

MINUTES
ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING
BOARD ROOM, SERVICE AND RESOURCE CENTRE
411 DUNSMUIR STREET, NANAIMO, BC
WEDNESDAY, 2020-JUL-15, AT 3:00 P.M.

Present: Councillor T. Brown, Chair
Councillor B. Geselbracht
E. Boulanger, At Large Member (joined electronically 3:50 p.m.)
D. Chen, At Large Member (joined electronically)
L. Frey, At Large Member (joined electronically)
J. Lesemann, At Large Member (joined electronically)
L. McCunn, At Large Member (joined electronically)
W. Wells, At Large Member (joined electronically)

Absent: H. DesRoches, At Large Member

Staff: J. Rudolph, Chief Administrative Officer
D. Lindsay, General Manager, Development Services
B. Sims, General Manager, Engineering and Public Works
J. Holm, Director, Development Approvals
R. Lawrance, Environmental Planner
C. Sholberg, Community Heritage 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 3:00 p.m.

2. ADOPTION OF AGENDA:

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

3. 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-JUN-03 at 3:00 p.m. be adopted as circulated. The motion carried unanimously.

4. REPORTS:

(a) Climate Change Resilience Strategy

Introduced by Rob Lawrance, Environmental Planner.

Presentation:

1. Rob Lawrance, Environmental Planner, provided a PowerPoint presentation. Highlights included:
 - Raising awareness within the community about environmental issues and improving communication
 - There will be a mitigation aspect and an adaptation and resilience aspect to responding to climate change
 - Most of the funding for Sea Level Rise Study and Resiliency Strategy came from the Federation of Canadian Municipalities – Climate Innovation Program
 - Objectives of the Sea Level Rise Study and Resiliency Strategy is to identify local climate change impacts and specify action to protect residents and assets
 - Provided an overview of the Sea Level Rise Study:
 - Provided diagrams outlining the process for the Sea Level Rise Study and how flood construction levels are determined in order to estimate where to expect flooding over the coast line
 - Conclusion was that overall the City is in a good position but there are areas that could use follow-up in Departure Bay, Downtown and Saysutshun
 - Recommendations from the Sea Level Rise Study: create a coastal hazard development permit area, review zoning and building bylaws to update flood hazard requirements, review coastal erosion monitoring program and create a green shores strategy to identify locations and ways to install features to respond to flooding and erosion
 - Provided an overview of the Resiliency Strategy:
 - Identified four project phases relating to engaging, identifying conditions, assessing and implementing
 - There has been strong engagement from City Staff as well as many external stakeholders
 - Expected Climate Impacts:
 - Reduced water availability
 - Expect more short duration/high intensity rain events creating flash flooding
 - A hotter/drier climate
 - Changes to tree species
 - Increases in stress and anxiety on vulnerable populations, first responders and supporting community members
 - Reviewed the Strategy Development Process: prepare impact statements, prioritize areas identified as vulnerable, take action on quick wins and brainstorm/evaluate actions, plan guiding principles and goals, determine/implement a plan
 - Provided a sample of evaluation criteria and implementation planning

- Recommended actions:
 - Water Supply: prepare for a more limited water supply, and improve resiliency of water infrastructure
 - Flooding and Drainage: minimize overland flooding resulting from heavy rainfall. Prepare for the impacts of sea level rise, including associated erosion and coastal flood risk
 - Environment, Parks and Recreation: quantify and manage Nanaimo's urban forest

Committee discussion took place. Highlights included:

- Rainfall collection not being included in planning
- Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) providing rebates for rainwater cisterns
- City of Nanaimo citizens are eligible for RDN cistern rebates
- Improving communication regarding storm water capture
- REIMAGINE NANAIMO includes a review of the Water Supply Strategic Plan
- Effects of changing groundwater tables on City infrastructure
- Focus of the Resilience Strategy was on fish bearing streams and maintaining watercourses during extreme water events

Rob Lawrance, Environmental Planner, continued his presentation as follows:

- Recommended actions (continued):
 - Environment, Parks and Recreation: assess and restore Nanaimo's ecological diversity, focusing on the City's urban watercourse and marine foreshore
 - Well Being and Preparedness: work with community partners to minimize health impacts of extreme weather on residents, developing an extreme heat response strategy. Improve knowledge, capacity and response plans to deal with increasing risk of landslides and wildfires. Raising public awareness of expected impacts and how to prepare for them
 - Land Use and Buildings: improve resilience planning for new and existing City facilities and residential development. Ensure development regulations and guidelines incorporate expected climate-related hazards
 - Corporate Governance: improve the City's ability to respond and recover from climate related events. Working with neighbouring jurisdictions to support climate resilience and limit transfer of risk across jurisdictional boundaries

Committee discussion took place. Highlights included:

- Information being shared between the City and the RDN
- RDN's Drinking Water and Watershed Protection Program is taking a broader approach and has a focus on watersheds
- City staff meet regularly with other regional planners to share information and plans
- The Resiliency Strategy was brought forward as a foundational piece when Council was presented with the REIMAGINE NANAIMO project

(b) CleanBC Home Renovation Rebate Program Update

Rob Lawrance, Environmental Planner, spoke regarding the following:

- City participation in Provincial rebate program
- Program began in April 2020
- Due to COVID-19 the current uptake is fairly low
- Programs have the potential to increase energy efficiencies
- Incentive for commercial installers to help promote the program as they receive funding for completing installations
- Improving communications to increase effectiveness

Committee discussion took place. Highlights included:

- Timeframe for the rebate program currently runs until 2022
- Province is currently promoting the program through their media resource; however, the City might be able to promote more locally
- Contacting local installers to advise them of these programs
- Providing more clarity about the program and the application process to improve access
- The Province has a website called “EfficiencyBC” which identifies rebates available in each community
- Targeting existing homes to improve energy efficiencies
- Staff are planning to provide a draft communication plan in the Fall of 2020

(c) Verbal Update Regarding REIMAGINE NANAIMO Process

Chris Sholberg, Community Heritage Planner, provided a verbal update regarding the REIMAGINE NANAIMO process. Highlights included:

- Report going to Council on 2020-JUL-20 to launch the REIMAGINE NANAIMO process
- Starting with the engagement process
- Information will be provided to the public through the “Get Involved Nanaimo” platform with background information on high-level topics such as: how we adapt, how we live and care, how we work, how we move, and how we connect and play
- Starting by involving people who may not have planning backgrounds and then focusing on more specific topics for engagement
- A series of questionnaires will be available on “Get Involved Nanaimo” focusing on the high level overall vision for Nanaimo and then topic specific questionnaires

E. Boulanger joined the meeting electronically at 3:50 p.m.

- Website planned to launch on Tuesday, July 21st
- Engagement planned with City committees and local stakeholders
- Currently working on details of how to hold engagement sessions
- A series of City videos will be launching to coincide with questionnaires and topics

- Ultimate objective of engagement is updating community plans:
 - Official Community Plan
 - Parks, Recreation and Culture Plan
 - Active and Sustainable Transportation plan
 - Economic Development Strategy
 - Water Supply Strategic Plan Update
 - Climate Action Plan
- Goal is to identify issues that are out of date, or have changed, and gain public input into where priorities should be, with Council making a final decision

Committee discussion took place. Highlights included:

- REIMAGINE NANAIMO report going forward to Council on the 2020-JUL-20 Agenda
- How the committee can prepare for this project – register for “Get Involved Nanaimo” to contribute and be advised of engagement initiatives, and review surveys when they are posted

6. OTHER BUSINESS:

(a) Councillor Geselbracht re: Update from Working Group

Councillor Geselbracht provided an update regarding the working group meeting held a week earlier. Highlights included:

- How to communicate to the community about the climate adaptation strategy and receive people’s feedback
- Staff will be working on developing a survey to better understand how the community interprets these issues
- Potentially using video to increase communication to the public
- Creating an environmental webpage to provide information in one location

Committee discussion took place. Highlights included:

- The City potentially purchasing more land around the watershed
- Considering making permeable cement mandatory to help with drainage – a large portion of Nanaimo sits on bedrock so options need to be based on what is appropriate
- Specifying that native plant species are the most endangered due to climate changes
- What is considered a cooling space and ensuring these are equitable and accessible – more than just buildings, this includes shade features as well
- Consider installing living walls Downtown to avoid the heat island effect
- Communications with Snuneymuxw First Nation (SFN) regarding the Resilience Strategy and Staff have shared this information with SFN staff

7. ADJOURNMENT:

It was moved and seconded at 4:09 p.m. that the meeting adjourn. The motion carried unanimously.

CHAIR

CERTIFIED CORRECT:

CORPORATE OFFICER