

B. Maxwell, member of the Peninsula and Agricultural Area Commission (PAAC) stated:

- He appreciates both Councils and their staff for working together on this issue.

P. Christie, member of PAAC, and Chair of the Sub-Committee on Drainage and Land, made a presentation and stated:

- Martindale Flats is an extremely valuable crop growing area.
- One concern is that water being diverted from Keating Ridge pours down Martindale Road during high intensity storms; even during low intensity rainfall the culverts are full.
- Further down Martindale towards the bottom of the valley, the ditches are completely full; for crops to grow, the water table needs to be kept down.
- High intensity rainfall causes water to overflow onto the field and results in ruined crops; water is backing up due to restriction.
- Culverts are constricted at Hunt Valley Road, where the creek crosses the road, and at Dooley Road; there seems to be some constrictions that are also not allowing the water to flow to the valley as quickly as it should.
- Continued cooperation between Central Saanich and Saanich needs to occur in order to address the issue.

I. Bruce, member of the Healthy Watershed Committee in Central Saanich, made a presentation and stated:

- The committee was struck as a result of the ISMP project that Central Saanich undertook in 2008–2009; it considers drainage and healthy watershed issues from an ecosystem perspective, as well as from a farming and agriculture perspective while balancing out values.
- With respect to Martindale Flats, the belief is that climate change is playing a role in flooding; there is also water coming down the Pat Bay Highway from Keating Ridge which contributes to flooding.
- There are problems at the Dooley Road Bridge and downstream of that bridge into Saanich, more specifically, the first 200 meters of the McHugh ditch/Noble Creek area; over the last 5 years, the ditch has had to be cleared of blockages.
- The McHugh ditch to Dooley Road was inspected and two small obstructions were noted; he recommended staff remove them.
- Recently, the depth of water upstream of the Dooley Road Bridge measured 18 inches; water is not backing up currently but intense rainfall is expected.
- Hunt Valley Farm is under new ownership and was subdivided into two properties; extensive drainage work has been done on the portion of Noble Creek that runs through both properties.
- Maintenance has been undertaken downstream to the bridge over the past five years; the problems with potential backup from that point needs to be addressed.

Councillor King stated:

- In other parts of the Municipality, historical wetlands have changed over time; it is hard to determine how much water is historical or as a result of climate change.

P. Christie stated:

- 10,000 years of rich soil due to cedars, has produced a naturally wet area.
- Support for farming is needed in order to produce local food; Canada geese have been harmful to crops.
- There is a dynamic between protecting agriculture and the environment.
- Council decisions need to consider agriculture as a priority because there are fewer farmers compared to the number of urban voters; there is a lot of misunderstanding amongst urban voters about what farmers need in order to make a profit.
- Drainage issues need to be addressed.

Councillor Graham stated:

- The farming community would like to thank Saanich and Central Saanich on working together to address drainage and water retention issues, investigating methods to accommodate water runoff from Tanner Ridge, and working on keeping the creek clear for drainage purposes.

Councillor Holman stated:

- He questioned if there are economic statistics regarding Martindale Valley crop damage due to flooding as well as damage caused by geese.
- The impacts of climate change and how it affects flooding are known.
- He understands the concerns put forward and questioned whether there had been specific requests coming forward to Council.

T. Mitchell stated:

- The amount of crop damage is approximately \$15 million; the current problem is keeping up with demand for local produce while farmers are losing crops due to flooding.
- Crops are underwater on Martindale Road; this has occurred in late September and most of October for 25 years.
- Local farmers need support to have their issues addressed; Central Saanich has said it will maintain the ditch but they will not maintain the water that is coming into the valley.
- Many farmers are now growing hay because they do not want to risk planting crops.
- Damage is estimated at \$200,000 to \$500,000 per year on his farm alone; financial losses depend upon how much rain occurs in that season.
- Two years ago, there was a lot of rain during the first week of September so there was a lot of damage done very early; this year, the rain started later.
- Farmers are trying to broaden the crops they grow.
- An ISMP that manages the entire area would make a considerable difference; the area referenced covers 1,500 acres.

P. Christie stated:

- An ISMP with both municipalities would be supported and is the request put forward to both Councils.

I. Bruce stated:

- In the 2009 ISMP, consultants identified that the invert or height of the stream underneath Dooley Bridge was too high. He took a spider excavator and excavated the channel on the Saanich side one meter below the existing grade along a 25 meter stretch.

- Saanich's Stormwater Manager advised that they would be undertaking a survey of the reach downstream of Dooley Road and would compare it to what the consultant referenced in 2009 to ascertain whether another 0.5 metres could be removed from the invert of the stream creating better flow.
- More study is needed and relevant data should be updated.

I. Bruce stated:

- It is his understanding that the ditches are cleaned regularly and maintained by Central Saanich; however, he is not sure whether the cleaning is adequate or what inverts were cleared down to.

The Superintendent of Public Works for Central Saanich, stated:

- Future opportunities could be explored jointly at the staff level regarding perceived high spots or choke points.

The Director of Engineering for Saanich stated:

- Saanich and Central Saanich staff walked the Noble Creek area to better assess the issues; a survey of Noble Creek to confirm any high points and abatement opportunities will be undertaken. This survey could be included in the 2017 Work Plan.

Councillor Plant stated:

- Supporting agriculture in the region will benefit everyone.
- Opportunities within our borders to make agricultural land more viable should be considered.

I. Bruce stated:

- Since blockages were removed and the invert reduced, the water appears to be moving well under the bridge.
- The 2010 survey data on Noble Creek can be shared and/or compared to any survey results that Saanich collects.
- The Healthy Watershed Committee investigated storage opportunities off the side of the highway.
- The stormwater could be moved off of Tanner Ridge to the proposed retention pond; there may be opportunities for some minor drainage diversion off the hill.

Councillor Murdock stated:

- The collaboration between Central Saanich staff and Mr. Bruce is appreciated; there is a willingness on the part of both municipalities to work collaboratively.
- There is a need to clear blockages which create disturbances on land that could be in production.

The Superintendent of Public Works for Central Saanich stated:

- Information from the data logger is being obtained; the 2018 Financial Plan will include funds for the review of the ISMP for Martindale.

Strengthening
our Agricultural
Mutual Interests

STRENGTHENING OUR AGRICULTURAL MUTUAL INTERESTS

Discussion item brought forward by the District of Saanich and introduced by Councillor Brice, as per Mayor Atwell

Councillor Brice stated:

- Both Councils have a proud history of farming and a shared commitment to ensure that it is a significant aspect of the Greater Victoria area. Our colleagues around the region are talking about food security and the need for farming; however, there are only a few communities that play a significant role.
- Saanich Council has taken some strong positions in favour of agriculture over many decades.
- The Saanich Official Community Plan (OCP) identifies 19 policies for the protection of agricultural land for current and future generations.
- Saanich has maintained a strong commitment to the Urban Containment Boundary (UCB) since the late 1960's; this has worked to protect rural Saanich from development and protects about 52% of Saanich.
- The province has designated almost 20% of Saanich's land as Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR).
- Based on tax assessments, 380 properties in Saanich have farm status.
- We are represented on the Peninsula Agricultural Area Commission (PAAC) and are currently engaged in developing agricultural and food security plans.
- Shared issues with Central Saanich include: deposit of fill and soil conservation, wildlife management to protect crops, lack of services (i.e.: a Provincial Algologist to advise farmers), and climate change in terms of the impact of an increase in major rain events.
- The preservation of farmland, supporting local food production, and addressing farm worker housing are additional areas of interest to both Councils.

Councillor Graham stated:

- The PAAC is an example of an inter-municipal organization; it connects the whole agricultural region and is a useful committee from that perspective.
- It would be beneficial if both municipalities could work better together in developing a plan; work already undertaken should be shared.
- At least 59% (2,400 ha) of Central Saanich is included in the ALR.

Councillor Jensen stated:

- There is a common goal regarding agriculture on the peninsula.
- The idea of a Regional Agricultural Fund should be reconsidered; while it may need to be managed at the CRD level, it would greatly benefit all farmers within the region.

Councillor Holman stated:

- The Regional Sustainability Strategy received extensive public buy-in; local food was noted as one of the top priorities.
- The CRD should be encouraged to continue viewing the Regional Food Strategy as an important priority.
- Central Saanich's resources are stretched; agricultural priorities should be identified in the Strategic Plan.
- A Food Strategy Plan should include shared municipal information and data.

Councillor Murdock stated:

- The Food Strategy Plan has been endorsed and is slated for consideration by the CRD Board; the Saanich Environment and Natural Areas Advisory Committee, of which he is Chair, put forward a recommendation that an agricultural fund at the regional level be explored.

- Working collaboratively to preserve and protect farmland in perpetuity and ensuring local food security would benefit all.

In response to a question from Mayor Atwell, the Director of Planning and Building Services for Central Saanich, stated:

- A number of applications were received by the Planning Department that require Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) approval and include a request for additional funds for farm worker housing.
- Planning has prepared some Zoning Bylaw amendments in the attempt to streamline the ALC process; the bylaws have not yet been adopted.
- In a process of agreed upon criteria, permits could be issued by the municipality without requiring ALC approval, which adds considerably to the timeline.

Councillor Paltiel, stated:

- Future challenges and obstacles depend upon how many future generations will depend on farming.
- An important consideration are the partnerships in the regional, provincial and federal levels which could be utilized to advocate on behalf of farmers.
- Mutual interests should be discussed prior to meeting with the ministries at the next UBCM.

In response to a question from Saanich Council, the Director of Saanich Planning, stated:

- Initial work on the Agricultural Food Security Plan began in early 2016 and has included feedback from a variety of stakeholders. Preliminary analysis of the feedback will undertake public consultation in January 2017.
- The draft plan would go to Council for consideration and review in late spring of 2017 after public input and supporting committees and municipalities have provided comment.

Multi-Modal
Transportation
Projects

MULTI-MODAL TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS

Discussion item put forth by Central Saanich

Mayor Windsor stated:

- There are several corridors that Saanich and Central Saanich share, including Lochside, Pat Bay, West Saanich, Wallace and Oldfield Roads.

Councillor Holman stated:

- Central Saanich has undertaken a review of the Keating Corridor to which Saanich was identified as a stakeholder.
- There are going to be shared transportation, industrial and housing issues.
- Feedback from the consultant process is expected in the near future and decisions regarding direction will be forthcoming.

In response to questions from Saanich Council, the Director of Saanich Engineering stated:

- The Wallace Road infrastructure is identified in the OCP as a part of the commuter network; all villages and centres are being assessed for new cycling or multi-modal facilities.

- An Active Transportation Plan is being worked on that includes walking, cycling and mobility devices. The plan identifies other local municipalities as stakeholders to help in identifying network opportunities and concerns.

Councillor Graham stated:

- Both municipalities need to work closer together in the future to identify opportunities for transportation coordination.
- Wallace has been a cycling route in Central Saanich since the 1990's; whereas for Saanich it has not.

Councillor King stated:

- Budgets should be compared to determine how much a 1% lift in taxation would garner for road improvements.

Mayor Atwell stated:

- A 1% lift in taxes in Saanich would equate to approximately \$1 million.
- The Saanich infrastructure budget is approximately \$250 million per year.
- The community would appreciate improvements to Wallace Road; working together to expedite the matter would be well received.
- Several users of the Lochside Trail have questioned its value as an equestrian trail as it crosses over the border; a coordinated approach is needed to investigate this matter.

Mayor Windsor stated:

- A 1% lift in taxes in Central Saanich would equate to approximately \$150,000.
- Members of the equestrian community have provided feedback on preserving elements of this corridor at the CRD level.

Pat Bay
Highway

PAT BAY HIGHWAY

Discussion item put forth by Saanich and led by Councillor Plant, as per Mayor Atwell.

Councillor Plant stated:

- ICBC crash analysis maps are a very useful and searchable dataset; they keep track of incidents with motor vehicles from 2009 to 2013.
- For shared interest, it may be worthwhile to discuss the safety of unregulated highway crossings; in Central Saanich this would include Old East, Keating and Tanner, in Saanich this would include Old East and Claremont Avenue.
- A joint submission to the Ministry could be undertaken in order to mutually request repairs to both regulated and unregulated crossings. North Saanich and Sidney municipalities could also be included.

Councillor Jensen stated:

- Accidents at Keating are catastrophic because people are travelling at highway speeds.
- A joint submission to the Ministry is more beneficial than each municipality working autonomously.

Councillor Paltiel stated:

- Major regional interests include keeping vehicles moving safely.
- It is unfortunate that statistics play a role in determining the priority for improvements.
- He is interested in working with Councillor Plant to identify initial opportunities to bring this issue forward.

Mayor Windsor stated:

- Issues can be brought back to each respective Council to determine if there is a willingness to work together in a way that has not yet been identified.

Mayor Atwell stated:

- Sayward was problematic for a long period; a working group consisting of MLA Lana Popham, Councillor Brownoff and others put pressure on the Province and the Ministry was open and reactive. This is a good model that gets constituents involved.

Councillor Graham stated:

- A joint submission to the Ministry would be appreciated. This issue is not just a Saanich or Central Saanich issue, it is a regional matter.
- The Pat Bay Highway is a main artery coming from the ferry and airport into the core.

Councillor Brice stated:

- She recently approached the Ministry regarding the Regional Transportation Service which recognizes that there is a significant amount of interactive transportation; 58% of trips within the region are inter-municipal. She is hopeful the Ministry response will be positive.

Mayor Windsor stated:

- The Regional Transportation Service has been considered at the committee level and it was recommended for approval.
- CRD Forum of Councils should be considered as an approach.

Councillor Plant stated:

- The Saanich Planning, Transportation and Economic Development Advisory Committee and the Saanich Administrative Traffic Committees are logical groups to seek policy development.

In response to questions from Saanich Council, the Director of Saanich Engineering stated:

- The Administrative Traffic Committee is comprised mainly of staff within the engineering and transportation sections, as well as members of Saanich Police and one representative from Council (Councillor Brownoff). They meet on a monthly basis regarding cross-department and complex issues such as traffic safety, traffic calming measures, parking concerns and traffic issues.

Comments

Mayor Atwell thanked Central Saanich Council and staff for attending and stated.

- He would like to see this type of partnership continue as this level of cooperation would benefit all residents and should become a high priority.

Mayor Windsor thanked both Council and staff members for attending and stated:

- He looks forward to both Councils returning to their respective municipalities to work through the items discussed.
- He is supportive of discussing the potential of future meetings and evolving the process of how they are conducted.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:37 p.m.

Meeting record prepared by J. Downie.