

MINUTES
ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING
VIRTUAL MEETING
WEDNESDAY, 2021-MAY-12, AT 5:01 P.M.

- Present:** Councillor T. Brown, Chair (joined electronically)
Councillor B. Geselbracht (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
E. Boulanger, At Large Member
- Staff:** Jake Rudolph, Chief Administrative Officer (joined electronically)
D. Lindsay, General Manager, Development Services (joined electronically)
B. Sims, General Manager, Engineering and Public Works (joined electronically)
B. Corsan, Director, Community Development (joined electronically)
J. Holm, Director, Development Approvals (joined electronically)
T. Daliran, Manager, Sanitation, Recycling and Cemeteries
M. Squire, Manager, Water Resources
R. Lawrance, Environmental Planner (joined electronically)
K. Kronstal, Social Planner (joined electronically)
M. Desrochers, Client Support Specialist (joined electronically)
S. Snelgrove, Deputy Corporate Officer (joined electronically)
K. Gerard, Recording Secretary (joined electronically)

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) Add Sarah Bonar, Aquaparian Environmental Consulting Ltd., to Agenda Item 5(d) – Nanaimo Waterfront Walkway – Departure Bay Update.
- (b) Move Agenda Item 5(b) – REIMAGINE Nanaimo – Update on Indicators to Agenda Item 5(d) and reorder Presentations.

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 Environment Committee Meeting held in the Boardroom, Service and Resource Centre, 411 Dunsmuir Street, Nanaimo, BC, on Wednesday, 2021-JAN-27, at 5:01 p.m. be adopted as circulated. The motion carried unanimously.

5. PRESENTATIONS:

(a) Checkout Bag Regulation Bylaw Update

Introduced by Bill Sims, General Manager, Engineering and Public Works.

Presentation:

1. Taaj Daliran, Manager, Sanitation, Recycling and Cemeteries, provided the Committee with a verbal update. Highlights included:

- Reviewed timeline from the first motion made by Council in 2017 to approval of “Checkout Bag Regulation Bylaw 2020 No. 7283” by the Province in early 2021
- 1700 letters have been distributed to businesses in Nanaimo explaining the bylaw and providing information regarding the ban of single use checkout bags
- The City of Nanaimo (the City) has created a webpage on the City website at www.nanaimo.ca that provides information and contacts in case businesses have questions
- July 1, 2021 is the bylaw effective date

(b) Water Supply Strategic Plan

Introduced by Bill Sims, General Manager, Engineering and Public Works.

Presentation:

1. Mike Squire, Manager, Water Resources, provided the Committee with a PowerPoint presentation. Highlights included:

- Staff are in the process of updating the Water Supply Strategic Plan (the Plan) to ensure the City continues to have clean, safe drinking water on demand
- Total residential water use is currently below the National and Provincial average and we have exceeded the 2035 target for water conservation
- Part of updating the Plan is to determine how we can educate the public to conserve even more water and how the City can continue to exceed targets
- 70% of current water storage is used for fisheries flow releases while 30% is for domestic use

- 70% of the above ground water storage is used for fire storage and protection
- The plan will use scenarios presented in the REIMAGINE Nanaimo process to determine future water supply, conversion measures and use
- Climate change is another factor Staff are looking at when revising the Plan as there will be a potential increase in seasonal demand but less water stored in snow packs
- Initial testing found that the Jump Creek Reservoir needed to be replaced in 2023 but water conservation efforts and public education has now furthered the life of the damn to 2035
- Preliminary findings show that that there is enough water in the Jump Creek Reservoir for the next 20 years as long conservation efforts and education continue
- Mid-town water supply upgrades are needed and are being accelerated after the water main break on Bowen Road in April of 2020
- Design concepts for the new water main that will connect water from College Heights area to Beban Park
- The connection would work within the REIMAGINE Nanaimo process through active transportation and connectivity
- Staff are looking at different scenarios to place a water main under or over the Parkway and if an overhead pipeline is chosen it could include a pedestrian/cycling path over the parkway

Committee discussion took place. Highlights included:

- Seasonal bulge based on restrictions or non-restrictions and the estimate of reduction in water usage
- Feasibility study needed for the water main to cross the Parkway
- Overhead pipeline and the potential for a cycling and walking path
- Decrease in outdoor water use in the spring and summer months
- Water main on Bowen Road is critical infrastructure

(c) Nanaimo Waterfront Walkway - Departure Bay Update

Presentation:

1. Bill Corsan, Director, Community Development, and Sarah Bonar, Aquaparian Environmental Consulting Ltd, provided the Committee with a PowerPoint presentation. Highlights included:
 - In 2017, the City completed a plan for the creation of a continuous walkway from Departure Bay Beach to the Nanaimo River Estuary which includes 13 km of walkway
 - Public consultation was well received and the plan was endorsed by Council in December of 2017
 - The plan includes 6 segments:
 1. Departure Bay to BC Ferries
 2. BC Ferries to Millstone River
 3. Maffeo Sutton Park to Pacifica

4. Boat Basin to Cameron Island
 5. Cameron Island to South Downtown Waterfront
 6. South Downtown Waterfront to the Nanaimo Estuary
- The Departure Bay segment received the most support and Staff, along with hired consultants, have been studying the feasibility of implementing the walkway by an elevated walkway or build the walkway directly on the beach
 - In 2018 it was decided that building on the beach would have less environmental impact
 - Concerns raised include the pathway being washed away during storms, erosion, slide events, sea level rise and environmental impact
 - Phase 1, the Feasibility Study, was concluded by McElhanney Consultants and included both foreshore and adjacent lands
 - Costs for the three conceptual designs are \$18 – 19 million and a referendum would need to be held in order to undertake the project as the City would need to borrow funds
 - Staff considered a 50-year sea level rise scenario when conducting the study and found that the sea may rise as much as 60 cm
 - The area is considered a low-value habitat area and Staff can ensure that this project includes habitat restoration
 - Staff have consulted with Snuneymuxw First Nation (SFN) elders who have identified archaeological sites and a permit would need to be approved under the Heritage Conservation Act
 - Challenges include permits from the Department of Fisheries, bonding for environmental work, approvals from BC Ferries, Transport Canada and the Regional District of Nanaimo
 - There are 30 private properties along the proposed walkway and riparian rights would need to be obtained from the owners in order to proceed
 - A new communication package will be made public at the end of May or early June
 - Conceptual drawings include a 3 meter wide pedestrian walkway and a separate 3 meter wide cycling track with a comprehensive habitat restoration project
 - The walkway must be accessible to everyone and have access points throughout the area
 - Project will have to be done using a referendum process

Committee discussion took place. Highlights included:

- Private property, riparian rights and bonding
- Connecting the waterfront walkway and alternate routes
- Cost, annual maintenance, cleaning and upkeep of the walkway
- Design of the project such as stability, options of building a bridge that connects the pathways along the waterfront, and cost estimate
- Third option along White Eagle Terrace

Sarah Bonar, Aquaparian Environmental Consulting Ltd, advised the Committee that bonding is for the area outside of the actual walkway and if habitat restoration is completed correctly, the area could actually be higher in habitat productivity than it is now but will need to be monitored for five years.

Committee discussion continued. Highlights included:

- Capital project and ensuring the project is looked at based on life cycle costs, staffing, liability, and maintenance budget
- Purpose of the Environment Committee endorsing the project
- Recommendation to endorse the project on an environmental aspect specifically

It was moved and seconded that the Environment Committee endorse the Departure Bay Waterfront Walkway Project as a flagship environmental restoration project. The motion carried.

Opposed: *Councillor Brown*

(d) REIMAGINE Nanaimo - Update on Indicators

Presentation:

1. Rob Lawrance, Environmental Planner, and Karin Kronstal, Social Planner, provided the Committee with a PowerPoint presentation. Highlights included:
 - Public engagement included 40 participants, 6 Zoom rooms and 75 potential indicators discussed narrowed down to 21 indicators
 - Environmental and ecological indicators generated good discussion with five draft goals organized around the doughnut framework: four for social foundations and one for ecological ceiling
 - The five draft goals include:
 1. Healthy – build a more sustainable community including housing, food and water
 2. Connected – Support access and well-being for all
 3. Empowered – encourage social enrichment
 4. Enabled – promote a thriving society
 5. Ecological – protect and enhance our environment
 - Staff need to ensure that they balance the indicators with the five goals and ensure they are measurable against the doughnut model

Committee discussion took place. Highlights included:

- Data collection and what does this data tell us and how will it be used
- Data collected regarding waste, recycling and compost and not including include all the strata type homes and subdivisions
- Indicators and goals connecting to different parts of the doughnut model and ensuring that the scenarios are interconnected to show goals for the future

- Future discussion regarding goals, indicators and/or scenarios, how these are shared across the doughnut model and how they impact each other

Rob Lawrance, Environmental Planner, advised the Committee that:

- Working with the Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) on data collection regarding solid waste and may have the ability to work with strata waste collection companies to obtain their data as well
- Development of indicators can change with priority feedback from public consultation and meetings with Council
- Intention of the current indicators is to create the scenarios and goals that are chosen based on community and Council feedback
- Staff are currently in Phase 2 which includes developing scenarios based on chosen indicators and a workshop with Council on 2021-MAY-31 for more feedback before public engagement continues
- Phase 3 will take place in the fall/winter of 2021 with the developing and completion of plans in the first quarter of 2022

Karin Kronstal, Social Planner, advised the Committee that the levels of connectivity within the doughnut model are difficult to present currently and plan to provide Council and the community with a more holistic and clear plan in the near future.

Committee discussion took place. Highlights included:

- Focus on the indicators and how they relate to the original doughnut model
- Mix of specific and broad indicators that span across many parts of the doughnut
- Indicators that were not included and whether some will be added or taken away if they do not fit within the doughnut model
- Difficulty and confusion understanding how the indicators fit into the goals, what they are indicating and what the City wants to achieve
- Communication gaps throughout the process and suggestion of a fulsome discussion on expectations vs. reality
- Missing a strong statement on what people want the City to look like and how values measure what we want to see

Rob Lawrance, Environmental Planner, stated that the scenarios created from the indicators will integrate all the concepts of the doughnut model and will show the interconnectivity.

Bill Corsan, Director, Community Development, spoke regarding the REIMAGINE Nanaimo process. Highlights included:

- The scenarios are being built using the indicators and will influence the new Official Community Plan (OCP) and the Parks and Recreation Master Plan

- Scenarios regarding growth are based on need for land, employment and housing as well as projected 40,000 additional people moving to Nanaimo
- Indicators and scenarios can be tested to show if they will be successful or not for growth and can be altered based on that information

Dale Lindsay, General Manager, Development Services, advised the Committee that:

- Staff are in the process of amending the OCP, Parks and Recreation Master Plan within REIMAGINE Nanaimo and public engagement all at the same time
- Indicators are a valuable tool to measure and evaluate different options and scenarios for what we want to achieve
- There are options for the different Committees and Council, and if they are not comfortable with the current indicators, going back for more discussion on what may have been missed
- Staff are working in a compressed timeframe but preliminary indicators will change and evolve as more discussion takes place
- Potentially returning with indicators after Council's workshop

6. REPORTS:

(a) BC Energy Step Code Acceleration Review

Rob Lawrance, Environmental Planner, provided the Committee with an update regarding the BC Energy Step Code implementation with options to reduce GHG emissions. Highlights included:

- Review of where the City is now in the implementation and compared to other communities
- Recently the Schedule D of the "City of Nanaimo Zoning Bylaw 2011 No. 4500" was amended to provide additional amenity points on new developments
- Amended "Building Bylaw 2016 No. 7224" (2019) to require the Step Code lower steps, beginning with Step 1 in 2020 and gradually increasing to Step 3 in 2022
- Staff are looking at ways to introduce zero emissions for heating and cooling of new developments and need to address the actual energy and fuels used to heat and cool to identify the root problem of green house gas emissions
- Communication and education for developers and home owners is an important step and providing more financial incentives to home owners to switch out their current heating and cooling systems
- A new staff position is being created which will have more focus and expertise on reduction of green house gas emissions in the building sector

(b) Deep Energy Retrofit Feasibility Study for the Nanaimo Region

Rob Lawrance, Environmental Planner, provided the Committee with a brief summary of the report. Highlights included:

- Through the Federation of Canadian Municipalities the City, along with the RDN, has put forward an application to complete a Deep Energy Retrofit Feasibility Study
- The study will explore options to establish a program for home energy upgrades
- Currently there are Federal, Provincial and local rebates available to home owners
- Staff will conduct public consultation on the barriers for upgrading and how the City can make the process more efficient for home owners who want to replace inefficient appliances and windows
- The City is hoping to create an innovative financing program for home owners that will see more uptake to replace old appliances and heating/cooling systems
- The RDN recently endorsed the partnership within the City

7. ADJOURNMENT:

It was moved and seconded at 7:01 p.m. that the meeting adjourn. The motion carried unanimously.

CHAIR

CERTIFIED CORRECT:

CORPORATE OFFICER