



Regional Planning Committee Minutes of a Special Meeting

Date: April 25, 2024
Location: Electronic Meeting

Members Present: Laura Patrick, Salt Spring Island Local Trustee, Chair
Sam Borthwick, Denman Island Local Trustee, Vice Chair
Mairead Boland, Saturna Island Local Trustee
Aaron Campbell, North Pender Island Local Trustee
Tobi Elliott, Executive Committee Representative
Mikaila Lironi, Lasqueti Island Local Trustee
David Graham, Denman Island Local Trustee
Peter Luckham, Thetis Island Local Trustee (Ex Officio)

Member Regrets: Alex Allen, Hornby Island Local Trustee

Staff Present: Stefan Cermak, Director, Planning Services
Robert Kojima, Regional Planning Manager
Anthony Fotino, Island Planner
Rob Kroeker, Planning Services Administrative Assistant / Recorder

Others Present: None.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Patrick called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m. and acknowledged that participants of the meeting were attending from all across the territories and home of the Coast Salish peoples.

2. AGENDA

2.1 Review of the Agenda

No new items were presented for addition to the agenda.

2.2 Approval of the Agenda

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

3. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

No members of the public were present.

4. DELEGATIONS

None.

5. BUSINESS – WORK PROGRAM ITEMS

5.1 Governance Review Annex 1 – Recommendations Summary - BRF

Regional Planning Manager Robert Kojima introduced the briefing, informing Regional Planning Committee that minor updates have been applied since the Committee first saw this report in 2023 and deferred discussion. Committee discussion included:

- Staff reported that many of the recommendations were already identified in 2018 review of planning services
- Regional Planning Committee will use the meeting to go through the report in sequential order
- with the transition to CityView platform for planning applications, staff reported that a review of processes for efficiency and streamlining has been completed to assist transition
- a Trustee inquired how can CityView improve and streamline over adapting the current process for applications
- Trust Council has requested reporting on application processing time to be delivered
- Official Community Plan Terms of Reference for Salt Spring Island is available, and setting a standard for work and equitable public engagement

5.1.1 Summary Table of Annex 1 Recommendations

Committee discussion included:

Section 1. Bylaws

Item 1. Number of Official Community Plans

- Official Community Plans should reflect each community and flow from a community involved process
- Official Community Plans should retain individuality to represent communities they are rooted in
- efficiency should not come at the cost of individuality of islands
- values, unique heritage can be captured and inform decisions on growth
- common ground on larger issues can be achieved in Policy Statement
- what is the cost for communities to review their Official Community Plans?
- in pursuit of good engagement and bringing communities to the table, many communities devote more robust people resources than Local Trust Committees have to Official Community Plan development

Item 2. Draft Model Official Community Plan

- the Saturna Island Official Community Plan was suggested as a strong model document
- could artificial intelligence tools be used to compare Official Community Plans with each other, and with a model template?

ADOPTED

- most jurisdictions that are updating Official Community Plans do so with increased engagement and attention to reconciliation versus when many Islands Trust Official Community Plans were done in the 1990s

Item 3. Official Community Plan reviews

- on starting reviews, projects tend to be more targeted, such as housing reviews, and as Regional Planning Team builds experience
- the new corporate planning process should identify projects at the start of the four year term for Trustees, to better guide long range planning
- it was proposed to consider freezing all Official Community Plan and Land Use Bylaw updates until they can be brought in line with the Trust Policy statement, possibly with more funding from province
- Regional Planning Committee's key role is how to structure this work so that Local Trust Committees are not just fending for money, but all fits into a longer term plan

Item 4. Priority to Local Trust Areas experiencing growth and change

- a Trustee asked if information is available regarding growth trends, developed and undeveloped lots – an overview allowing comparison across islands
- data organization to compare growth information across islands
- other questions include water resources, fire resiliency, climate change
- population and carrying capacity does not capture the types of growth: how can people living on islands take responsibility for existing development patterns and make change to build back ecosystems, foster equity and sustainability

Item 5. Official Community Plan review timeframes

- one Trustee suggested the removal of timeframes from models, citing the differences in needs and complexity between islands

Item 7. Actions and engagement methods

- engagement goals are similar across islands, towards fully informed communities with say in process
- methods will be different, and engaging constituents is different across diverse groups that requires meeting people where they are
- replication across Local Trust Areas is not advisable, and tailoring should be sought to island context

Section 2. Land Use Bylaws

Item 8. Reduce Number of Land Use Bylaws to match Official Community Plans

- value in format similarities and simplicity for understanding Land Use Bylaw regulations, as opposed to Official Community Plans nuanced to each island's aspirations
- standard format is helpful, as currently information in Land Use Bylaws that relates can be in different sections across the document

ADOPTED

- one Trustee would like to see differences in regulations common to all Land Use Bylaws, for instance setbacks, arranged in a table to compare for a more holistic picture across Local Trust Areas
- the model Land Use Bylaw is being maintained and updated by staff with regard to new regulations from Province
- Trustees expressed interest in reviewing the model Land Use Bylaw and Regional Planning Manager Kojima will share with attendees following meeting

Item 11. Concurrent updates of Land Use Bylaws and Official Community Plan updates

- value is seen in linking Official Community Plan updates and Land Use Bylaws
- concurrent reviews assist in reflecting the needs of community best, linking community vision to regulation

Section 3. Model Bylaws

- resist the creation of model bylaws requiring large resources without stringent conditions and delineated use cases

Section 4. Compliance and Enforcement

- the Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Review project will be returned to the next Regional Planning Committee for discussion

Section 5. Planning Projects

- striking an appropriate balance between reviewing applications, and planning projects
- one Trustee suggested that for Denman, project management with regard to major and minor projects is working, but struggles to see how this works also for very different islands
- staff is developing screening materials for major projects to guide planning priorities, which will be coming back to a future meeting
- budget allotment to planning is small, though it is very visible to Trust mission from constituent perspective
- strategic position to allocating planning resources thus has outsized impact

Section 6. Development Applications

- possible outcome of delegating Development Permits include saving time for applicant, and for trustees no longer reviewing
- challenge to delegating Development Permits is fewer reviewers, which is a failsafe; but if turned down, the decision could be appealed to the Local Trust Committee
- delegation of minor Development Variance Permits is another area of interest, minor variance would need definition and could be dealt with quickly
- reliance on professional educated staff for these decisions in the above cases is helpful to Trustees

ADOPTED

- if delegation was adopted, informing the public of these permits in other manners than the current Local Trust Committee agenda packages
- information viewable to the public on CityView Portal may contribute to a solution, with public education about the platform forthcoming

Section 7. Organization

- Trustees value having staff on islands and this practice increases access for community
- an office in Swartz Bay area would facilitate easier access for southern islands
- Governance Committee discussion is ongoing regarding leases, and the Governance Report was written when the northern office was struggling to retain staff, while current staffing is robust
- rationale for leasing over using capital to purchase

Section 8. Staff Resources

- planners are sometimes challenged by procedural questions when they are the only one attending meetings
- the role of Chair is to protect staff and keep within the realm of their professional expertise
- value of Trustees having the opportunity to know staff, their role and their work

Section 9. Planning Reports

- trend towards shorter reports and good summarization
- pending update to eSCRIBE platform that Islands Trust uses will possibly facilitate improved access to previous reports
- challenge of finding individual staff reports in previous agendas, without direct links
- information produced is good but must be organized for access and research

Annex 1 Section E. Other Observations

Committee discussion included:

- regarding First Nations feedback, Islands Trust perspective is trying to be proactive in anticipating needs, communicating, and avoiding surprises with First Nations and Ministry staff
- a Trustee asked if CityView will provide an operational dashboard to view progress of projects and ascertain where projects stall
- internally, CityView is set up to prompt staff on step by step processes; applicants can view progress through the public-facing portal
- reporting to Local Trust Committees is still being explored as it is currently being learned by staff
- Trustees Patrick and Borthwick committed to cross referencing the Annex 1 list with Regional Planning Committee's current priorities list to report to Governance Committee or Trust Council that it has been reviewed, identifying what is embedded in current work, and what gaps if any still need to be addressed

ADOPTED

6. BUSINESS - OTHER

None.

7. BUSINESS – NEW

None.

8. NEXT MEETING

The next scheduled meeting of the Regional Planning Committee is May 24, 2024.

9. CLOSED MEETING

The Committee did not close the meeting.

10. RISE AND REPORT

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

11. ADJOURNMENT

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

Laura Patrick, Chair

Certified Correct:

Rob Kroeker, Planning Services Administrative Assistant / Recorder