

MINUTES
SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE ACTION PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

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

770 Vernon Avenue

Wednesday, June 19, 2024, at 4:00 p.m.

Present: Councillor Nathalie Chambers (Chair), Timio Colistro, Diya Courty-Stephens (via Teams), Ronald Jeffries, Kurban Keshvani (via Teams) 4:04 p.m., Leslie Miller-Brooks and Mattias Spalteholz

Regrets: George Klima and Karin Nelson

Staff: Sharon Froud, Deputy Manager of Legislative Services; Rebecca Newlove, Manager of Sustainability (via Teams) and Angela Hawkshaw, Committee Clerk (via Teams)

Guests: Linda Geggie, Capitol Region Food and Agriculture Initiatives and Ryan Senechal

ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES

MOVED by R. Jeffries and Seconded by K. Keshvani: “That the Minutes of the Sustainability and Climate Action Advisory Committee meeting held May 15, 2024, be adopted as amended.”

Committee discussion ensued with the following comment:

- It was noted that L. Miller-Brooks was not present at the May 15, 2024 meeting.

The Motion was then Put and CARRIED

CHAIRS REMARKS

- Saanich Council endorsed the Environmental Policy Framework (EPF) and Biodiversity Conservation Strategy (BCS) on June 17, 2024.

CAPITOL REGION FOOD AND AGRICULTURE INITIATIVES ROUNDTABLE (CRFAIR)

The Executive Director of CRFAIR gave a presentation (PowerPoint on file). The following was noted in response to questions and during committee discussion:

- Saanich has completed a food hub feasibility study, proposing an Indigenous-focused food hub to be hosted by Camosun College.
- Collaborating with other municipalities could be beneficial for essential services related to infrastructure, such as storage and abattoirs.
- Local abattoirs could alleviate concerns about food shortages on the Island.
- The local bear and cougar population is a concern for farmers regarding their livestock.
- The Regional Canada Goose Management Service Bylaw aims to reduce the impact of the rapidly growing Canada Goose population in the region. These geese are impacting farmland and degrading coastal ecosystems and waterways.
- In June, CRFAIR will be conducting two roundtable meetings: one on creating equitable access to community and commercial kitchens, and the other on the further development of a community garden network.

- In 2023, the Capital Regional District (CRD) acquired the former Royal Oak Golf Course, which has potential for ecological restoration. The CRD will continue collaborating with local First Nations to determine appropriate actions in regional parks and trails that respect Indigenous rights. Opportunities for food growing are also being explored.
- The Victoria Community Food Hub Society (VCFHS) advocates for a healthy and sustainable food system in the CRD. Saanich could explore and learn from this model.
- CRFAIR offers a newsletter that provides updates on future public engagements and upcoming programs.

The Committee Clerk exited the meeting at 4:40 p.m.

MOVED by R. Jeffries and Seconded by L. Miller-Books: “That the Sustainability and Climate Action Advisory Committee recommend that Council consider working with other municipalities to look at essential services for agriculture by:

- Investigating options for local food storage and abattoirs.
- Enforcing compliance and regulations for non-farm use land.
- Supporting land access for farmers in Saanich and the CRD.
- Endorsing regenerative farming to follow the Haliburton Community Gardens model.
- Demonstrating support for the development of a food policy task force, whether regional or specific to Saanich.
- Upholding best practices in policy decisions.
- Advocating and support ongoing community education regarding Saanich Flavour Trails.

CARRIED

FUTURE OLD GROWTH AREAS

A presentation was given on the Future Old Growth Areas (PowerPoint on file). The following was noted in response to questions and during committee discussion:

- A policy could be created to manage the variety of forests that back on to proposed developments. These abrupt edges pose challenges that include surface water management and physical injury to tree roots.
- Minimal requirements are needed to manage these transitions responsibly.
- Considering the health impacts on the forest and inspiring future stewardship is fundamental.

MOVED by L. Miller-Brooks and Seconded by D. Courty-Stephens: “That the Sustainability and Climate Action Advisory Committee recommend that Council direct staff to:

- Protect existing old trees and old forests/forest fragments.
- Improve the District of Saanich resources for planning and management of public forests.
- Improve edge buffers between forested areas and encroaching development.
- Strategically acquire parkland with remnant forest to maximize ecosystems services distribution, and scaffold forest connectivity.
- Empower First Nations in participatory governance, planning and management of existing forested parks and in future parkland acquisition.
- Meaningfully consult all communities in forest parkland planning and empower community members in stewardship opportunities.

CARRIED

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion from R. Jeffries the meeting adjourned at 6:06 p.m.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is scheduled for October 16, 2024 at 4:00 p.m.

Councillor Nathalie Chambers, Chair

I hereby certify these Minutes are accurate.

Angela Hawkshaw, Committee Clerk