

MINUTES
ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING
ELECTRONIC MEETING
WEDNESDAY, 2022-MAY-25, AT 5:05 P.M.

Present: Councillor B. Geselbracht (Chair)
Councillor D. Bonner
E. Boulanger, At Large Member (joined electronically 6:32 p.m.)
H. DesRoches, At Large Member
L. McCunn, At Large Member
W. Wells, At Large Member

Absent: D. Chen, At Large Member
J. Lesemann, At Large Member
L. Frey, At Large Member

Staff: B. Sims, General Manager, Engineering and Public Works
L. Bhopalsingh, Director, Community Development
J. Holm, Director, Development Approvals
D. Mousseau, Manager, Development Engineering and Environmental Protection
T. Pan, Manager, Sustainability
A. Manhas, Economic Development Officer
J. Eckert, Zero Waste Coordinator
D. Stewart, Environmental Planner
S. Snelgrove, Deputy Corporate Officer
K. Gerard, Recording Secretary

1. CALL THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING TO ORDER:

The Environment Committee Meeting was called to order at 5:05 p.m.

2. INTRODUCTION OF LATE ITEMS:

- (a) Agenda Item 7(a) – Community Watershed Restoration Grant – Replace recommendation on the report dated 2022-MAY-25 with the recommendation stated on the Addendum.

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 electronically on Wednesday, 2022-MAR-30, at 5:01 p.m. be adopted as circulated. The motion carried unanimously.

5. PRESENTATIONS:

(a) "Management and Protection of Trees Bylaw 2013 No. 7126" - Amendment Process

Dean Mousseau, Manager, Development Engineering and Environmental Protection, provided a PowerPoint presentation. Highlights included:

- The "Management and Protection of Trees Bylaw 2013 No. 7126" (the Bylaw) was first adopted in 2013 and is now under review by Staff
- A phased approach includes:
 - Stage 1 – housekeeping amendments to provide clarity and reflect current bylaw administration are in progress
 - Stage 2 – comprehensive amendments including a benchmark study, and community consultation will take place in Quarter 4 of 2022 and Quarter 1 of 2023
- The benchmark study will measure the City's bylaw, policies and processes against other municipalities in BC
- Stakeholder and community engagement will ensure the bylaw is in line with community expectations

Committee and Staff discussion took place. Highlights included:

- The bylaw in relation to City owned, public and/or private lands and development permitting process in removing trees and replacing them
- Including a section regarding solar panels in the Bylaw
- Suggestion was made to have a Committee meeting focused on the Bylaw for input and feedback
- Stakeholders chosen to review the Bylaw and provide feedback includes, among others, stewardship groups, development community and the community at large
- Challenges applying the Bylaw to areas with differing amounts of tree cover

Jeremy Holm, Director, Development Approvals, and Dean Mousseau, Manager, Development Engineering and Environment Protection, stated that the Committee would be consulted during the engagement process in Stage 2 and this would take place before the 2022 General Election.

Committee suggestions included:

- That Nanaimo and Area Land Trust, insurance companies and the Municipal Insurance Association be included in stakeholder engagement
- Using a proactive approach to dangerous trees to mitigate damage to properties during a windstorm or weather event
- Ensuring a list of administrative changes be brought forward to Council

Dean Mousseau, Manager, Development Engineering and Environment Protection, advised the Committee that administrative amendments will be brought forward to Council for adoption once completed and the benchmark study will include a gap analysis, need for an urban forest inventory, and a process for assessments on areas in need of damage mitigation.

(b) Update re: Tree Voucher Program

Dean Mousseau, Manager, Development Engineering and Environment Protection, provided a PowerPoint presentation. Highlights included:

- The Tree Voucher Program was introduced on Earth Day in 2017
- Available to Nanaimo residents only; however, it is not available to developers going through the development permit process as the permitting process has tree removal requirements
- Promoted twice a year with a limit of two vouchers per person
- The program has a secure funding source as it is funded through cash-in-lieu contributions and fines from developers
- 1,610 vouchers were sold from introduction to the start of COVID-19
- Post COVID-19, an online system for applying for and receiving tree vouchers was implemented with 1339 vouchers sold in 2021
- The program is growing in popularity and trees can be purchased at Green Thumb Nursery
- Staff are currently soliciting interest from other garden centres but there are caveats that must be met such as having the capacity to invoice in real time so the voucher cannot be used again, same day, at another nursery
- No tax dollars are used in the program and the intent is to encourage planting of native trees that provide canopy and environmental benefits

(c) Circular Cities and Regions Initiative Project Update

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

Presentation:

1. Jesse Eckert, Zero Waste Coordinator, and Amrit Manhas, Economic Development Officer, provided a PowerPoint presentation. Highlights included:
 - The purpose of the Circular Cities and Regions Initiative Project (CCRI) is to advance knowledge, sharing and capacity among local governments
 - The City and Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) are joint applicants along with 14 other municipalities across Canada
 - Through the webinars and workshops a Circular Economy Roadmap (the Roadmap) was created
 - The Roadmap includes two focus areas: 1. Built Environment and 2. Innovation and Economic Diversification
 - Next steps include:
 - Review recommendations and incorporate approved actions into the City Action Plan (already completed)
 - Share Roadmap with Staff that participated in the workshops
 - Consider establishing a multiyear Circular Economy Working Group
 - Schedule an additional workshop to expand on areas of interest

Committee discussion took place regarding the City's target goals of zero waste by 2030, including businesses in the CCRI and updates to Council regarding the Roadmap and recommendations created from the workshops and webinars.

Bill Sims, General Manager, Engineering and Public Works, and Jesse Eckert, Zero Waste Coordinator, advised the Committee that Staff are currently working on an information report to Council but more research is required regarding inclusion of businesses in the project.

Amrit Manhas, Economic Development Officer, continued the presentation. Highlights included:

- The purpose of the Circular Economy Accelerator Project (the Project) is to empower and enable businesses to adopt circular economy practices through education and capacity
- Encouraging innovation within businesses leads to new jobs, new services, supports climate targets and assists in meeting waste diversion goals
- The project is initiated by the Vancouver Island Coast Economic Developers Association (VICEDA), will be managed and delivered by Synergy Foundation and is available to communities north of the Malahat and Sunshine Coast
- Timeline for the project is Spring of 2022 to Spring of 2023 and member communities minimum contribution to participate is \$64,000 with each participating business to pay \$500 to enroll
- For each business participating Synergy Foundation will create specific goals and actions based on the type of business
- Once the pilot project is complete, a final report will be created that will provide key findings, successes, gaps where improvements can be made and provide case studies featuring pilot participants
- Upon completion free resources will be made available to other businesses that will encourage waste diversion and highlight new, innovative opportunities for waste streams

Committee discussion took place regarding ways to reuse waste, partnerships throughout Vancouver Island, procurement practices, communication with Snuneymuxw First Nation (SFN) and sharing information with the Committee on the progress of the pilot project.

Amrit Manhas, Economic Development Officer, advised the Committee that reusing of waste would depend upon the type of business and how the waste they produce could be reused. She stated that Staff would contact SFN to ensure an invitation to participate is provided and procurement practices will be looked at for each participating business. As well, metrics needs to be developed to measure progress.

(d) Update on Community Engagement and Outreach on Climate and Sustainability

Introduced by Lisa Bhopalsingh, Director, Community Development.

Presentation:

1. Ting Pan, Manager, Sustainability, provided a PowerPoint presentation. Highlights included:

- Provided an update regarding community engagement partnerships including Agents of Change, the Cool It! Climate Leadership Program and EcoHack a City initiative
- Provided a recap of committee suggestions for engagement including:
 - Partnering with the School District #68 environmental focused committee to initiate new programs
 - Increased social media messaging showing low-barrier, effective environmental changes
 - City hosted contest to reward residents with good environmental behaviors
- Other engagement and initiatives currently taking place include Earth Day, Water to Earth Month and GoByBike week
- Staff are working on a list of City of Nanaimo environmental accomplishments to share through social media and the City website
- No funding is currently available for the EcoHack initiative, for 2022, but the City is on the list for 2023

Lindsay McCunn, Environment Committee member, stated that a research project has been designed to measure pro-environment behaviour and attitudes to see if the school programs transfer to homes to positively influence household members.

E. Boulanger joined the meeting electronically at 6:32 p.m.

6. REPORTS:

(a) Community Watershed Restoration Grant

Introduced by Ting Pan, Manager, Sustainability.

Dave Stewart, Environmental Planner, advised the Committee that:

- The budget established for the grant is \$20,000/year
- Grant criteria establishes that funding, through the application process, will be awarded to community groups who would like to complete restoration work within a watershed area

Committee discussion took place. Highlights included:

- Individuals applying for the grant compared to community groups or development companies
- SFN support, Staff assistance in the grant process for applicants and approval timelines
- Scope of grant be limited to community restoration

Lisa Bhopalsingh, Director, Community Development, and Dave Stewart, Environmental Planner, advised the Committee that:

- Development companies, using the development permit or variance process are not eligible
- Encourage neighbourhood associations and community groups to work together on projects that promote environmental stewardship and restoration
- Staff will ensure to bring forward this grant opportunity at the next technical working group meeting with SFN
- Staff will be available to assist with applications and answer questions from applicants
- City support is provided in a more informal way for groups that want to do clean-ups

It was moved and seconded that the Environment Committee recommend that Council endorse the Community Watershed Restoration Grant Guidelines and Criteria as included in Attachment A to the 2022-MAY-25 report by David Stewart, Environmental Planner. The motion carried unanimously.

7. OTHER BUSINESS:

(a) Option to Return to In Person Meetings

Sky Snelgrove, Deputy Corporate Officer, advised the Committee that there are three (3) options for meetings going forward. These include:

1. In person meetings – all members present in the Service and Resource Centre Boardroom
2. Virtual meetings – current practice
3. Hybrid meetings – Chair in person in the Service and Resource Centre Boardroom with members in person or virtual

By unanimous consent, the Environment Committee chose to hold meetings using the hybrid meetings model as noted above.

8. QUESTION PERIOD:

No one was in attendance to ask questions.

9. ADJOURNMENT:

It was moved and seconded at 7:00 p.m. that the meeting adjourn. The motion carried unanimously.

CERTIFIED CORRECT:

CHAIR

DEPUTY CORPORATE OFFICER