



MINUTES

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON THE ENVIRONMENT

MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 2010-JAN-13 AT 4:15 PM
CITY HALL BOARD ROOM, 455 WALLACE STREET

Present: Jim Kipp, Chair
Shelley Serebrin (arrived 4:43 pm)
Susan Fisher (Alternate for Anne Kerr)
Meg Savory
Wally Wells
Charles Thirkill
Joan Wagner
Jeff Thomas

Staff: Rob Lawrance, Environmental Planner
Rebecca Tubbs (Recording Secretary)

Regrets: Margaret Henigman

1. Call to Order

J. Kipp called the meeting to order at 4:26 pm.

Members began by introducing themselves to each other because it was the first meeting attended by J. Thomas and S. Fisher.

2. Approval of Agenda & Late Items

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

a) Council Update: 2009-Dec-14:

J. Wagner noted that Mr. Sperling appeared as a delegation to Council regarding issues being caused by his neighbour's wood burning habits. According to J. Wagner, no resolution was made at the meeting.

b) New Business: Bob's Bird's-Foot Trefoil (Lotus pinnatus):

C. Thirkill explained the significance of a local flower called Bob's Bird's-Foot Trefoil (Lotus pinnatus). This flower, which blooms in May/June, is unique to the Nanaimo area. There are only about 1,800 plants throughout Canada, 1,500 of which are located on the Harewood Plains, within the city itself.

C. Thirkill provided members with a map that displays the flower's distribution. C. Thirkill has e-mailed Council requesting that it consider Lotus pinnatus as Nanaimo's floral emblem, and they seem intrigued.

R. Lawrance noted that Lotus pinnatus is a provincially red-listed flower and nationally is listed under the *Federal Species at Risk Act*. He noted that the land in which the flower grows is privately owned, but added that the property has an environmentally sensitive development permit attached to it. This means that any developer would need to work with City staff to protect these plants.

C. Thirkill would like to make a proposal to Council in March. The Committee would like to take a tour of the area in March to view the flowers themselves, conditional upon receiving landowner permission.

3. Adoption of Minutes (2009-Nov-10)

The minutes were approved as presented with the following changes:

a) A. Kerr requested that Item 4A (Eco-logos) of the 2009-Dec-09 Minutes be changed to appear as below:

A. Kerr distributed information to members via e-mail before the meeting (see attached). A. Kerr reported that in her research of environmental product logos, there appeared to be no credible logos for pesticides alternatives. The two most recognized 'green' product logos, EcoLogo (Canada) and Green Seal (USA) which have credible third-party verification, do not have any pesticide alternatives on their product lists. In response to a query from R. Lawrance, she felt

that although there are many environmental logos available in the market, there are none for pesticide alternatives with enough credibility (especially 3rd party verification) for the City of Nanaimo to support them.

MOVED by M. Savory, SECONDED by C. Thirkill, that the 2009-Dec-09 Minutes be adopted as amended.

CARRIED.

4. Items Arising from Minutes

- a) J. Wagner asked if open fireplaces will be eligible for the woodstove change-out program taking place from March 1 to April 30, 2010. R. Lawrance explained that they are eligible for the rebate if an insert is installed.

5. Budget: (to be determined)

R. Lawrance explained that ACE has not yet been allocated a budget. J. Kipp added that Council will be meeting to discuss budgets soon.

6. Delegation

- a) The Human Hive Conference – Report:
Deferred until next meeting.

7. Correspondence, Handouts, Notices

- a) Environmental Mind Grind Challenge Sponsorship Package – for info:
R. Lawrance provided members with the sponsorship package at the meeting (see attached). He explained that the program is designed to educate children and parents on various environmental issues in a fun “game show” format. Students from schools of all ages attend and participate in these activities / challenges.
- b) Urban Forest Outdoor Classroom – for info:
R. Lawrance provided Ms. Brewer’s proposal to Parks to members for information via e-mail prior to the meeting (see attached). Ms. Brewer has invited ACE members to attend a presentation that she is giving at Bowen Park on “green living”. R. Lawrance, C. Thirkill, and J. Wagner will attend the event.

8. Ongoing Business

- a) Cosmetic Pesticide Education Program – update:
R. Lawrance provided members with samples of two materials that are being developed through the advertising campaign (see attached). These materials included a 3-4 foot outdoor banner to be used at events and a sample ad for the Leisure Guide.

Leisure Guide Ad:

R. Lawrance explained that the information on the ad is very general, giving notice of the upcoming bylaw, as well links to find more information (www.nanaimo.ca or www.teamwatersmart.ca). This ad will be submitted to the Parks, Rec & Culture Department prior to the next ACE meeting.

Outdoor Banner:

This banner will be used as an information banner at public events for groups involved in providing information on IPM practice and pesticide alternatives. R. Lawrance noted that Team Watersmart has already planned to hold 10 events this summer in which the banner will be displayed. The Nanaimo Recycling Exchange (NRE) has planned to hold five events, including a pesticide drop-off event in April.

It was suggested that the term “natural allies” on the banner be simplified. If members any have suggestions or changes to these materials, please send them to R. Lawrance in the next week or so.

Bylaw:

R. Lawrance explained to members that the bylaw was returned to him by the lawyer but he has not had a chance to review it. Once it is reviewed, he will send a synopsis of the recommended changes to members for information. He will develop a Council report to accompany the draft bylaw.

W. Wells asked J. Kipp if it is possible for the bylaw to be adopted by Council in one meeting.

J. Kipp assured him that it would take at least two meetings, adding that it may not have to go to a public session.

J. Wagner feels if the City is going to ask people to restrict their use of cosmetic pesticides, they should do the same. R. Lawrance reminded the Committee that the Parks Department essentially eliminates their use for pesticides by following the IPM process. J. Kipp suggested finding ways to promote this fact, as it may not be known to the public.

S. Serebrin arrived at 4:53 pm.

9. New Business

a) ACE Workplan:

Members were sent a draft copy of the workplan via e-mail prior to the meeting (see attached).

REVIEW OF WORKPLAN

1. Revise Committee Terms of Reference - Complete

J. Kipp explained that Council is looking to change committee mandates, extend committee terms past election dates, eliminate reapplications, add “sustainability” to the ACE Committee, amalgamate committees, and create new committees.

J. Kipp noted that Council wants to create a community sustainability committee. Although there is currently a sustainability committee at the RDN, its structure only consists of staff and elected officials (J. Kipp will distribute sample structure of current committee).

R. Lawrance noted that the provincial government is requiring that Official Community Plans (OCPs) of municipalities be amended to include a section on greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in which the municipality must set targets to be met. R. Lawrance has been discussing with the RDN how this can be coordinated on a regional level.

R. Lawrance noted some projects he has been working on regarding climate change, such as setting proposed targets and finding ways to meet those targets. He will present the information he has gathered at the next meeting. R. Lawrance noted that he has also been working on the development of the green design guidelines with Gary Noble, Development Approval Planner.

S. Fisher mentioned that A. Kerr had wanted to develop landscaping requirements for native plants. R. Lawrance replied that the green design guidelines will include components that address native plants as a component of overall landscaping.

2. Habitat Atlas Update – Incomplete / Ongoing.

R. Lawrance reported that this item was not completed in 2009 because the I.T. Department was not prepared to do a major overhaul. They are able to make some changes to it this year.

M. Savory requested that the status of this item be changed to appear as “ongoing” only.

3. Invasive Species Management – Incomplete.

R. Lawrance explained that this is a big issue with a high cost. It will be a good opportunity for the City to review its practices (primarily within the Parks Department), to determine what needs to be revised. R. Lawrance will invite the Program Coordinator of the Coastal Invasive Plant Committee

(CIPC) to speak at a future meeting. W. Wells suggested changing the status of this item from "incomplete" to "ongoing" (low priority).

M. Savory suggested inviting a staff member from the Parks Department to speak at a future meeting. R. Lawrance suggested asking G. Pasaluko to speak to the Committee about the grant request that Parks is making. The Committee will then get a chance to ask how the Parks Department would like their support and if there are other they can be of help.

C. Thirkill was recently asked to organize a spring break event for Dover Bay Secondary students. He has organized broom cutting in Jingle Pot Marsh and Bowen Park at virtually no cost. So far, 14 students have volunteered. C. Thirkill will send out more information about this effort to members. S. Serebrin noted that elementary and university students may be interested in participating in this type of program. S. Serebrin will see if there is any interest from VIU.

4. Woodburning Stoves / Inserts – Complete.

5. Community Sustainability / Climate Change Programs – Incomplete.

The Committee feels that this issue is of high priority and should be moved toward the top of the workplan.

6. Cosmetic Pesticide Use – Complete.

J. Kipp explained that this item will become more operational as the bylaw is passed. The Committee will now review to find out what happens.

At the last meeting, it was suggested that the Committee hold a brainstorming forum that included local retailers, the City of Nanaimo, Team Watersmart, NALT, etc. J. Wagner suggested inviting Green Thumb, noting that they already host free seminars. J. Kipp will attempt to contact Green Thumb and Long Lake Nursery to request getting together for a discussion. S. Fisher suggested inviting Art Knapp. She will send her contact to R. Lawrance.

7. Public Information / Outreach – Complete.

Public forums and info events held. Suggestions for 2010 included sustainability, native plant landscaping, limiting footprints.

8. Green Nanaimo Awards – Complete.

R. Lawrance explained that there will not be Green Nanaimo Awards this year. Although the award ceremony is traditionally held on an annual basis, staff has found it difficult to do so. Difficulties include lack of variety in nominations, repeat nominations, and large staff-time commitment. It is important to note that usually the ceremony is organized in conjunction with other committee awards and that these committees have opted to not hold a ceremony this year.

W. Wells noted that the quality of the award should be retained. Giving awards just for the sake of giving awards takes away from the importance of receiving one. He explained that the Chamber of Commerce has had the same problem in receiving new nominations with their Sterling Awards.

C. Thirkill suggested changing the emphasis of the award, for example, to schools. M. Savory likes the idea of a school-based award. R. Lawrance noted that the Environmental Mind Grind Challenge (Item 7a) relates largely to that type of effort. The Committee could consider contributing an award to this program. R. Lawrance will discuss the idea of this with Michael Schellnick of the Nanaimo Recycling exchange. J. Kipp suggested having an annual award but without a ceremony.

The Committee would like to continue with yearly awards. This item will be added for discussion to the February agenda.

NEW PROPOSALS FOR 2010 WORKPLAN

1. 2010 Earth Day Celebrations

C. Thirkill would like to organize something simple and community-driven such as an ivy pull in Bowen Park. He would like the event to be City-supported. C. Thirkill will ask G. Pasaluko which City park would be most appropriate to hold this type of event.

J. Wagner suggested an organic garden tour. J. Kipp added that Team Watersmart may be able to organize the majority of the tour if they found a way to incorporate water conservation into the program (i.e. rain barrels, low-maintenance planting, etc). S. Serebrin suggested the idea of holding a sustainable building tour.

R. Lawrance said that both tours are a possibility, but that he needs someone to identify potential gardens and buildings, as well as help organize the programs. J. Wagner will send some contacts to R. Lawrance. M. Savory said that she could volunteer some time to a program but feels that these tours would be better organized through the Parks, Recreation & Culture's Leisure Guide than R. Lawrance and this committee. Instead of the work being done by City staff, the tour would be held by an organizer and a small fee would be charged.

2. Green Mapping

J. Wagner explained that green mapping is a resource that is used to identify a variety of environmental features such as retailers of local produce/environmentally friendly products, locations of parks and bike paths, water bodies, etc. Essentially, it is a collaboration of the area's environmental information combined into one map. R. Lawrance noted that a feature like this could be built into the Habitat Atlas.

3. Economic Development Strategy Review

Council will be forming an Economic Development Committee that includes representation from Council. Their goal will be to entice green business into Nanaimo. W. Wells noted that Council has approved \$60,000. The consultant has just begun work and should have a report by the end of the month. This item should be added to the workplan as "ongoing" but with low priority.

W. Wells will scan the document he provided at the meeting and send it to R. Tubbs to distribute to members.

R. Lawrance said that he will have a draft workplan completed for review at the February meeting. Once approved, it will be sent to Council. M. Savory asked if the Committee could be provided progress updates for this workplan. She would like to refer to the meeting quarterly (every third meeting) to monitor their progress.

R. Lawrance suggested having a copy of this workplan available at any meeting.

b) 2010 Earth Day Celebrations:
See workplan discussion.

c) Economic Development Strategy Review – input for green business component:
See workplan discussion.

d) Cosmetic Use of Pesticides in BC – Public Consultation Paper:
In summary, the province is consulting the general public and interest groups on their opinion regarding the regulation of cosmetic pesticides. There is one month for input. This is one phase of the consultation. There may be another phase directed toward local governments. J. Wagner thought it would be valuable information because many people have asked why pesticide regulation is not a provincial issue. This consultation shows that they are starting to act on things.

M. Savory asked if the RDN's Team Watersmart would make a submission to this survey.

R. explained that they are an educational team made up of Regional District staff and may not see this as their role.

C. Thirkill again mentioned that he would like to see a reporting requirement created for applicants, to require a record location and application of pesticides on the City's GIS system. J. Kipp said that a reporting requirement would have to be completed on a voluntary basis.

10. Council Update

a) 2009-Nov-23 (S. Serebrin):
S. Serebrin reported no environmental-related issues. She noted a delegation that appeared regarding urban chickens and asked J. Kipp if Council had made a decision. J. Kipp said that Council

has requested that staff to continue with a report. She also reported that a representative from SD68 appeared as a delegation to discuss how the City and School District could work together to share land and facilities to maximize their use.

b) 2009-Dec-07 (C. Thirkill):

No report.

c) 2009-Dec-21 (Meeting cancelled):

d) 2010-Jan-11 (Volunteer):

At this meeting, the neighbor of Mr. Sperling presented to Council. Problems seemed to not only be caused by wood smoke, but by a variety of ongoing neighbourhood disputes.

J. Kipp noted that many people fear that wood stoves will be banned. This will not happen.

R. Lawrance noted the difficulty of a ban comes because many people use wood stoves as their primary source of heat. There are some people, however, that use woodstoves as their secondary source of heat in a garage or workshop, for example. Should there be a limit to the number of stoves permitted per property?

J. Wagner noted that the majority of complaints received by the City are complaints that are health-related, not environmental.

11. Next Meeting

a) Committee Terms Update:

J. Kipp reported that committee terms of reference are currently under review and for members to proceed as usual unless told otherwise.

The next meeting is scheduled for 2010-Feb-10 at the City Hall Board Room.

12. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 6:42 p.m.

APPROVED:

Chair

2010-Feb-10

Date