



Regional Planning Committee Minutes of a Regular Meeting

Date: July 24, 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
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
Mary Storzer, Regional Planning Manager
William Shulba, Senior Freshwater Specialist
Rob Kroeker, Planning Services Administrative Assistant / Recorder

Others Present: One member of the public was present.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Boland called the meeting to order at 10:04 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

No new item was presented for consideration.

2.2 Approval of Agenda

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

3. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

No member of the public wished to speak.

4. DELEGATIONS

4.1.1 Maxine Leichter – Friends of the Gulf Islands Society

ADOPTED

The delegate spoke to concerns about protecting species at risk in the Trust Area. The Biologist's report shows that locations harbouring species at risk are known, and now need to be protected. A model Development Approval Information (DAI) bylaw would be helpful to ensure consistent and adequate professional reports. A request was made for staff to explain the difference between Regional Planning Committee and Trust Programs Committee ecosystem protection work. The Committee was urged to adopt all recommendations in the staff report.

5. CORRESPONDENCE

None.

6. ADMINISTRATIVE COORDINATION

6.1 Draft Minutes of Previous Meetings

For review and approval.

6.1.1 Regional Planning Committee Draft Minutes of May 1, 2026 Regular Meeting

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

6.2 Resolutions Without Meeting

None.

6.3 Follow-up Action List

Received for information.

Trustee Elliott left the meeting at 10:23 a.m. and re-joined the meeting at 10:33 a.m.

7. BUSINESS – WORK PROGRAM ITEMS

7.1 Freshwater Atlas Updates and Timeline - Briefing

Senior Freshwater Specialist Shulba introduced the briefing. Committee discussion included:

- orientation to this work for new trustees after the October elections
- maintenance of data and contingency planning
- watercourse and wells data accuracy
- tutorial structure for the Freshwater Atlas demonstration
- resource sharing and the cost of mapping beyond Islands Trust jurisdictional areas

Trustee Elliott left the meeting at 10:41 a.m. and re-joined the meeting at 10:52 a.m.

7.2 Freshwater Footprint Gabriola Case Study into the Official Community Plan Review - Briefing

Senior Freshwater Specialist Shulba presented the briefing, speaking to project learning about Gabriola's water sustainability and freshwater hazard area map development. Committee discussion included:

- implications of 'hazard' used as a descriptive term
- alternative terms, such as groundwater risk area or freshwater conservation area
- rainwater harvesting systems mitigate freshwater hazard
- ground truthing practices including community monitoring and well-watching networks support data maintenance
- data procurement must include blueprints for replicating work, regardless of which water resource consultant performs work

The committee recessed for a break at 11:39 a.m. The meeting resumed at 11:50 a.m.

7.3 Monitoring Progress on Ecosystem Protection in Land Use Planning – Strategic Plan Initiative 3.2.4 Update – Request for Decision

Director Cermak introduced the Request for Decision, noting that the purpose is to forward the deliverables from the Environment and Climate Change Canada-funded biologist to Trust Council in support of Strategic Plan Initiative 3.2.4. Committee discussion included:

- seek a wide range of biological expertise if an independent firm is sought to review professional reports
- the *Species at Risk – State of the Islands* report is ready for advancement
- remove endorsement of the Land Information Screening Tool (LIST)
 - tools need to earn the trust of the public with transparency during development
 - weighting of data layers should reflect community values and input
 - clarity is lacking on maintenance of the tool's data, and its cost
- LIST organizes overlapping scientific and environmental data for presentation to decision-makers
- LIST daylights part of the process by which staff make recommendations
- it is key to explain to the community how decisions are reached in order to earn public trust
- consider receiving rather than endorsing all items
- a trustee supports endorsing the *Species at Risk – State of the Islands* report, the terms of reference for professional environmental assessments, and the model natural environment Development Permit Area

The Committee recessed for lunch at 12:45 p.m. The meeting resumed at 1:16 p.m.

Trustee Elliott left the meeting at 1:14 p.m.

ADOPTED

RPC 2026-010

It was **MOVED** and **SECONDED**,

that the Regional Planning Committee forward this Request for Decision and its amended attachments to Islands Trust Council recommending that Islands Trust Council:

- Receive the *Species at Risk - State of the Islands* report;
- Endorse staff use of the *Species at Risk - State of the Islands* report, and the model natural environment Development Permit Area as operational technical inputs when advising Local Trust Committees and preparing bylaw updates;
- Endorse staff use of the Terms of Reference for Professional Environmental Assessment Reports as a staff operational standard;
- Request staff to prepare an internal communications policy to improve how the methodology and rationale behind the Land Information Screening Tool are communicated in staff reports, presentations, and related projects;
- Request staff to expand and refine the Land Information Screening Tool content in the Housing Options Toolkit by adding a more technical summary of the tool's methodology, rationale, and intended use to complement the current plain-language version posted online as Tool 4 - Land Information Screening Tool.

CARRIED

Committee discussion continued:

- retaining biological services expertise versus going to tender for each need
- limit ongoing operational costs

RPC 2026-011

It was **MOVED** and **SECONDED**,

that the Regional Planning Committee request staff to draft a business case with options for retaining ongoing biological services.

CARRIED

Trustee Elliott re-joined the meeting at 1:28 p.m.

8. BUSINESS – OTHER

8.1 Project Criteria and Prioritization - Briefing

Regional Planning Manager Storzer introduced the briefing. Committee discussion included:

- on-the-ground factors like housing availability should factor into Official Community Plan prioritization across regions
- strong criteria informing how resources are concentrated will aid project completion
- staff and trustee requests for work could be daylighted and contemplated in one list as a planning projects register

ADOPTED

- rural Land Use Bylaws for associated islands are often dated and out of sync with Official Community Plans
- Strategic Plan work tends to draw staff capacity over bylaw updates
- growth pressures and remaining development potential
- minor projects criteria material is sought for Trust Council as well as for new trustee orientation

RPC 2026-012

It was MOVED and SECONDED,

that the Regional Planning Committee request staff to forward the briefing on Regional Planning Team Major Project work, as well as the updated minor project work criteria to Trust Council.

CARRIED

Trustee Borthwick left the meeting at 2:27 p.m.

9. BUSINESS – NEW

None.

10. WORK PROGRAM

The work program was received for information.

11. NEXT MEETING

The next Regional Planning Committee regular meeting is September 25, 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 2:29 p.m.

Mairead Boland, Chair

ADOPTED

Certified Correct:

Rob Kroeker, Planning Services Administrative Assistant