



MINUTES
ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY
MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 2010-NOV-10 AT 4:15 PM
CITY HALL BOARD ROOM, 455 WALLACE STREET

Present:	Anne Kerr, Chair Jim Kipp (arrived 4:29) Jeff Thomas	Meg Savory Charles Thirkill Shelley Serebrin (arrived 4:58) Joan Wagner
Guests:	David Stewart, Planner	Jana Zelenski, Landscape Architect, HB Lanarc
Staff:	Rob Lawrance, Environmental Planner	Rebecca Tubbs (Recording Secretary)
Regrets:	Wally Wells	

1. Call to Order

Chair A. Kerr called the meeting to order at 4:20 pm and welcomed D. Stewart and J. Zelenski.

2. Approval of Agenda & Late Items

The agenda was approved as presented with the addition of the following late items:

- a) Volunteers for a VIU representative (M. Savory):
With the new mandate and an opening for a VIU representative, M. Savory offered some suggestions for volunteers from VIU's "sustainable solutions" group. If there are no objections, she will approach them directly to request a representative.
- b) Salute to the Coho, 10:00 am – 2:00 pm (2010-NOV-20) (C. Thirkill):
The Salute to the Coho will be held at Bowen Park on 2010-NOV-20 from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm. The event will include family-oriented displays and a presentation by C. Thirkill in the amphitheatre at 10:00 am. There will also be a tour of the side channel and fry trapping. Everyone is welcome to attend.
- c) Friends of Harewood Plains Meeting (2010-NOV-24) (C. Thirkill):
The Friends of Harewood Plains' second community meeting will be held at the new Chase River Fire Hall on 2010-NOV-24 at 7:00 pm. The meeting will include a discussion about the study and restoration of natural sites as well as the next steps for the community in protecting the meadows. The Friends of Harewood Plains hats will be available for \$15.00 each.
- d) Departure Creek Community Information Meeting (2010-NOV-18) (A. Kerr):
The Departure Creek Community Information Meeting will be held at the Departure Bay Kin Hut (2370 Departure Bay Road) on 2010-NOV-18 at 6:30 pm and will be hosted by The Nanaimo & Area Land Trust and the City of Nanaimo. The meeting will focus on bringing the salmon back to Departure Bay Creek. Everyone is welcome to attend.
- e) The Clean Bin Project Movie (2010-NOV-15) (M. Savory):
VIU will be holding a film entitled "the Clean Bin Project" by Jen Rustemeyer and Grant Baldwin from 7:00 pm to 9:30 pm in Building 310, Room 203. The film is a documentary about a regular couple and their quest to live completely waste free. Light refreshments will be served. Tickets are 10:00 for the public.

3. Adoption of Minutes (2010-OCT-13)

MOVED by M. Savory, SECONDED by C. Thirkill, that the 2010-OCT-13 Minutes be adopted as presented.

CARRIED.

4. Items Arising from Minutes

a) Environmental Coordinator Position (C. Thirkill):

At the previous meeting, C. Thirkill had inquired about the status of the environmental coordinator position at the City of Nanaimo. He was informed that environmental coordinators are no longer required due to provincial Riparian Area Regulations (RARs). There are other issues besides RARs that need to be monitored by an environmental coordinator such as wildlife tree and stream protection, education, etc. The RARs were never intended to replace the need for local environmental coordinators.

Conversations with Ministry of Environment staff point in the opposite direction. Several municipalities (including Saanich, Courtenay, and Campbell River) have retained their Environmental Coordinators. C. Thirkill emphasized how important it is to have an environmental coordinator, especially in the future as the city continues to grow.

R. Lawrance noted that there is still a half-position for an environmental coordinator in Nanaimo. C. Thirkill suggested that Nanaimo look into cost sharing an environmental coordinator with another community.

J. Kipp arrived at 4:29 pm.

It was suggested that this item be added to a future agenda.

5. Budget (\$1,739)

6. Delegation

a) Jana Zelenski, Landscape Architect, HB Lanarc - Use of Native Plants in Development Landscaping:

A. Kerr welcomed J. Zelenski to the meeting. At the last meeting, G. Noble had suggested that she attend as a delegation to discuss native planting from the perspective of a landscape architect.

J. Zelenski introduced herself as a landscape architect from HB Lanarc Consultants. She noted that the use of native plants is important to both her and her firm, who operate with a commitment to sustainability. She is a member of the Design Advisory Panel (DAP), which gives her the opportunity to see and comment on development proposals for the City.

Why do we use native plants?

- environmental responsibility
- to support local and regional identity (i.e. arbutus tree)
- native plants can be the most appropriate choice for the site location
- less water / maintenance required
- can easily adapt to the appropriate environment
- can provide the highest value

There are certain cases in which native plants *must* be used. There are also cases in which native plants *should not* be used. Some of the main considerations when deciding to use native plants include site condition (shade, microclimate, soil, pollution tolerance, etc.) and context (for example, a forest has a different context than a parking lot). If native plants are used inappropriately, they can suffer from disease and be unsuccessful.

Plant choices are also based on aesthetics and on the scenario. In some cases, adaptive plant material can perform the same or better than native plants. There is no one-size-fits-all scenario when choosing plants. She noted that protecting existing landscapes is very important, as native landscapes are very difficult to reproduce.

J. Zelenski thanked the Committee for inviting her to the meeting and asked if there were any questions.

What is your experience in sourcing native plant material locally (island or lower mainland)? Have you heard of concerns regarding local supply?

- *She has not encountered a problem with local supply. Native plant sources do exist here, sometimes in smaller quantities. Native plants are a bit harder to propagate which may make them harder to find. The supply depends on the seasonal availability.*

Do you have any suggestions for resources which include information on the appropriate use of native plants in urban settings? Is there a list that you could recommend?

- *J. Zelenski has lists that she uses for her work. She could compile a list of resources and send it along as information.*

Do you use deer-resistant plants?

- *Yes. There are a variety of measures that can be used to deter deer, with netting around gardens being the most effective.*

Do you avoid planting invasive species?

- *Yes. Although it is not regulated, the majority of landscape architects will not plant invasive species.*

Do clients ever request the use native plants? Are they aware of the benefits?

- *Yes. There is a strong interest in using native plants, especially because they require less maintenance. Most of the interest is on an institutional scale, not residential.*

What do you think about a minimum requirement for native planting in new developments? Would this pose as a problem for the landscape industry? How would this affect the supply?

- *J. Zelenski struggles with the idea of a minimum requirement, mostly due to the fact that native plants are not appropriate for every application. Landscape architects require flexibility in applying native plants in the appropriate setting. Any sort of regulation caters to the lowest common denominator – that's when they start being applied inappropriately. In her opinion, the majority of landscape architects has a huge desire to use native plants, when appropriate, but do not desire a regulation. A general regulation would not work. In regards to the supply, she sees no issue (based on her experience).*

Do you see commercial suppliers such as Art Knapp and Green Thumb catering to the supply of native plants?

- *If the market demanded it, they would supply the demand.*

You had mentioned that there are certain situations in which native plants *would not* be appropriate. Do you have any specific examples?

- *One example would be the street trees used at the Vancouver Island Conference Centre. Native plants would not adapt or survive in "street tree" conditions. Sunny conditions are a situation in which native plants may not be appropriate - there are relatively few native plants for sunny conditions.*

In regards to a minimum requirement for native planting in new developments, do you think there is a broader way to address the issue that may be more workable for landscape professionals (i.e. a requirement for low maintenance adaptive plants)?

- *It's a tough question. When you start to direct professionals on what to plant, it can get monotonous. The approach would need to be a site-specific approach. When the site is being analyzed during the development process, it needs to be recognized what the opportunities and obstacles are. With certain sites it may be good to require native or low*

maintenance adaptive plants. With other sites, it may not be a good idea. It is complex and there is no easy answer.

What about a broader requirement that leaves the choice to use native plants to the discretion of the industry?

- *Certainly there could be emphasis and guidelines to encourage the use - there are already guidelines in the OCP. She feels that she would be challenged to write a bylaw that is able to address all scenarios.*

S. Serebrin arrived at the meeting at 4:58 pm.

A. Kerr thanked J. Zelenski for attending the meeting.

b) D. Stewart, Planner - Zoning Bylaw Rewrite:

D. Stewart would like to focus on the “green” side of the new Zoning Bylaw. He began with his PowerPoint presentation (see attached slides). Committee questions and discussion noted below:

With adoption of the OCP, it was noted that the Zoning Bylaw needs to be updated. A rewrite has begun because the current Zoning Bylaw is 17 years old and does not reflect the current land use thinking of today. Staff have been focusing on specific parts of the bylaw (residential, commercial, corridor, etc.) and created a chart-based version. This results in a much smaller and user-friendly document.

The landscaping portion of the new Zoning Bylaw will include three levels:

- **Level 1:** Basic requirements.
- **Level 2:** Sustainable Landscapes, which include native species, protection of existing native species, living walls, green roofs, bioswales, urban food gardens, etc.
- **Level 3:** Takes into consideration all of the requirements in Level 1 and 2, as well as street furniture, bike facilities, permeable urban plazas, public art, etc.

Density bonusing means that developers are awarded with higher density for providing certain amenities. Density bonusing will be awarded to developers who meet Tier 1 or Tier 2 requirements, as presented in the new Sustainable Design Guidelines.

J. Wagner asked whether or not the Landscaping Bylaw addressed the use of invasive species. D. Stewart explained that the bylaw encourages people to hire a landscape architect, and no landscape architect would use invasive species. As an extra precaution, it may be worth revisiting. R. Lawrance noted that it needs to be determined what constitutes an “invasive species”. He recommends outsourcing the responsibility of such a job to an outside organization to ensure that the information is kept up-to-date by the experts.

D. Stewart noted that the new Zoning Bylaw will encourage both minimum and maximum setbacks within corridor zones. This will ensure that the streetscape is “walkable” and of human scale. S. Serebrin asked how a setback can be ecologically or environmentally beneficial. R. Lawrance explained that setbacks create opportunity for developers to incorporate green space into their development. D. Stewart noted there are reasons other than environmental, such as engineering requirements, for requiring setbacks.

S. Serebrin noted that cycling needs to become a major part of streets. D. Stewart agrees - the new Zoning Bylaw does mention cycling a bit, but not as much as he'd like. Cycling is addressed in Level 2 and 3 of the landscape requirements, and in Tier 1 and 2 of the Sustainable Design Guidelines.

Staff still need to determine how to, for instance, weight the value of a bike rack (2m²) compared to a permeable paver sidewalk (10m²).

J. Wagner asked if flexibility has been considered in regards to setbacks (to help assist with issues such as buildings rotated on site to utilize sun/shade). D. Stewart said that all setbacks are flexible and can be varied through a Development Variance Permit.

S. Serebrin noted the idea of the creation of animal corridors. How can animal corridors be incorporated into the Zoning Bylaw? D. Stewart agrees that animal corridors are important but feels that a zoning bylaw is not the right tool for it. The Sustainable Design Guidelines may address it. The cheapest requirement that will be available to developers will be to protect existing vegetation. R. Lawrance noted that the Parkway and existing watercourse areas throughout the city would be good opportunities for animal corridor protection.

A. Kerr wonders why so many setback requirement variances are allowed in watercourse areas. She wonders if the new Zoning Bylaw will be stricter in keeping with the variances. D. Stewart explained that the new bylaw will not be stricter. That is more a question of the RAR policy, which setbacks are based on. J. Kipp noted that every citizen legally has the right to request a variance.

A. Kerr asked if there is a grandfather clause in place that protects existing building structures within the setbacks. D. Stewart said yes. Any redevelopment of the property (i.e. deck addition) would have to go through the same process as any other new development.

C. Thirkill suggested that if a developer is interested in applying for a variance, that Council direct them to get an independent opinion first. This requirement could be built into the process; instead of someone just simply requesting a variance, they would be required to hire an independent evaluator to determine whether or not a variance would be appropriate.

D. Stewart noted that the draft Zoning Bylaw is now available online, as well as public surveys. Staff will be facilitating open houses sometime in the new year (after the draft mapping is complete). Staff will also send out media releases before the open houses. Once PNAC and Council have endorsed the Zoning Bylaw, it will proceed to final adoption in the spring/summer.

Questions or comments can be sent to draftzoningbylaw@nanaimo.ca

A. Kerr thanked D. Stewart for attending the meeting. The new Zoning Bylaw rewrite is of much interest to the Committee and members look forward to providing feedback and input before Council adoption.

7. Correspondence, Handouts, Notices

a) Sustainable Transportation in Liveable Communities – Forum (2010-NOV-13):

R. Lawrance is unable to attend this forum and would like another member to attend. S. Serebrin volunteered to attend the forum. J. Wagner may also attend. C. Thirkill suggested that the Committee pay for lunch for members who do attend.

MOVED by J. Kipp, SECONDED by J. Thomas, that any member who attends the forum receive a reimbursement of up to \$10.00 for lunch.

CARRIED.

8. Ongoing Business

a) Sustainability Action Plan:

The revised Sustainability Action Plan Terms of Reference was distributed to members via e-mail prior to the meeting. At the last meeting, R. Lawrance was asked to create a report regarding the status of the Action Plan. Because there are few upcoming Council meetings and R. Lawrance felt it was important for Council to be informed of what is going on before the Community Energy and Emissions Study (CEES) went forward, he provided the information in a staff report format. This report will go to the next Council meeting (2010-NOV-22) and help provide them with an understanding of the Sustainability Action Plan and process.

- Engaging the Public on Climate Change Workshop:

R. Lawrance was asked to contact BC Healthy Communities and ask if they would be able to attend the City to hold a workshop. They provided him with a proposal for an all-day session on "Engaging the Public on Climate Change". The facilitators have proposed a

date of 2010-DEC-16 but are also available in January 2011. The facilitators have requested a maximum of 45 attendees. R. Lawrance would prefer approximately 25.

A. Kerr wonders if there is enough time to arrange for the workshop before 2010-DEC-16. R. Lawrance noted that it will be a tight schedule, but the main goal will be to make sure that the key stakeholders are able to attend. He would prefer to hold the event in December as there will likely be follow-up items that will need to be added to the ACES 2011 workplan.

MOVED by C. Thirkill, SECONDED by J. Thomas, that the Committee allocate the funds required to pay for the cost of the workshop.

S. Serebrin would prefer to not allocate all of the remaining funds toward the workshop. R. Lawrance noted that the cost of the workshop is more than ACES budget will allow and that the Community Planning budget will be used to cover the remaining costs. Motion amended:

MOVED by C. Thirkill, SECONDED by J. Thomas, that the Committee allocate \$1,200.00 toward the cost of the workshop.

CARRIED.

S. Serebrin wonders what information will be provided to BC Healthy Communities to help them develop their workshop outline. A baseline report would help inform them what is happening in Nanaimo and what questions are pertinent to Nanaimo, as they do not live here themselves. They need to be able to use City staff as a resource.

A. Kerr noted that HST is not included within the final cost estimate of \$4,120.00.

R. Lawrance emphasized that it is key to have the right stakeholders in attendance and that the workshop date cannot be confirmed until the stakeholders have been contacted. As he contacts the stakeholders, he will be able to get a better idea of availability for the proposed workshop dates, as well as prepare an introductory package.

R. Lawrance will contact the following stakeholders:

- Vancouver Island University
- School District #68
- Vancouver Island Health Authority
- Neighbourhood associations
- ENGOS
- Snuneymuxw First Nation
- Regional District of Nanaimo
- Chamber of Commerce
- Nanaimo Recycling Exchange
- Young Professionals of Nanaimo
- Various business associations

If members have any other suggestions for stakeholder attendees, please send them to R. Lawrance by the end of Monday (2010-NOV-15).

- Green Business Summit?:
Deferred until W. Wells is in attendance.

- b) Pesticide-Free Education / Promotion Meeting with Parks Department (2010-OCT-21) Debrief:
Deferred to December meeting.

9. New Business

- a) Draft Committee Funding Policy:
Deferred until December meeting.

b) Christmas Dinner Location (2010-DEC-08):

J. Wagner suggested that the dinner date be changed to 2010-DEC-09. The Committee agreed to meet at the Diner's Rendezvous at 6:00 pm. R. Tubbs will make reservations and send the details to members via e-mail.

10. Council / Committee Updatea) 2010-OCT-25 (M. Savory):
No report.b) 2010-NOV-08 (J. Wagner):
No report.c) PNAC Meeting (M. Savory)
No report.**11. Next Meeting**

The next regular meeting is scheduled for 2010-DEC-08 in the City Hall Board Room at 4:15 pm. C. Thirkill will act as Chair. Christmas dinner to follow on 2010-DEC-09 at the Diner's Rendezvous at 6:00 pm.

12. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 6:36 pm.

APPROVED:

Chair

Date