

MINUTES
ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING
BOARD ROOM, SERVICE AND RESOURCE CENTRE
411 DUNSMUIR STREET, NANAIMO, BC
WEDNESDAY, 2020-NOV-04, AT 5:00 P.M.

Present: Councillor B. Geselbracht, Chair
Councillor T. Brown (joined electronically)
E. Boulanger, At Large Member (joined electronically)
D. Chen, At Large Member (joined electronically)
H. DesRoches, At Large Member (joined electronically)
L. Frey, At Large Member (joined electronically)
J. Lesemann, At Large Member (joined electronically)
W. Wells, At Large Member (joined electronically)

Absent: L. McCunn, At Large Member

Staff: B. Sims, General Manager, Engineering and Public Works
J. Holm, Director, Development Approvals
R. Lawrence, Environmental Planner
S. Snelgrove, Deputy Corporate Officer
J. Vanderhoef, Recording Secretary

1. CALL THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING TO ORDER:

The Environment Committee Meeting was called to order at 5:01 p.m.

2. INTRODUCTION OF LATE ITEMS:

- (a) Reorder Agenda Item 7(a) Environmental Responsibility Framework to be considered prior to Reports.

It was moved and seconded that the agenda be reordered to consider Agenda Item 7(a) Environmental Responsibility Framework prior to considering Reports. The motion carried unanimously.

3. ADOPTION OF AGENDA:

It was moved and seconded that the Agenda, as amended, be adopted. The motion carried unanimously.

4. ADOPTION OF MINUTES:

It was moved and seconded that the Minutes of the Special Environment Committee Meeting held in the Boardroom, Service and Resource Centre, 411 Dunsmuir Street, Nanaimo, BC, on Wednesday, 2020-OCT-07 at 3:02 p.m. be adopted as circulated. The motion carried unanimously.

5. OTHER BUSINESS:

(a) Environmental Responsibility Framework

Councillor Geselbracht provided a PowerPoint presentation. Highlights included:

- Suggested questions to be considered when structuring environmental responsibility framework
- Opportunity to liaise with the community within the REIMAGINE NANAIMO process

Committee discussion took place. Highlights included:

- Importance of adopting a framework and having all participants buy-in
- Flexibility of the Doughnut Economy framework is important as it can be tailored to Nanaimo which provides value to this structure
- Will require discussion and collaboration across committees and City departments
- Downscaling the Doughnut and how a community can take responsibility for impacts beyond their boundaries
- Simon Fraser University is working on climate impact performance indicators for municipalities and cities
- Request that the consultant be provided the Doughnut framework to incorporate into the ongoing work
- Need for structure in the Strategic Plan and see environmental values reflected in guiding document

Councillor Brown provided the following motions for discussion and consideration:

“That Council, as part of its Strategic Plan review process, consider replacing key Focus Area 1 under the Environmental Responsibility Key Focus Area with: “We will take responsibility to build a city and community that operates within the planetary boundaries necessary to maintain core life-sustaining ecological functions.”

“That the City of Nanaimo adopt the Doughnut Economic Model as a cohesive vision for all city initiatives and planning processes, focused on social and environmental sustainability as defined by the model, and be supported by a localized, objective-based, and evidence-based framework through the REIMAGINE NANAIMO process.”

“That the Environment Committee Work Plan be amended and re-focused to address the environmental components of this social and environmental sustainability framework.”

Committee discussion took place. Highlights included:

- Including wording such as “climate change” and “bio-diversity” in the proposed motions
- Including performance indicators
- Wording is intended to be broad in order to cover various areas within the Doughnut Economy framework

- Choosing the best wording to make sense to everyone involved and avoiding emphasis on specific areas
- Engagement through the REIMAGINE NANAIMO process could help explain details and framework

It was moved and seconded that the Environment Committee recommend that Council, as part of its Strategic Plan review process, consider replacing key Focus Area 1 under the Environmental Responsibility Key Focus Area with: “We will take responsibility to build a city and community that operates within the planetary boundaries necessary to maintain core life-sustaining ecological functions”. The motion carried unanimously.

Councillor Brown spoke regarding a Zoom workshop that he and Councillor Geselbracht participated in with the consultants who are helping implement the Doughnut Economy in the City of Amsterdam. He noted the following suggestions:

- Needs to be a cross sector approach
- Not to be deterred by starting from scratch
- During the review of plans consider how goals might be achieved
- It can’t be done all at once and needs addressed systematically
- Take an agnostic approach to encourage people to bring their ideas to the Doughnut

Councillor Geselbracht noted that he and Councillor Brown would be making a presentation to Council on 2020-NOV-09 regarding the process of downscaling the Doughnut. He will provide the Legislative Services department with supplementary documents related to this presentation to share with committee members.

Committee discussion took place. Highlights included:

- Process of applying the Doughnut Economy to the City of Nanaimo and sharing resources through the REIMAGINE NANAIMO process
- Timing and opportunities available with the REIMAGINE NANAIMO process providing community engagement and creating links between City initiatives
- Multiple agencies have partnered to create the “Creating City Portraits” program which provides a ten-step process for mapping, engaging, and monitoring the implementation of the Doughnut in a region
- Developing framework on the go and creating the City of Nanaimo’s “City Portrait” during the REIMAGINE NANAIMO process
- Building this framework into the City’s processes and challenges of teaching people how to use it in their daily routines
- First step is understanding the framework and then identifying the measurements
- Identifying who will create framework and how it can be accelerated
 - Suggestion of a workshop setting with community partners, consultant and Council members
- Potentially framing some questions for the consultant to provide direction
- Timing of action as the REIMAGINE NANAIMO process has already started and potential for this vision to be adopted into the Official Community Plan (OCP) and potentially other guiding documents

- Addressing the ways that environmental sustainability impacts various initiatives such as: water supply, transportation and planning
- Framework could help the consultant identify gaps

It was moved and seconded that the Environment Committee recommend that the City of Nanaimo adopt the Doughnut Economic Model as a cohesive vision for all City initiatives and planning processes, focused on social and environmental sustainability as defined by the model, and be supported by a localized, objective-based, and evidence-based framework through the REIMAGINE NANAIMO process. The motion carried unanimously.

Committee discussion took place. Highlights included:

- Potential for recommendations to create work for the Environment Committee if adopted by Council
 - Work will need to be shared and will require buy in from all sectors
 - Council would need to provide direction to gain alignment between committees and City departments
 - Wording of proposed motion does not limit the work to the Environment Committee alone
- Second and third recommendations are related and Councillor Brown or Councillor Geselbracht will address this during the Council meeting to ensure both motions are adopted together or neither are adopted
- Other Task Forces have indicated a need for a larger guiding framework
- Doughnut Economy will be a topic of discussion during the 2020-NOV-09 Governance and Priority Committee Meeting
- If this plan is implemented into the City's OCP it will be a guiding plan for various issues such as: land use, social issues, and planning

It was moved and seconded that the Environment Committee recommend that Council amend the Environment Committee Work Plan and re-focus it to address the environmental components of this social and environmental sustainability framework. The motion carried unanimously.

Councillor Bonner noted that the motions passed by the Environment Committee complemented the motions being recommended by the Health and Housing Task Force. He noted that committees influence each other and suggested that committees should be working together within the Doughnut framework.

Committee discussion took place. Highlights included:

- Integrating the Doughnut framework in the planning process and importance of having a vision statement
- Vision statement should encapsulate what the Doughnut is trying to achieve and outlines how to address issues locally and how the local economy impacts areas outside of City borders
- Developing the vision statement and Doughnut framework through the REIMAGINE NANAIMO process
- Phase two and three of REIMAGINE NANAIMO provide opportunities for the public to provide input on the draft OCP and could provide feedback on integrating the Doughnut framework into the OCP

6. REPORTS:

(a) 2021 Environment Committee Key Date Calendar

Introduced by Sky Snelgrove, Deputy Corporate Officer.

- Meetings have been scheduled on Wednesdays from 5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. every two months and will remain over Zoom
- Adjusting the schedule would be challenging due to limited resources

It was moved and seconded that the Environment Committee recommend Council approve their 2021 Key Date Calendar. The motion carried unanimously.

(b) REIMAGINE NANAIMO Environment Gap Analysis Review

Introduced by Rob Lawrance, Environmental Planner.

During the 2020-OCT-07 Environment Committee Meeting, members were provided three “Technical Backgrounders” for review. Staff and technical stakeholders will review these “Technical Backgrounders”. The purpose is to lay groundwork regarding what Nanaimo is doing and identify gaps by comparing Nanaimo to other same size communities. The Consultant has provided some suggested gaps and Staff are seeking input from the committee on which gaps should be prioritized and if gaps are missing from the list.

Committee discussion took place regarding each of the three “Technical Backgrounders” as follows:

Climate and Hazzard Adaptation Backgrounder:

- Suggested installing visual markers around the City indicating where the increasing water level will reach (by year)
- Development Permit Area for Coastal Zone/Hazard Areas
 - Riparian rights focus on protection of fish but not the people who live and use the surrounding land
 - Concerns regarding point-in-time reports from developers showing degradation of streams with no fish present, which allows developments to proceed, but does not allow for stream rehabilitation
 - Climate change has not been integrated into the setback requirements or flood plane areas
- A recommendation is planned for Council regarding reviewing setback and development permit process
- Outcomes are lacking from some of the backgrounders
- Food security and extending the growing season
- Developing a method to work from local data estimates rather than BC averages
- Actively planning for wind storms and mitigation in the future
- Back casting to review trends and make projections for the future
- Adaptation to share resources during a disaster situation

GHG (Greenhouse Gas) Mitigation Backgrounders:

- Banning natural gas province wide
- Development permits or performance zoning in relation to GHG building targets
- Increasing transit service and all transit infrastructure needs
- Using more aggressive language
- New buildings allowing access on rooftops and having white reflective surfaces or plants to absorb water
- Better monitoring of compost product being collected to improve organic waste diversion
- Environmental impact of both compressed natural gas (CNG) and renewable energy
- Implement planting targets in an urban forest planting program to capture more carbon monoxide
- Public Transportation needs to be a focus
- Increasing the interest in e-bike infrastructure as a priority
- Contracting a bike sharing system (specifically e-bikes)
- Circular economy policy aiming for more reusable products and less virgin material use

Green Infrastructure/Natural Areas Backgrounder:

- Soil quality and considering a soil program and types of planting
- “Soil Removal and Depositing Regulation Bylaw 1976 No. 1747” is dated and needs to be updated in order to track the movement of soil across the City and for erosion and sediment control
- Maintaining large green eco system
- Gamifying invasive plants and working with Snuneymuxw First Nation Elders to understand uses of local plants
- Adding the use of natural products for issues like bank stabilization in updates to the “Soil Removal and Depositing Regulation Bylaw 1976 No. 1747”
- Establishing storm water utilities to incentivize change
- Including natural assets inventory
- Use of environmental materials being encouraged by local government
- Promoting and incentivising environmentally sustainable business practices

(c) REIMAGINE NANAIMO Stakeholder Engagement Update

Introduced by Rob Lawrance, Environmental Planner.

Staff have been initiating outreach through REIMAGINE NANAIMO and listening to comments from the public about their environmental concerns. The consultant will be reviewing this information as well. Currently 491 organizations have been invited to participate. There have been 43 meetings held, mall pop-ups, pop-ups in the park, and Zoom meetings with various groups and organizations. Staff have attended multiple neighbourhood group meetings to hear their priorities and more meetings are planned for November.

Three questions were raised in the report “REIMAGINE NANAIMO Stakeholder Engagement Update”. Committee members were asked to review those questions and the lists of organizations that have been contacted to identify if any organizations were overlooked.

Councillor Geselbracht noted that the next scheduled meeting of the Environment Committee is 2020-DEC-09 and Staff and the Committee Chairs will discuss proceeding with this meeting closer to that date.

7. ADJOURNMENT:

It was moved and seconded at 7:13 p.m. that the meeting adjourn. The motion carried unanimously.

CHAIR

CERTIFIED CORRECT:

CORPORATE OFFICER