-use buildings.
- The BC Energy Step Code, developed in collaboration with the province and industry, reduces the need for covenants by integrating energy performance standards directly into the BC Building Code.
- BC Hydro is conducting a "Call for Power" to procure new clean or renewable energy sources. This initiative aims to meet the growing electricity demand in BC, driven by population growth and electrification of industries. Successful projects are primarily large-scale wind and solar, many in partnership with First Nations.

ADJOURNMENT

MOVED by S. Graham and Seconded by D. Courty-Stephens: “That the meeting be adjourned at 5:58 pm.”

RESULT: Carried 8 TO 0

IN FAVOUR: Brownoff, Bainbridge, Courty-Stephens, Graham, Klima, Miller-Brooks, Nelson, Sharpe

OPPOSED: None

CHAIR

I hereby certify these Minutes are accurate.

COMMITTEE CLERK