

MINUTES
ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING
ELECTRONIC MEETING
WEDNESDAY, 2022-JAN-26, AT 5:00 P.M.

Present: Councillor B. Geselbracht, Chair
Councillor D. Bonner
E. Boulanger, At Large Member
H. DesRoches, At Large Member (joined 5:44 p.m.)
L. Frey, At Large Member (joined 5:03 p.m.)
J. Lesemann, At Large Member (disconnected 6:27 p.m.)
L. McCunn, At Large Member

Absent: W. Wells, At Large Member
D. Chen, At Large Member

Staff: D. Lindsay, General Manager, Development Services, Deputy CAO
B. Sims, General Manager, Engineering and Public Works
L. Bhopalsingh, Director, Community Development
J. Holm, Director, Development Approvals
T. Pan, Manager, Sustainability
K. Brydges, Environmental Protection Officer
K. MacDonald, Parks and Open Space Planner
D. Stewart, Environmental Planner
S. Snelgrove, Deputy Corporate Officer
A. Mac Coll, Recording Secretary

1. CALL THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING TO ORDER:

The Environment Committee Meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m.

2. INTRODUCTION OF LATE ITEMS:

- (a) Add Agenda Item 5(b) REIMAGINE Nanaimo Draft Green Policies Review Report and Replace the PowerPoint.
- (b) Remove Agenda Item 7(c) BC Government Roadmap to 2030 Overview.

3. ADOPTION OF AGENDA:

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

4. ADOPTION OF MINUTES:

It was moved and seconded that the Minutes from the Environment Committee Meeting held electronically on Wednesday, 2021-DEC-01, at 5:02 p.m. be adopted as circulated. The motion carried unanimously.

Lisa Frey joined the meeting at 5:03 p.m.

5. PRESENTATIONS:

(a) Staff Changes and Introductions

Lisa Bhopalsingh, Director, Community Development, introduced Ting Pan, Manager, Sustainability, who has worked for multiple municipalities and has recently come from the Climate Action Secretariat with the Province of BC. Each Committee member introduced themselves.

(b) REIMAGINE Nanaimo Draft Green Policies Review

Introduced by Lisa Bhopalsingh, Director, Community Development.

Presentation:

1. Ting Pan, Manager of Sustainability, provided the Committee with a PowerPoint presentation. Highlights included:

- The policies presented for review at the 2022-JAN-26 Environment Committee (Committee) meeting are the first drafts and they will be updated before going out to the public or Council
- Staff suggested that the Committee have a special meeting before March 28, 2022 to go over the draft Nanaimo Green policies in finer detail before the document is sent to Council or to the public
- The largest emissions coming from the City of Nanaimo (City) are buildings and transportation
- There is strong support from the community to regularly measure GHG emissions
- Council declared a climate emergency in 2019 and set new emission targets for 2030 and 2050
- The Committee would like stronger language throughout all the GHG policies
- Staff intends to implement a regular review cycle to evaluate policies and actions to show the City's progress in meeting GHG targets
- The draft policy includes the acceleration of zero-carbon and energy efficient building design practices for all new construction
- Incentivizing citizens to reduce their emissions was suggested to achieve net zero emissions by 2050
- Poll completed by Committee members regarding the draft green policies:
 - 4 voted "Yes it hits the mark"
 - 2 voted "Not enough"

Committee discussion took place. Highlights included:

- There are policy items that need to be organized and simplified differently in the structure of the draft document to provide clarity for the reader
- The 8 Green Nanaimo topics are not all of equal value in the plan, and some could be "collapsed" underneath other topic headings to streamline the draft document
- Green and affordable storm water services could be moved to healthy watersheds in the plan

- Rationale for including large infrastructure items such as water supply and sewer systems as they cannot be easily changed

Bill Sims, Director, Public Works and Engineering, advised storm water services such as the water treatment plant and the sewer treatment plant contain a large volume of infrastructure. Having infrastructure that is financially and environmentally sustainable is critical to avoid inefficient services by reducing the infill into the systems to preserve capacity for growth. Water is a key focus and a public health service the City provides and a storm water utility would provide funding besides property taxes to deal with sea level rise, and natural asset regeneration.

Committee discussion took place. Highlights included:

- The City's doughnut economic model perspective and how to build a City that operates within its ecological limits
- The structure of the document needs to serve the doughnut economic model with communication and coordination between all City departments giving a green lens to every project
- The longitudinal shape of the City burdens the infrastructure
- Inclusion of light pollution and dark skies are topics that have effects on insects, health, and well-being
- Language is variable in the draft document between the different sections and could be interpreted in different ways
- Food security is under the community well-being and livability section
- Psychology, human dimension, and psychosocial elements need to be added to the Green Nanaimo section
- Condensing 8 key topic areas in the Green Nanaimo section could help streamline and change the framework of the document
- Clarifying of the wording used in the plan to include the City's intent in practical terms

Harvey DesRoches joined the meeting at 5:44 p.m.

Lisa Bhopalsingh, Director, Community Development, continued the presentation. Highlights included:

- Urban tree canopy in the blue and green network structure
- Integrated land use planning affects how citizens move in the community and reduces reliance on gas powered vehicles
- Mobility hubs were identified by the City in the 2014 Transportation Master Plan and Staff are now integrating them and thinking about transit provisions and accessible networks
- Land use has a large influence on citizens and their need to own a vehicle versus having other choices created by good land use planning
- Staff are currently reviewing how to accommodate large format retail and the emerging direction to no longer support large surface use centres in urban areas
- Reducing stand alone drive-thrus and promoting other forms of development and incorporating them in a sustainable manner
- Blue and Green "Big Moves" in the urban fabric includes parks, permeable surfaces, rainfall intensity and impacts of climate change on resiliency

- Staff are reviewing how climate change and adaptation impacts things like fires, water conservation and natural assets as the City grows in an urbanized landscape
- The tentative date for the draft document to go to public review is 2022-FEB-14 with the public engagement finishing at the end of March

Committee discussion continued. Highlights included:

- Language should be tightened in the green policies to include concrete statements and that it be accessible to all
- Food security elements in the document are to be reported back to the Committee at future meeting
- The Committee would like to provide direction regarding fruit and nut trees to be included in planting as well as more pilot food forests in the policy direction of the Urban Forest Management Strategy

6. REPORTS:

- (a) Proposed Development Permit Area 1 and 2 Guideline Amendments Continued from 2021-DEC-01
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Jeremy Holm, Director, Development Approvals, provided a summary regarding Development Permit Areas 1 and 2 Guideline Amendments. Highlights included:

- Direction was received from Council to improve the protection of water courses and riparian areas as well as prioritizing the update to the Development Permit Area (DPA) guidelines
- No motion was made at the 2022-DEC-01 meeting as quorum was lost
- A gap analysis was undertaken regarding the Development Permit Area Guidelines and it identified 6 themes that need to be improved upon in the City's regulatory framework
- The following themes were identified:
 - Avoidance prioritization
 - DPA application review
 - Biological assessments
 - Mitigation and compensation
 - Restoration
 - Monitoring and reporting
- Currently developing within DPA 1 the focus is on riparian protection to support fish habitat and the proposed amendment would expand to include other habitat values
- There is variable standards currently being used for mitigations proposed when environment professional's approve DPA's and what is now proposed are clear and consistent standards
- There is no monitoring requirement within the City's DPA guidelines to ensure that a post construction reporting program achieves the net gain principles that it is intended to
- The proposed amendment would include a post development monitoring requirement
- The draft guidelines will come back to the Committee for further review

Jerome Lesemann disconnected from the meeting at 6:27 p.m.

Presentation:

1. Kevin Brydges, Environmental Protection Officer, provided a presentation. Highlights included:

- The City is considering combining DPA 1 & 2 into one guideline which would refocus it to a perspective of biodiversity and increase in habitats
- Focus on biodiversity and new requirements in the City's guidelines will help Staff receive more information from the environmental professional when they are approving the DPA
- Consequences of guidelines not being followed or approved is the City holding monies in bonds which are not released to the applicant until a qualified environmental assessor has signed for approval
- Bio physical reporting structures for DPA guidelines are to be updated with consultation from the professional environmental community

Committee discussion took place regarding the DPA process when it hasn't met the requirements of the environmental professional standards or the City guidelines.

It was moved and seconded that the Environment Committee recommend that Council support the proposed enhancements to the City's regulatory framework for watercourse protection. The motion carried unanimously.

(b) 2022 Environment Committee Work Plan

Introduced by Lisa Bhopalsingh, Director, Community Development and Ting Pan, Manager, Sustainability. Highlights included:

- Continuation of REIMAGINE Nanaimo until the plan is complete
- Community watershed restoration grant program to be added to the work plan
- Climate leadership projects for initiatives and pilots the Environment Committee could lead or participate in
- Mobilizing the community with new ideas to aide the City in meeting the priority goals outlined in the plan
- Policy updates are to be completed on corporate building and energy management
- The Committee can incorporate more items into the work plan from Council

Committee discussion took place. Highlights included:

- Buttertubs Marsh Dike management is run by residents who maintain the dikes and they have asked the City to take over the maintenance

Staff advised the Committee that there is a co-management agreement between the City and Land Trust. Staff are working to resurrect the management committee for Buttertubs and to meet with volunteers currently caring for the dikes. Land Trust would be the most appropriate group to chair and manage the program as currently under the agreement the City owns the west side of the marsh and they are only responsible for the trails.

Committee discussion continued. Highlights included:

- The Buttertubs Marsh Dike management as a potential future agenda item to be reported back to the Committee for information
- Zero waste and the circular economy to be added to the Committee work plan
- Governance and Priorities Committee will have a governance update from the Director of Corporate Services in the future, and the Environment Committee member feedback could be included to help improve the structure and effectiveness of the Committee

It was moved and seconded that the Environment Committee recommend that Council endorse the 2022 Environment Committee Work Plan with the addition of the zero waste Circular Economy Strategy Update and review of committee structure. The motion carried unanimously.

Ting Pan, Manager of Sustainability, spoke regarding the BC Government Roadmap to 2030 Overview and advised she would share the PowerPoint presentation with the Committee prior to the next scheduled meeting.

7. QUESTION PERIOD:

There was no one in attendance to ask questions.

8. ADJOURNMENT:

It was moved and seconded at 6:54 p.m. that the meeting adjourn. The motion carried unanimously.

CERTIFIED CORRECT:

CHAIR

DEPUTY CORPORATE OFFICER