

MINUTES
ARTS, CULTURE, & COMMUNITY WELLBEING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Held at Saanich Municipal Hall, Committee Room 2 and via MS Teams
770 Vernon Avenue

September 25, 2024, at 5:01 p.m.

Present: Councillor Karen Harper (Chair), Pamela Carroll, Barbara Elson, Mark Leiren-Young (5:26 p.m.), James Hesser (via Teams), and Peter Quinn (5:08 p.m.)

Staff: Cristina Caravaca, Senior Manager, Community Services; Tiana Solares, Senior Manager Recreation Services (via Teams); and Colton Whittaker, Committee Clerk

Guests: Sarah McCabe, Victoria Brain Injury Society and Lauren Cronk, Victoria Brain Injury Society

Regrets: Kimberly Van Nieuvenhuysse

ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES

MOVED by P. Carroll and Seconded by B. Elson: "That the Minutes of Arts, Culture and Community Wellbeing Advisory Committee meeting held May 22, 2024, be adopted as circulated."

CARRIED

CHAIRS REMARKS

The Chair welcomed committee members, and the following was noted:

- Councillor Harper's hearing health motion successfully passed at UBCM. The motion will now go to the province, encouraging them to include hearing health in the Medical Services Plan (MSP).
- During the Public Hearing on September 24, 2024, Council reviewed a Heritage Designation application for the Stoddart Residence, and it was approved.
- Saanich Council has adopted a new tri-annual town hall format for public engagement. The first town hall will be held at Cedar Hill Golf Course on October 22, 2024. This new format aims to foster meaningful public engagement on key community topics.

VICTORIA BRAIN INJURY SOCIETY

The representatives from the Victoria Brain Injury Society gave a presentation (PowerPoint on file) and the following was noted during committee discussion:

- The Victoria Brain Injury Society (VBIS) is affiliated with various other brain injury societies throughout the province, including the Brain Injury Alliance.
- A key part of VBIS's mission is to educate the community and raise awareness about brain injuries.

- Doctors frequently refer patients with brain injuries to Island Health, which then connects them with VBIS.
- Individuals who have self-diagnosed brain injuries can access VBIS, as the organization is committed to being highly accessible.
- VBIS is funded by the Brain Injury Alliance and Island Health, along with numerous other funders.
- VBIS collaborates with the University of Victoria (UVIC) Physical Education Department and sports teams to raise awareness about brain injuries.
- VBIS works closely with the Christie Lab at UVIC regarding neuroscience for healthier brains.
- A significant number of clients accessing VBIS are experiencing homelessness.
- While VBIS is not a housing provider, it has affiliations that enable it to serve as a bridge for connecting individuals with housing resources.
- VBIS offers an education course titled "Coping Strategies," which addresses the emotional, cognitive, physical, and spiritual impacts of brain injury.
- VBIS will be introducing counseling students in the new year to provide free support for clients.
- Individuals accessing VBIS undergo an intake process that includes a 30-minute conversation to collect basic information and discuss their brain injury history. Following this, they are introduced to the various programs VBIS offers and helped to identify the most suitable options for their needs.
- VBIS can refer individuals to other organizations if their injuries exceed the limitations of the services offered.
- High schools in the region are introducing athletic therapists to monitor athlete safety.
- Rowan's Law was enacted after a high school rugby player passed away from second impact syndrome resulting from multiple concussions sustained during play.
- Understanding brain anatomy and function is a key component of the educational programs offered by VBIS.
- VBIS curriculum is sourced from Brain Injury Canada, and client representation and feedback are essential components of the program.
- Clients set goals upon accessing VBIS, and once they achieve these goals, such as completing a housing application, applying for income assistance, or accessing technological supports, they may not return for further services.
- A significant aspect of VBIS's work is fostering a sense of community, as individuals with brain injuries often seek to connect with and converse with others who share similar experiences.
- Living with a brain injury can be a lifelong journey, and what works for one person may differ for another.
- VBIS provides support to approximately 900 clients each year from across Greater Victoria.
- Age, along with factors such as injury location, severity, and cause of the brain injury, plays a significant role in the recovery process.

The representatives from Victoria Brain Injury Society left the meeting at 5:55 p.m.

RECREATION AND COMMUNITY SERVICES STATISTICS

The Senior Manager, Recreation Services presented (PowerPoint on file) on recreation and community services statistics. The following was noted in response to questions and during committee discussion:

- Saanich is developing a 10-year strategic plan, collaborating with the Planning department to assess the community's future needs and effectively address the demands of the growing population.
- The impact of UVic's McKinnon pool closure is already evident, particularly affecting the UVic water polo team, the Vikes swim team, and other related activities.
- Gordon Head Recreation Centre receives the vast majority of students and youth.
- Saanich's recreation centers are aging, with the newest facility recently turning 30 years old.
- Amenity cost contributions from developers could serve as a mechanism to secure funding for community infrastructure.
- Saanich emphasizes promoting a healthy lifestyle by providing third spaces for individuals to connect with one another and build community.
- There is an opportunity to offer outdoor swimming lessons as an alternative to free up indoor pool space.
- The demographics of golf course users are notable, as many individuals eventually age out, fewer younger people are taking up the sport.
- Saanich collaborates with the RBC First Tee program to make golf more accessible, as it is typically an expensive sport.
- Saanich offers summer golf camps, with some programs featuring tennis in the morning followed by golf in the afternoon.
- Saanich Council supported a motion to modify the Leisure Involvement For Everyone (LIFE) program, enabling access to more people, including university students who qualify as low-income residents to receive reduced passes and free drop-in access to recreational activities.
- Cedar Hill Golf Course features excellent walking trails that provide great opportunities for exercise.
- Last year, Saanich partnered with the City of Victoria to develop a regional pickleball strategy.
- Pearkes Recreation Centre has emerged as the most popular venue for pickleball, with plans to expand by adding a few additional courts and improving the court booking system.
- Saanich has been working to make access to the LIFE program as accessible as possible by transitioning the application process to a digital portal while still offering in-person options. Staff are also exploring a partnership with the BC Services Card to further enhance accessibility.
- The committee may consider organizing field trips in the future.

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion from P. Carroll the meeting adjourned at 6:33 p.m.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting date will be on November 27, 2024, at 5:00 p.m.

Councillor Karen Harper, Chair

I hereby certify these minutes are accurate.

Colton Whittaker, Committee Clerk

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