ADOPTED

Regional Planning Committee
Minutes of a Regular Meeting

Date: September 25, 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
Laura Patrick, Salt Spring Island Local Trustee (ex officio)
Aaron Campbell, North Pender Island Local Trustee

Member Regrets: David Graham, Denman Island Local Trustee

Staff Present: Stefan Cermak, Director, Planning Services
Rob Kroeker, Planning Services Administrative Assistant / Recorder
Clare Frater, Director, Trust Area Services

Others Present: no 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

A verbal update on the status of the Freshwater Atlas was requested to be added under Work Program Items as item 7.3.

2.2 Approval of Agenda

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

3. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

No member of the publish wished to speak.

4. DELEGATIONS

None.

5. CORRESPONDENCE

None.

6. ADMINISTRATVE COORDINATION

6.1 Draft Minutes of Previous Meetings

For review and approval.

6.1.1 Regional Planning Committee Draft Minutes of July 24, 2026 Regular Meeting

Committee discussion included:

- item 7.3 discussion points should demonstrate that items beyond the Land Information Screening Tool were discussed
- the draft minutes should be amended to reflect this

By general consent the Regional Planning Committee request that staff amend the July 24, 2026 draft regular business meeting minutes, and that adoption be completed by Resolution Without Meeting.

6.2 Resolutions Without Meeting

None.

6.3 Follow-up Action List

Director Cermak presented the list. Committee discussion included:

- the Freshwater Sustainability Strategy has a March 2029 target date for its implementation plan, following the independent review of the strategy
- a high-level document with estimated costs is sought
- the independent review of the strategy will daylight some of the deliverables that have been achieved during work on local trust committee projects
- reporting and communications to trustees about work needs improvement
- further funding needs to be predicated on demonstration of concrete results

Trustee Borthwick left the meeting at 10:25 a.m. and returned at 10:27 a.m.

7. BUSINESS – WORK PROGRAM ITEMS

7.1 Fiscal Year 2027/28 Biologist Services Business Case – Request for Decision

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

- this business case references political feasibility, but Trust Council should decide whether options are politically feasible

- the business case should identify specific needs and the type of biologist services that address them
- clarify the amount of demand that planners have for biologist services
- Islands Trust Conservancy staff cannot address the need for biologist services because there is not capacity for projects outside the Conservancy's work plan

Director Frater joined the meeting at 10:39 a.m. She provided information about staff roles and resources available to Islands Trust Conservancy.

- a staff biologist would provide general expertise, while contracted biologists would give Islands Trust access to a range of specific expertise
- the ability to select practitioners according to particular needs will have value
- business case cost estimates are low, and need to be revisited to fully account for a comparable hourly charge rate estimate for internal staff
- comparison of cost is difficult without the true cost of staff options represented
- Regional Planning Committee could recommend that business cases for planning work include a section about assessing the need for environmental and professional services, to start to capture what a biologist could provide to projects and to collect information about need
- remove reference to political considerations from the staff biologist options
- send the business case to Financial Planning Committee without endorsement but with staff directed to apply revisions as discussed
- return the business case to Regional Planning Committee at their next meeting

RPC 2026-013
It was MOVED and SECONDED,
that Regional Planning Committee request staff to revise the business case for ongoing biological/ecological expertise to:

1. define the biological and ecological service needs of Islands Trust, including the type, frequency and level of expertise required;
2. present clearly differentiated service-delivery options, including internal staffing, part-time staffing, external retainer, project-specific contracting, academic/other partnerships and hybrid models;
3. provide comparable financial and operational analysis for each option, including total cost, anticipated service capacity, continuity, specialist access, management requirement and risks; and
4. forward the revised business case to Financial Planning Committee and return it to the next Regional Planning Committee for their review and endorsement.

CARRIED

Director Frater left the meeting at 11:13 a.m.

The committee recessed at 11:13 a.m. The meeting resumed at 11:23 a.m.

7.3 Freshwater Atlas Update - Verbal

Director Cermak spoke to the current stage of Freshwater Atlas work. Committee discussion included:

- a timeline update is sought because the Atlas was estimated to be public this fall
- orientation for trustees is being developed with consideration for introducing new elected officials to the Freshwater Sustainability Strategy and its tools

7.2 Summaries of RPC Highlights from Trust Council Annual Reports for the 2022-2026 Term - Briefing

Chair Boland initiated a roundtable discussion about the highlights of Regional Planning Committee work for the term, and asked for key messages for next term's Regional Planning Committee. Committee discussion included:

- by overseeing land use planning initiatives, this committee is engaged in work that is foundational to Islands Trust
- the Bylaw Enforcement Review Project achieved valuable clarity for communities by updating bylaw enforcement policies and practices
- the Tiny Homes on Wheels Enablement Project was a successful project, with a panel at the Union of BC Municipalities and lots of engagement
- tiny homes work arose from a Housing Strategic Action Plan tool and community concerns, with initiative and hard work from trustees
- Regional Planning Committee can provide guidance on planning tools in development, and must understand tools well if they are to champion them
- local government is about having clear processes
- good government depends on constituents understanding what is happening and why
- new trustees will pick up projects already in progress
- keep a record of how important documents are found for quick accessibility
- a timeline of projects with current status, resolutions directing work, and spending could assist the task of tracking long-running initiatives
- communications to constituents about work should be easy to access
- achievements need to be clearly communicated
- the treatment of small, rural and associated islands and shoreline areas in land use bylaws is not coherent and requires review
- small islands are a critical area for attention because that that is where the greatest biodiversity still exists
- there is a planning deficit evident in the many out of date official community plans and land use bylaws, especially with regard to associated islands
- elected officials are encouraged to consider tackling planning challenges with courage and thinking at the regional level
- Regional Planning Committee may benefit by focussing on larger, change-making issues requiring political guidance, while working groups of trustees could take over giving feedback on operational tools and procedures
- staff do not get the best possible advice in six-hour meetings
- institutional knowledge among staff and continuing trustees is valuable

- staff should consider carefully if political check-ins on endorsed plans such as the Housing Strategic Action Plan are a good use of meeting time, and critical at that moment

8. BUSINESS – NEW

None.

9. WORK PROGRAM

The work program was received for information.

10. NEXT MEETING

The next Regional Planning Committee meeting is scheduled on January 8, 2026 at 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

11. CLOSED MEETING

The Committee did not close the meeting.

12. RISE AND REPORT

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

13. ADJOURNMENT

By general consent, the meeting was adjourned at 12:18 p.m.

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Mairead Boland, Chair

Certified Correct:

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Rob Kroeker, Planning Services Administrative Assistant