

MINUTES
SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE ACTION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Held at Saanich Municipal Hall, Council Chambers and via MS Teams
770 Vernon Avenue
January 16, 2025, at 4:06 PM

ROLL CALL

In Attendance: Councillor Judy Brownoff, Jane Cameron, Spencer Graham, Leslie Miller-Brooks, Karin Nelson, Barb Sharpe and Diya Courty-Stephens,
Regrets: Lesley Bainbridge and George Klima,
Staff: Maggie Baynham, Sustainability Project Manager and Angela Hawkshaw, Committee Clerk

ADOPTION OF MINUTES

October 22, 2024

MOVED by K. Nelson and Seconded by L. Miller-Brooks: “That the Minutes of the Sustainability and Climate Action Advisory Committee held October 22, 2024, be adopted as circulated.”

RESULT: Carried 6 TO 0

IN FAVOUR: Jane Cameron, Spencer Graham, Leslie Miller-Brooks, Karin Nelson, Barb Sharpe and Diya Courty-Stephens

OPPOSED: None

COMMITTEE BUSINESS ITEMS

CHAIR’S REMARKS

The Chair welcomed the members and the following was noted:

- The Chair has past experience within the District of Saanich about sustainability and climate action initiatives and it will be valuable to this committee.
- Motions may require coordination and planning across multiple departments.
- Each member is encouraged to propose topics for future agendas.

Each member was invited to introduce themselves and encouraged to propose topics for agendas.

CLIMATE AND SUSTAINABILITY DIVISION WORK PLAN

The Sustainability Project Manager gave a presentation on the Climate and Sustainability Division Work Plan. The following was noted in response to questions and during committee discussion:

- The federal election could impact future funding and initiatives.
- Many of the important policies and programs that affect the direct work of the division are at the Provincial level, though some occur Federally. Grant funding comes from BC Hydro, the Province, and significant Federal contributions, among others.
- Some community groups are impacted more than others by extreme heat. For example, apartment residents, which may lack funding for upgrades, are suffering, whereas single-family homes are easier to upgrade, and owners are more likely to have the financial means to install heat pumps.

- Saanich’s financing program continues to be offered to encourage building upgrades aimed at improving environmental sustainability. While the application process requires multiple steps, these programs provide valuable support for homeowners committed to making impactful, eco-friendly improvements to their properties.
- Public engagement at the local level is ongoing, demonstrating a commitment to community involvement. Exploring additional ways to involve residents could help address challenges, reduce frustration, and ensure plans better align with public needs and expectations.
- Staff transitions have presented challenges, however continuing to highlight the importance of securing stable resources is essential in new initiatives and building projects.
- Baseboard heaters are cost-efficient to install but are expensive to operate compared to heat pumps and do not provide cooling.
- The goal of the Saanich Commonwealth Place biomass mechanical upgrade is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 90 per cent. The upgrade received significant funding through a grant from the Federal Gas Tax Fund.
- Air quality for wood burning, renewable energy pros and cons, and provincial burning standards will be considered as part of the Climate Plan update.
- Collaborating with Vancouver Island Health Authority (VIHA) to advance electrification is challenging. Encouraging multiple municipalities to work together could help to overcome these barriers.
- VIHA and the Capital Regional District continue to work with Saanich on extreme heat planning.
- The District of Saanich's Community E-bike Incentive Pilot Program, launched in 2021, received positive feedback and achieved great outcomes.

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion from L. Miller Brooks the meeting adjourned at 5:55 p.m.

COUNCILLOR JUDY BROWNOFF, CHAIR

I hereby certify these Minutes are accurate.

COMMITTEE CLERK