

MINUTES
SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE ACTION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Held at Saanich Municipal Hall, Council Chambers and via MS Teams
770 Vernon Avenue
February 13, 2025, at 4:03 PM

ROLL CALL

In Attendance: Judy Brownoff (Chair), Lesley Bainbridge, Jane Cameron, Spencer Graham, George Klima, Leslie Miller-Brooks, Karin Nelson, and Barb Sharpe

Regrets: Diya Courty-Stephens

Staff: Eva Riccius, Senior Manager, Parks; Alix Link, Manager of Urban Forestry, Natural Areas, and Community Stewardship; Rebecca Newlove, Manager, Sustainability and Angela Hawkshaw, Committee Clerk

COMMITTEE BUSINESS ITEMS

CHAIR'S NOTES

- The Capital Regional District (CRD) has adopted Bylaw 4575, Biodiversity and Environmental Stewardship Coordination and Bylaw 4602, Foodlands Access Service Establishment. These two new regional services will coordinate biodiversity, ecological asset protection, and environmental stewardship, while the other will focus on preserving and providing access to farmland for agricultural use, as well as promoting regional food security.
- Agricultural use of some lands at Bear Hill will be piloted.
- Courses and workshops at Haliburton Community Organic Farm provide valuable training, but there are concerns that farmers have no land to acquire afterward, forcing them to relocate, which highlights the ongoing importance of food security on the island in these changing times.
- The CRD's Solid Waste Management Plan (SWMP) aims to reduce the material sent to the Hartland Landfill Facility and manage waste sustainably.
- A neighborhood grant program could help promote awareness of waste and recycling options.
- The Rethink Waste Community Grant program provides funding for community projects that align with the 5R Pollution Prevention Hierarchy.
- At the Special Council Meeting on February 11, 2025, approximately 80 people provided input on the Quadra McKenzie Plan (QMP). Staff will present the public process results and next steps at the Council meeting on February 24, 2025.
- Engineering was asked to report on the implications of fast-tracking the Active Transportation Plan. They presented their report, and Council received it for information. The financial implications were significant, and several members of Council described it as a wake-up call.

ADOPTION OF MINUTES

January 16, 2025

MOVED by J. Cameron and Seconded by S. Graham: "That the Minutes of the Sustainability and Climate Action Advisory Committee held January 16, 2025, be adopted as circulated."

CARRIED

The following was noted during Committee discussion:

- There is a duplicate bullet on page 2.

RESULT: Carried 6 TO 0

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

OPPOSED: None

BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION AND URBAN FOREST STRATEGY UPDATES

The Manager of Urban Forestry, Natural Areas, and Community Stewardship gave an update on the Implementation Plan (PowerPoint on file) and the following was noted in response to questions and during committee discussion:

- A suggestion was made to revise the order in the presentation from Economy, Social, and Environment to Environment, Social, and Economy. The Environment is foundational, in supporting both Economic growth and Social well-being.
- This presentation is for collecting feedback on the implementation of the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy (BCS) and the Urban Forest Strategy (UFS).
- The 3-30-300 Rule recommends that everyone should see three trees from their home, live in a neighborhood with 30% tree canopy cover, and have a public green space within 300 meters, ensuring equitable access to nature in urban areas.
- Incentives for planting rain gardens and reducing paved areas on private properties were discussed as beneficial for stormwater management. Other departments are involved, and Engineering could provide specific guidance on this topic.
- BC Hydro and TD Friends of the Environment Foundation offers various grants for communities.
- There are over 100 Natural State Covenants in the municipality.
- The municipality is currently restoring Gabo Creek to help restore fish habitat and bank stability. Parks and Public Works crews have worked on this project together.
- Adding trees to the transportation network could provide shade and keep walking or movement areas cooler during hot temperatures.
- There is a need to coordinate and harmonize various initiatives with the BCS and the UFS including the Active Transportation Plan (ATP) and the Quadra McKenzie Plan (QMP).
- Shelbourne Street designs were completed many years ago. It is possible that a design developed today would be different, based on current public interest in retaining trees along streets.
- Annual reporting on lost trees and newly added trees, along with better explanations for these changes, could help provide clearer information and gain residents' support
- There is an opportunity for better collaboration between services like BC Hydro and BC Transit, encouraging all parties to work together.
- Community involvement has proven effective, as seen with Prospect Lake, where 50 trees were successfully saved.
- Mentioning specific species, animals, birds, and plants could help generate interest and highlight the impact on quality of life. The education and outreach plan is currently in development. A special edition of Saanich's Our Backyard Magazine is planned.
- Enhancing biodiversity is essential for creating a sustainable community.
- A presentation of the engagement plan would be appreciated.
- The task of removing invasive species is a large one for staff, and partners are needed. The Pulling Together program is a large and successful initiative, involving significant efforts in this area.

- Private landowners could be offered initiatives for planting trees, with one-time funding through Saanich and the Habitat Acquisition Trust (HAT).

**The Manager of Urban Forestry, Natural Areas, and Community Stewardship exited the meeting at 5:13 p.m.

The Senior Manager of Parks gave a presentation on the Biodiversity Conservation and Urban Forest Funding Strategy and the following was noted in response to questions and during committee discussion:

- The Climate Report Card tracks specific metrics such as planted trees, permeable surfaces, and tree canopy. It also includes targets related to greenhouse gases, providing data to update the plan.
- The deadline for finance to the 2025 budget is February 16th.
- A resource request for 2025 for a Field Biologist, as part of implementing the priority actions in the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy, has been put forward. This role could focus on a smaller area instead of the entire region of Saanich.
- Observing a Council meeting is a helpful way to learn about the process of implementing plans and how finances are allocated.
- A 5-10 degree drop in temperature occurs when trees are added to streets.

**The Senior Manager of Parks exited the meeting at 5:33 p.m.

CLIMATE PLAN REPORT CARD

The Manager of Sustainability gave a presentation on the Climate Plan Report Card (PowerPoint on file) and the following was noted in response to questions and during committee discussion:

- The funding saved using the EV cars covers service requirements. The question remains regarding the residential footprint, which is not limited to Saanich.
- Solid waste per year was 405 kg in 2020 and has decreased to 385 kg in 2024. These numbers collected from the CRD include commercial drop-offs, which cannot be separated from the residential data at this time.
- Annual reporting is appreciated.
- Climate issues are not yet a widespread interest globally. It is urgent to find a way to engage a larger number of people and combat misinformation.
- The Saanich Carbon Calculator could be promoted.

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion from J. Cameron the meeting adjourned at 6:02 p.m.

CHAIR

I hereby certify these Minutes are accurate.

COMMITTEE CLERK