

MINUTES
ARTS, CULTURE, & COMMUNITY WELL-BEING ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Committee Rm. 2 and via Microsoft Teams
Saanich Municipal Hall, 770 Vernon Avenue
October 25, 2023 at 5:07 p.m.

- Present: Councillor Karen Harper, Jim Hesser (via Teams); Mark Leiren-Young (via Teams); Chris Poirier-Skelton.
- Staff: Cristina Caravaca, Senior Manager, Community Services (via Teams); Rebecca Newlove, Manager of Sustainability (via Teams); Kathy Graham, Community Programmer II, Community Services Division; and Vivian Cheung, Committee Clerk Assistant.
- Guests: Corrine Hilton, Executive Director, Saanich Neighbourhood Place; Donna-Lynne Thorpe
- Regrets: Clare Atwell, Ian Kopp, Arianna Marie Scott, Robert Randall, Kimberly Van Nieuvenhuysen.
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Due to lack of quorum, no motions were passed.

CHAIR'S REMARKS

- The Chair welcomed everyone and thanked the presenters for attending.

SAANICH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLACE

The representatives gave a presentation, and the following was noted:

- Saanich Neighbourhood Place (SNP) began in 1993 as a place for families, children, and youth to gather for support and to provide a wide range of community-based services. SNP is the only organization in the District of Saanich that provides these services. Many of the districts outside of Saanich come to SNP for help. This is a strain on resources and staff.
- In 1997, SNP was formally established as a registered non-profit family resource centre.
- It is important for Saanich residents to become familiar with SNP because there is a lack of recognition and understanding of what programs and support are available.
- SNP is a member of the Coalition of Neighbourhood Houses which is a group of 10 local organizations.
- The goal is to have a neighbourhood house available to all residents of Saanich that is within a 15-minute walking distance.
- SNP has many community partnerships including rental space at Broadview United, Boys & Girls Club, and TransCare BC: SAFER Youth and Family Programs.
- Broadview United location has been renovated and offers a designated space with more room to expand. There is a family support worker on site.
- Full o' Beans Preschool opened in September 2013 at the Pearkes Recreation Centre.
- SNP provides a fee reduction initiative for childcare needs.

The members made the following comments, and the following was noted:

- Designating a percentage of space in new developments will allow for organic growth.
- Saanich provides different funding models.
- This presentation has shown the importance of working together and the incredible resources that are available at SNP.
- The amount of people that require this service is not achievable with one house.
- SNP supports the Westshore. There is no house designated to this area.
- A space with a low rental charge is needed.

LIFE Financial Assistance Program

The Financial Development Programmer gave a presentation, and the following was noted:

- The Leisure Involvement For Everyone (L.I.F.E.) financial assistance program exists to provide opportunities for all individuals and families to participate and access Saanich's services regardless of their financial situation.
- The changes in the Financial Development in 2023 are:
 - o Full-time Programmer II
 - o L.I.F.E. program enhancements
 - o Grant/funding identification and support for Division.
 - o Partnership building.
- The Greater Victoria Regional Program started in 1996 to provide low-income families access to regional facilities and to drop-in programs. All regional municipalities are involved and have the same basic requirements for program eligibility.
- Proof of residency and income are required.
- Low-income levels are determined by Statistic Canada. A regionally approved percentage increase is based on the higher cost of living for Greater Victoria residents. This number is reviewed annually.
- The L.I.F.E program offers three scenarios of assistance:
- 52 free drop-in passes for the year. This gives access to 13 Greater Victoria Recreation Centres.
- 50% off the regular annual pass cost which includes unlimited drop-in services at the four Saanich Recreation Centres.
- 50% off the regional annual pass cost which includes unlimited drop-in services at the 13 Regional Recreation Centres.
- The L.I.F.E. program in Saanich seeks to reduce barriers for new immigrants and refugees and offers free membership to Seniors Centres.
- Supporting youth through school connections can build community and better health practices.
- A survey in 2019 found that:
 - 59% of clients would not be able to recreate without the L.I.F.E. program.
 - Free admissions held the highest value.
 - The discounted annual pass is not helpful when finances are already strained.
 - Post secondary students and Aboriginal applicants feel excluded.
 - The low-income cutoff provided from Statistic Canada does not capture all struggling citizens.
- Providing more ways to apply and be accepted to the program will reduce anxiety for clients and staff.

- Changes coming on November 15, 2023, include:
 - o Increase from a one to a two-year term.
 - o Increase from 52 visits per year to unlimited.
 - o Allow access to post secondary students that reside in Saanich.
 - o \$50.00 coupons with set credit amount. Greater credits will be given to children and youth.

The members made the following comments:

- This program will help support youth with mental health issues.
- The new model for reapplying will reduce stress.
- The flexibility with credits is helpful.
- These improvements will have a positive impact on clients.
- Grants are available.

J. Hesser exited the meeting at 6:10 p.m.

DEVELOPMENT PERMIT DESIGN GUIDELINES

The Manager of Sustainability gave a presentation, and the following was noted:

- The *Local Government Act* provides authority to designate Development Permit (DP) Guidelines to establish form and character objectives and to designate areas of land as Development Permit Areas (DPA) for certain purposes. DPAs must specify guidelines for how proposals in that area can address the special conditions or objectives of the DPA.
- DP Guidelines support staff in an efficient review of applications, as well as provide direction and guidance to applicants, review committees (e.g., Advisory Design Panel) and Council to support a common understanding of expectations.
- The guidelines should be educative, descriptive, consistent, and clear on intent.
- The existing Saanich Development Permit Areas (DPA): Justification and Guidelines document is a patchwork of Development Permit Areas (DPAs) and guidelines that have not undergone a comprehensive review since before the Official Community Plan (OCP) was approved in 2008.
- Many policies and plans have been approved by Council including the 2008 OCP and multiple planning documents that contain design guidelines. For example, garden suites have their own.
- The purpose is to develop a simplified, consolidated Guidelines document that is aligned with the OCP and recent policies, plans and bylaws that have been approved by Council. The goal is a harmonized, easy to use document with clear language, explanatory visual illustrations, and alignment with other goals.
- The guidelines will be updated more frequently as new policies are approved.
- The new simplified and consolidated document will improve efficiency and aid staff in achieving targets as laid out in various plans.
- A descriptive (vs. prescriptive) approach has been taken, with clear statements of design intent including strategies and best practices for implementation.
- More prescriptive guidance such as metrics have been added, for built form, scale, orientation, and relationship to public spaces. A more descriptive and educative approach

was taken for character, composition, and site planning.

The members made the following comments:

- The draft plan could be more visible and accessible on the Saanich website.
- The DPA Guidelines are intended to build our community and assist with the development process.
- Simplifying the process to attain development permits could assist with the housing crisis.
- More guidelines will bring significant results within the District.
- The document is more fluid than the 2008 version.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 6:37 p.m.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, November 22, 2023 at 5:00 p.m.

Councillor Harper, Chair

I hereby certify these minutes are accurate.

Angela Hawkshaw, Committee Clerk