

MINUTES
ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING
ELECTRONIC MEETING
WEDNESDAY, 2021-DEC-01, AT 5:00 P.M.

Present: Councillor B. Geselbracht, Chair
Councillor D. Bonner (disconnected 6:59 p.m.)
E. Boulanger, At Large Member
H. DesRoches, At Large Member
L. Frey, At Large Member
J. Lesemann, At Large Member (disconnected 7:18 p.m.)

Absent: D. Chen, At Large Member
L. McCunn, At Large Member
W. Wells, 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
L. Bhopalsingh, Manager, Community Planning
K. Brydges, Environmental Protection Officer
K. Macdonald, Parks and Open Spaces Planner
D. Stewart, Social Planner
S. Snelgrove, Deputy Corporate Officer
K. Gerard, Steno, Legislative Services
A. Mac Coll, Recording Secretary

1. CALL THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING TO ORDER:

The Environment Meeting was called to order at 5:02 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 from the Environment Committee Meeting held virtually on Wednesday, 2021-OCT-20, at 5:05 p.m. be adopted as circulated. The motion carried unanimously.

Councillor Geselbracht introduced Dave Stewart the new Environmental Planner to the Committee.

Dave spoke regarding his experience in environmental planning, education, and background.

4. REPORTS:

(a) REIMAGINE Nanaimo Policy Update and Review

Kirsty MacDonald, Parks and Open Space Planner, provided the Committee with a PowerPoint presentation. Highlights included:

- The Official Community Plan (OCP) is a land use document for the City of Nanaimo (the City)
- The policies within the OCP are structured around five value statements/goals which are the following:
 - a Green Nanaimo
 - a Healthy Nanaimo
 - a Connected Nanaimo
 - an Empowered Nanaimo
 - an Enabled Nanaimo
- City staff took 40 secondary documents that Council had already approved to elevate portions of the documents and put them into the new City plan which gives a higher level of corporate guidance
- New Development Permit Areas (DPA's) under consideration are Sea Level Rise, Coal Mine Hazard, and Wildfire Interface
- Enhanced new policies are to be added to the City plan around Greenhouse Gas reductions (GHG), reconciliation, contaminated sites, and partnerships

Duncan Cavens, C2MP Collaborative Planning and Design, continued the presentation. Highlights included:

- The City has more aggressive GHG reduction targets than the Province of BC
- The majority of Nanaimo GHG emissions created by residents are from transportation and buildings with a small percentage from waste in landfills
- Province updated the Clean BC road map with policies that could create funding for local governments to reduce GHG emissions
- The City has a higher influence over Municipal Infrastructure for GHG emissions and low jurisdiction over residents vehicle choice and how they travel from point A to point B
- The entire City plan will support GHG reductions and show integration of all the goals/value statements

Committee discussion took place. Highlights included:

- United Nations Climate Change Conference 26 (COP26) and the City plan
- Proposed wording in City policies to reduce GHG emissions to Net Zero by 2050 or to reach Climate Emergency target of 107% reduction by 2050
- Interim dates and goals to be added to the policies to complete the goal of 107% reduction
- Targets need to be clearly laid out in policies with deadlines to create action without having ambiguous language
- Realistic acknowledgment that there will be emissions that need to be offset by other means

- Interim targets to be referenced in the OCP, or in lower level documents with specifics in the supporting action plan

Duncan Cavens, C2MP Collaborative Planning and Design, continued the presentation. Highlights included:

- The action plan could be reviewed for targets set on a three to five year basis
- Measuring the GHG emission targets for travel is costly and has a lower value to cost when completed yearly
- Data for kilometres per year could be provided by the Province of BC in the future
- Gathering information from ICBC for types of vehicles, fuel source, and percentages of electric vehicles registered in Nanaimo

Committee discussion took place. Highlights included:

- Target dates, reviewing emissions, and adding performance indicators
- Commitment to regularly review GHG emissions embedded in the policy statement of the OCP
- Adjust the measuring intervals of GHG emissions
- Stronger statements to be implemented in the policy action plan
- Moral obligations regarding societies who have benefited from industrialization to lower carbon emissions for societies who currently cannot reduce GHG emissions

It was moved and seconded that the Environment Committee recommend that Council amend the Greenhouse Gas target policy statement to read: “That the City will leverage its available resources and authority to reduce carbon emissions beyond net Zero to reach climate emergency targets of 107% reduction by 2050 and actively advocate to senior levels of government for the necessary support to achieve this.” The motion carried unanimously.

It was moved and seconded that the Environment Committee recommend that Council add a policy statement in the Official Community Plan to commit the City to a regular review cycle of Greenhouse Gas target performance indicators necessary to evaluate whether policy actions are having the desired effect. The motion carried unanimously.

Duncan Cavens, C2MP Collaborative Planning and Design, continued the presentation. Highlights included:

- The City’s projected construction emissions are 11% for 2050
- The Province of BC has committed to Net Zero GHG emissions for construction by 2030
- Energy efficiency alone will not meet the City’s GHG emissions target of zero carbon by 2030

Committee discussion took place. Highlights included:

- Accelerating building step codes and timelines
- More aggressive language to be used for construction GHG emissions

It was moved and seconded that the Environment Committee recommend that zero carbon and energy efficiency building design practices be accelerated for all new construction before 2030. The motion carried unanimously.

Duncan Cavens, C2MP Collaborative Planning and Design, continued the presentation. Highlights included:

- Municipalities to acquire a moratorium on new natural gas connections by advocating to the Province of BC
- Creating a strong position with the Province of BC to ban the use of natural gas
- Clean BC roadmap states by 2030 all new heating and hot water equipment need to meet the highest standard for efficiency

It was moved and seconded that the Environment Committee recommend that Council advocate to the Provincial government for a moratorium on all new natural gas connections. The motion carried unanimously.

Duncan Cavens, C2MP Collaborative Planning and Design, continued the presentation. Highlights included:

- Currently 65% of the building stock in the City will still exist in 2050, and it makes up 39% of the GHG emissions in Nanaimo
- There is limited authority for municipal governments to mandate building stock
- Retrofit codes are to be mandated by the Province of BC when implemented
- The City currently tops up the Clean BC Incentive by \$200 for upgrading households to low carbon
- Collectively work towards reaching net zero emissions by 2050 for existing buildings in the City
- Heat pumps that are 300% efficient with low carbon emissions have comparable fees to natural gas
- Increase City incentives with targets, policy, and funds to eliminate oil heating by 2030

Committee discussion took place. Highlights included:

- Interim targets are critical to reaching City targets in the OCP
- Use other municipal government strategies and frameworks to realize the City's goals and achieve a higher uptake of retrofit
- Look into program designs for incentivizing retrofits, and review the program through a budgetary process

Duncan Cavens, C2MP Collaborative Planning and Design, continued the presentation. Highlights included:

- Reducing business travel 29% per person by 2041 and prioritizing alternative transportation modes
- Look at the action plan for active transportation regarding underground parking versus surface level parking
- Less than 1% of vehicles in Nanaimo are electric

- Personal vehicles are 80% of the GHG emissions for transportation
- City policy currently states 100% of new developments must have parking pre wired for electric vehicles
- Propose all citizens have access to electric vehicle charging stations using Provincial grants to fund them, and strategizing where to place them
- The life-cycle of materials for GHG emissions in construction projects

Committee discussion took place. Highlights included:

- Electric vehicles are pivotal to reduce emissions from travel
- Low carbon non-single occupancy modes of transportation
- Creating more alternative transportation routes
- Timeline to construct primary active transportation routes by 2030
- Language in the action plan having results using “to do” rather than consider
- Shared bicycle networks in Nanaimo
- Creating strategies for better parking for electric bikes

It was moved and seconded that the Environment Committee recommend that Council change the policy statement regarding Solid Waste to eliminate organic matter sent to landfill by 2030. The motion carried unanimously.

It was moved and seconded that the Environment Committee recommend that Council endorse the approach for policy development in regards to greenhouse gas reduction with the inclusion of stronger language. The motion carried unanimously.

Councillor Bonner disconnected from the Environment Committee meeting at 6:59 p.m.

Lisa Bhopalsingh Manager, Community Planning, advised the committee that they may not have time to review the action policy until after the Phase 3 of REIMAGINE Nanaimo process is launched. All prior feedback received will be included in the City plan for Phase 3, and additional feedback would be during the Phase 3 engagement process with draft policies provided to the Committee.

(b) Proposed Development Permit Area 1 and 2 Guideline Amendments

Kevin Brydges, Environmental Protection Officer, provided a summary report.

- Purpose is to outline watercourse protection and support enhancements for a recommendation to Council
- How principles and concepts integrate into the DPA process
- Incorporate improvements by February using different wording for the DPA's
- To ensure environmental protection, avoidance is key regarding new development/Greenfield development in environmentally sensitive areas
- Internal DPA review process is completed when it is unavoidable to develop near environmentally sensitive areas
- In practice the City reviews many factors where the site of building the environment of the site environment professional inputs and are not highlighted in the DPA guide line
- Including clear ideas so it is apparent which biological aspects have been looked at

- DPA 1 currently considers fish habitat only, but it can be improved with additional detailed assessments for ecological forms and functions with riparian set backs
- Encroachments are completed through the DPA process and the intent is to mitigate any impacts
- Current no net loss policy and revisions could be updated to include the net gain of functional habitat
- How can the City restore and increase the amount of functional habitat through the DPA process
- Definition of net gain and how to calculate net gain of a functional habitat
- Including standardized methodology for types and density of plants
- Adding requirements of a DPA to monitor and report post development effects of the development using industry professionals

J. Lesemann disconnected from the Environment Committee Meeting at 7:18 pm. and the meeting lost quorum.

General member discussion took place. Highlights included:

- Biological assessments, the determination of a functional habitat, and water bound assessments
- Watershed issues related to hydrology and water balance
- Hydrology of sites and considerations of the assessment of the riparian
- Square footage of permeable soil, biological activity drainage, and filtration

Kevin Brydges, Environmental Protection Officer, advised the Committee that:

- Hydrology and water balance are not currently included in the DPA process and it is challenging to measure
- Drainage and filtration are currently included in the DPA process
- Mechanisms are needed to be put in place if goals are not met
- Longer maintenance periods could be attached to applications as a requirement

6. QUESTION PERIOD:

There was no one in attendance to ask questions.

CERTIFIED CORRECT:

CHAIR

CORPORATE OFFICER