

**MINUTES**  
**SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE ACTION ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
Held at Saanich Municipal Hall, Committee Room 2 and via MS Teams  
770 Vernon Avenue  
Wednesday, May 15, 2024, at 4:00 p.m.

Present: Councillor Nathalie Chambers (Chair), Diya Court-Stephens (via Teams), Kurban Keshvani, George Klima, Karin Nelson and Mattias Spalteholz

Staff: Eva Riccius, Senior Manager, Parks; Sharon Froud, Deputy Manager of Legislative Services; Rebecca Newlove, Manager of Sustainability; Jacqueline Weston, Asset Management Program Manager and Angela Hawkshaw, Committee Clerk

Regrets: Timio Colistro and Ronald Jeffries

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### **ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES**

**MOVED by K. Keshvani and Seconded by M. Spalteholz: “That the Minutes of the Sustainability and Climate Action Advisory Committee meeting held April 17, 2024 be adopted as circulated.”**

**CARRIED**

### **CHAIR’S REMARKS**

The Chair made the following comments:

- The Traditional Territorial Acknowledgment and the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Statement were read.
- Encouragement was given to research the presentation on Deep Adaption by Jim Bendell, Professor of Sustainability Leadership at the University of Cumbria.

\*\*\*The Committee Clerk exited the meeting at 4:11 p.m.\*\*\*

### **BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION STRATEGY**

The Senior Manager of Parks gave a presentation on the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy (PowerPoint on file). The following was noted in response to questions and during committee discussion:

- The mapping in dark green shows the impact of the Urban Containment Boundary (UCB) on sensitive ecosystems and biodiversity. The province is now allowing development within the UCB.
- Starting with small actions could lead to greater successes and bigger changes over time. This could instill confidence within the community.
- Several stewardship programs exist in Saanich, such as Pulling Together. There is potential to expand and further develop these programs.
- Many species are at risk. Staff could provide Council with recommended actions.
- A program could be considered to sustainably slow the shrinking of green spaces.
- The strategy could include incentives for residents to protect and enhance biodiversity both front yards and back yards.
- Information about the Saanich Naturescape Program could be highlighted in a future mail-

out to build resident awareness.

- Signage could be displayed on residential properties that are re-wilding. These signs could display valuable resources.

## **URBAN FOREST STRATEGY**

The Senior Manager of Parks gave a presentation on the Urban Forest Strategy (PowerPoint on file). The following was noted in response to questions and during committee discussion:

- Increased tree coverage may reduce solar panel feasibility on roofs. Mandating solar panels on taller buildings and implementing high-efficiency solutions such as heat pumps and wind energy was discussed.
- Waiting for provincial housing targets has proven beneficial. Analyzing tree placements will aid in achieving tree canopy coverage goals within new developments.
- Planting on boulevards could assist in achieving 44% canopy coverage by 2064.
- Research indicates that achieving 40% tree canopy coverage is needed to help alleviate extreme heat.
- Currently, approximately 600 large trees are planted on boulevards and parks in Saanich. The target is to double that number. This requires more staff and funding.
- Development required services may lead to tree loss. Collaboration with engineering is anticipated.
- Increased vegetation may raise concerns about fire safety. Education will be important.
- Providing essential resources and funding to support parks staff is crucial.
- Planting sites are limited.
- Living plant walls in new developments could offer benefits comparable to trees.

## **DRAFT NATURAL ASSETS INVENTORY**

The Asset Management Program Manager gave a presentation on the Draft Natural Assets Inventory (PowerPoint on file). The following was noted in response to questions and during committee discussion:

- The value of nature extends beyond financial considerations. Natural assets offer value to communities and enhance overall well-being.
- Annual service values are intended to enhance awareness.
- The cost involved in replacing assets is a concern.
- The economics of natural assets are crucial.
- It's necessary to consider the long-term effects of loss and implement safeguards accordingly.
- Eighty municipalities have conducted an inventory, but few have assigned valuation.
- Calgary, AB is a leader in natural asset valuation. Reviews are underway regarding the integration of annual service values into decision-making for development applications and cost-benefit analysis for project design.
- Bench marking information could be provided in the report.
- This report is an inventory of assets only, not a plan for how to further manage them. The intent is to raise awareness of the value.
- Saanich's public website on natural asset management will be scheduled for regular updates.

**MOVED by G. Klima and Seconded by K. Keshvani: “That the Sustainability and Climate Action Advisory Committee recommend that Council consider accepting the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy and Urban Forest Strategy. In particular, the Committee requests that the Urban Forest Strategy be funded appropriately.”**

**CARRIED**

**ADJOURNMENT**

On a motion from K. Keshvani the meeting adjourned at 6:04 p.m.

**NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, June 19, 2024, at 4:00 p.m.

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Nathalie Chambers, Chair

I hereby certify these Minutes are accurate.

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Angela Hawkshaw, Committee Secretary