



Gabriola Island Local Trust Committee

Minutes of Special Meeting

Date: November 28, 2023

Location: Electronic Meeting

Members Present: Peter Luckham, Chair
Tobi Elliott, Trustee
Susan Yates, Trustee

Staff Present: Narissa Chadwick, Island Planner
Stephen Baugh, Island Planner
William Shulba, Freshwater Specialist
Lisa Millard, Recorder

Others Present: There were 0 members of the public and 0 members of the media in attendance.

1. CALL TO ORDER

"Please note, the order of agenda items may be modified during the meeting. Times are provided for convenience only and are subject to change."

Chair Luckham called the meeting to order at 2:35 pm. He acknowledged that the meeting was held on the territory of the Coast Salish First Nations.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

By general consent the agenda was approved as presented.

3. BUSINESS ITEMS

Planner Chadwick provided a brief update on the engagement phase of the Gabriola Island Local Trust Committee (LTC) Official Community Plan (OCP) and Land Use Bylaw (LUB) Review Project and noted the following:

- Fifteen groups have been allocated funding to host discussion about the visioning process and staff will facilitate meetings with some groups that are underrepresented;
- There will be a series of videos released which will focus on specific topics of interest to the community such as identifying what a community vision is, what an OCP is, and what an LUB is; and
- Postcards with QR codes directing people to the project website, as well as a survey, will be sent out.

3.1 Major Project: Gabriola Visioning Engagement Process and Water Balance Assessments

Freshwater Specialist William Shulba summarized a briefing and highlighted the following:

- A water balance assessment is a holistic view of the amount of water that is available in a particular area and includes many facets of water productivity and water use;
- The Southern Gulf Islands undertook groundwater availability assessments in 2021 and these assessments form part of a water balance;
- A water budget can provide an analysis of present-day water availability while a water balance speaks to sustainability and future use allocations;
- The water balance is an accounting of how much water comes into the island from precipitation, and how much water is used;
- Water use includes human and ecosystem use as well as how much the ocean receives;
- On Gabriola Island most of the water is provided by winter precipitation which is then stored and used primarily in the summer months when minimal precipitation is coming in;
- The primary storage containers on Gabriola are the island itself by means of subterranean storage within aquifers;
- It will be important to look at the data that comes from the water accounting and apply this information to water authorizations and future use;
- Consideration of the impacts of climate change will be critical as will the involvement of First Nations Bands and Councils and their traditional knowledge;
- The holistic water approach would require significant coordination with First Nations and climate change professionals;
- Ultimately, if the current case is not sustainable in relation to the current climate trends, then we need to understand this and implement mitigation measures to avoid future issues.

Discussion ensued and the following points were made:

- The budget ask of Trust Council will be \$50,000 and a funding application will also be made through the Complete Communities grant;
- The existing suitable land analysis can be used as a template for grounding the available information and the water balance will be a critical piece to balance density needs, water preservation, and environmental protection considerations;
- The Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) has been collecting information on water use for over ten years including water use assessments, surveys, and ground water monitoring on Gabriola and there is opportunity for the RDN to be an external partner on the project;
- While the project will focus on Gabriola and Denman islands, the methodology will be useful across the Trust Area;

- The project will focus on domestic use versus commercial, agricultural, and industrial uses which require water licenses;
- There is ability to engage the community in the project through community information meetings or surveys;
- Communication about water balancing can also become part of the aspects of the OCP review project related to water usage;
- While some might consider it the RDN's responsibility to undertake a water balancing project it becomes the Islands Trust responsibility, within its mandate to preserve and protect, to act when other parties do not; and
- Gathering this data is a good opportunity to have conversation with First Nations because we will be able to demonstrate that we want to do evidence-based decision-making, and will have the data needed to have conversations about water allocation.

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It was MOVED and SECONDED

that the Gabriola Island Local Trust Committee direct staff to provide a memo outlining the rationale behind funding support from Trust Council for water balance assessments and why Gabriola and Denman are chosen as the ideal candidates for methodology development.

CARRIED

4. ADJOURNMENT

By general consent the meeting was adjourned at 4:02 pm.

Peter Luckham, Chair

Certified Correct:

Lisa Millard, Recorder