



Regional Planning Committee Minutes of a Regular Meeting

Date: May 1, 2026
Location: Electronic Meeting

Members Present: Mairead Boland, Saturna Island Local Trustee, Chair
Sam Borthwick, Denman Island Local Trustee, Vice Chair
Tobi Elliott, Gabriola Island Local Trustee, Executive Committee Representative
David Graham, Denman Island Local Trustee
Aaron Campbell, North Pender Island Local Trustee
Laura Patrick, Salt Spring Island Local Trustee (ex officio)

Member Regrets: Aaron Campbell, North Pender Island Local Trustee

Staff Present: Stefan Cermak, Director, Planning Services
William Shulba, Senior Freshwater Specialist
Rob Kroeker, Planning Services Administrative Assistant / Recorder

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Boland called the meeting to order at 10:07 a.m. and acknowledged that participants of the meeting were attending all across the territories of the Coast Salish peoples.

2. AGENDA

2.1 Review of the Agenda

One new item was presented for consideration:

- Add Minor Projects Criteria Request For Decision to agenda section 8, Business - Other

Trustee Borthwick joined the meeting at 10:12 a.m.

2.2 Approval of Agenda

By general consent the Regional Planning Committee approved the agenda as amended.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

No members of the public were in attendance.

ADOPTED

4. DELEGATIONS

None.

5. CORRESPONDENCE

5.1 2026-02-13 Chair Patrick Re: Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Policy Amendments Feedback

Received for information.

6. ADMINISTRATIVE COORDINATION

6.1 Draft Minutes of Previous Meetings

For review and approval.

6.1.1 Regional Planning Committee Draft Minutes of Feb. 6, 2026 Regular Meeting

Chair Boland suggested that the word “less” in a point on p. 9 of the agenda be amended to “loss” so that the phrase reads “no net loss”.

By general consent the Regional Planning Committee approved the minutes as amended.

6.2 Resolutions Without Meeting

None.

6.3 Follow-up Action List

Director Cermak noted that the Follow-Up Action List lacked items for completion dated later than July 2025, and is being updated by staff. Committee discussion included:

- send a new version to Regional Planning Committee when updates are completed
- Freshwater Sustainability Strategy and Minor Project Criteria are key items to add to the list

7. BUSINESS – WORK PROGRAM ITEMS

7.1 2025/26 Annual Report – Approval of Regional Planning Committee Section – Request For Decision

RPC 2026-005
It was MOVED and SECONDED,

ADOPTED

that the Regional Planning Committee approves the attached text for inclusion in the 2025/26 Annual Report for approval by Trust Council and submission to the Minister of Housing and Municipal Affairs.

CARRIED

7.2 Change of Date for Regional Planning Committee November Meeting – Request For Decision

Committee discussion included:

- the Request for Decision is from Executive Committee
- a motion should be modified to reflect that it comes from Regional Planning Committee

RPC 2026-006

It was MOVED and SECONDED,

that the Regional Planning Committee cancel the November 27, 2026 Regional Planning Committee meeting and schedule a special meeting on January 8, 2027.

CARRIED

7.3 Communication Summary and Options for Land Information Screening Tool - Report

Senior Freshwater Specialist Shulba delivered the report, noting that it contemplates Regional Planning Committee's request for staff to consider methodology and propose options for communications about the Land Information Screening Tool. Committee discussion included:

- there has been reputational harm to the Gabriola Island Local Trust Committee and its ability to pursue its Official Community Plan project due to one of the tool's maps being circulated in the community without context
- a trustee thinks that communications should be paired with a formal engagement process to build community trust
- staff should return with options about how to do further this initiative in a co-developed, island-based manner with the community
- pursuing a communications plan while lacking confidence in the tool itself is challenging
- consider putting the tool on the projects list as something that Regional Planning Committee can make recommendations for
- ask Trust Council to give Regional Planning Committee direction to oversee the delivery of changes to the tool
- more effort should be put into ground truthing the layers and data
- a trustee suggests this tool is about increased density, and would prefer to shift the focus to what can be protected
- the implementation section on p.39 should be included in communications about the tool, particularly that "the LIST is a decision-support tool and not a regulatory instrument. Its outputs are intended to inform [...] rather than to prescribe"

ADOPTED

- the step from layers and maps, to weighting information within the tool, is a crucial area for input
- step back and proceed more slowly, with any map produced having lots of discussion before entering the public domain
- members of the public will likely use the tool to zoom in to their lot
- use cases will help demonstrate how the tool can be used otherwise
- some weighting determinations are protected practices for biologists, or other professionally credentialed judgments, called type 1 data
- community involvement and values-based decision-making can inform type 2 and 3 data layers
- the groundwater wells layer draws frustration about inaccuracy
- a GIS tool from the previous term with the live ability to implement participant decisions and change weighting in real time allowed collaboration with the community and working groups
- how often is the tool being updated, and how are inaccuracies dealt with?
- trustees have a responsibility to direct how Islands Trust does work
- the tool was a staff project that went into use and backed other work without passing an approval process from trustees
- the effect is that this tool supports preconceptions that staff are pushing changes on the islands from far away
- this tool is about understanding growth trends and projections in support of Strategic Plan initiative 2.1.2: developing a growth management framework
- it is also a bridge to evaluating ecosystem health, resiliency, and disturbed areas, supporting Strategic Plan direction 3.2: improve understanding and monitoring of ecosystem health
- this tool must identify both opportunities and constraints for development
- understand what we can accomplish in-house and what can be achieved via relationships such as with Dr. Tara Martin's Conservation Decisions Lab
- Bowen Island Biodiversity Plan is an example of a spatial tool with integrated conservation values, which informed Bowen's Official Community Plan
- suitability for protection should be prioritized and demonstrated
- remove communications suggestions that the tool is for increasing density, because it is a broader tool for planners
- relative weighting of layers could be tweaked towards ecosystem resilience, but may be influenced by the need for input by a qualified professional
- this initiative is a base layer for resiliency and ecosystem health indicators as a way of understanding the land and the social factors influencing it

The meeting recessed for lunch at 11:59 a.m., and resumed at 12:29 p.m.

7.4 Work Plan Update – Request For Decision

Chair Boland guided discussion to the Work Plan. Director Cermak introduced the Request for Decision. Committee discussion included:

ADOPTED

- the Land Information Screening Tool is part of a larger project of developing tools for ecosystem resilience planning
- the tool has potential to bring together information into a values-based mapping framework
- the tool is not new work and falls under Strategic Plan key initiative 2.3.2: implement the Housing Strategic Action Plan
- the tool requires more development before further staff implementation
- it does not account for social and political contingencies of its work products, which is the area of expertise of trustees
- sufficient elected official oversight and deliberation is sought
- viewing what tools other jurisdictions have could help provide clarity
- a workshop could seek input and opinions of trustees to potentially broaden the scope and use of the Land Information Screening Tool
- Trust Council could be the body to explore or endorse more robust use of the tool
- define clearly what the tool is for, whether it is achieving those aims, and work on an ongoing framework for its maintenance and use
- demonstrate how the community would be engaged in weighting and use if the tool were informing development of an Official Community Plan
- Regional Planning Committee has a full suite of active projects
- growth management is already on future projects but can be prioritized
- tool development work could be the key action for implementing the Housing Strategic Action Plan, if this is placed on the work program
- potential exists for working with other partners who have developed demonstrable tools, such as Bowen Island Conservancy or Dr. Tara Martin's UBC Conservation Decisions Lab

RPC 2026-007

It was MOVED and SECONDED,

that the Regional Planning Committee amends its active projects list by replacing completed Trust Council Strategic Plan Key Initiative 1.2.3 – *Improve bylaw enforcement policies and procedures to be administratively fair, reasonable and transparent with the aim of restoring public confidence*, with Trust Council Strategic Plan Key Initiative 2.3.2 – *Implement the Housing Strategic Action Plan*.

CARRIED

Regional Planning Committee returned to consideration of item 7.3.

Committee discussion continued:

- Regional Planning Committee could consider a special meeting and a formal engagement process for the Land Information Screening Tool
- it is worth it for this group to spend time articulating this project and recommend a business case because budget deliberations are under way by the time next Trust Council is incoming
- a joint meeting with Trust Programs Committee can address shared priorities within Strategic Plan initiatives

ADOPTED

- conservation values should be brought in to mapping and factor in environmental resilience
- a trustee suggested that external engagement should not be performed until there is an opportunity to revise the Land Information Screening Tool
- a joint special meeting could be premature before that tool is refined
- the Land Information Screening Tool exists and is being used now
- a formal engagement process requires resources and a work program
- engagement could be pursued in the context of a specific island project
- if the Committee is at an impasse, the material should be taken to Trust Council as a Request for Decision with options

RPC 2026-008

It was MOVED and SECONDED,

that the Regional Planning Committee request the Land Information Screening Tool staff report be amended as a Request for Decision and forwarded to Trust Council for consideration, discussion, and next steps.

CARRIED

8. BUSINESS – OTHER

7.4 Minor Project Criteria – Request For Decision

Director Cermak introduced the Request For Decision. Committee discussion included:

- the difference between major and minor projects is sometimes unclear
- issues can absorb island planner time and capacity for minor projects
- resources should be going where they are needed across the federation
- minor project evaluation should reflect federation-wide priorities
- ranking of projects or allocation of resources should be viewed at a broader level than the local trust committee
- island planners have multiple islands and must allocate time accordingly
- more transparency is desired to make decisions on projects in an integrated, broader context
- bring the criteria back to the next meeting in July and then it can be forwarded to Trust Council

RPC 2026-009

It was MOVED and SECONDED,

That Regional Planning Committee request staff to strengthen the minor project criteria to include a clear, explicit Trust-wide resource allocation lens. This should consider:

- overall demand on planning resources,
- community scale and complexity, and
- alignment with federation-wide priorities.

CARRIED

9. BUSINESS – NEW

ADOPTED

None.

10. WORK PROGRAM

Director Cermak discussed the committee's Work Program, including the Freshwater Sustainability Strategy review. Committee discussion included:

- drafting of the Terms of Reference for the Freshwater Sustainability Strategy review is occurring now
- the Biologist's deliverables including a state of the islands report for species at risk protection will be returned for the committee's consideration

11. NEXT MEETING

The next Regional Planning Committee regular meeting is July 24, 2026 at 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

12. CLOSED MEETING

The Committee did not close the meeting.

13. RISE AND REPORT

As the Committee did not close the meeting, there was no need for the Committee to discuss this option.

14. ADJOURNMENT

By general consent, the meeting was adjourned at 2:21 p.m.

Mairead Boland, Chair

Certified Correct:

Rob Kroeker, Planning Services Administrative Assistant