



Regional Planning Committee Minutes of a Special Meeting

Date: September 8, 2025
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
Clare Frater, Director, Trust Area Services
Robert Kojima, Regional Planning Manager
Rob Kroeker, Planning Services Administrative Assistant / Recorder

Others Present: None.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Boland called the meeting to order at 10:02 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 or late item was presented for consideration.

2.2 Approval of the Agenda

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

3. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

No member of the public was present.

4. BUSINESS – WORK PROGRAM ITEMS

4.1 Revised Fiscal Year 2026/27 Business Cases – Request For Decision

DRAFT

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

- coordination with other government bodies on mapping has addressed concerns about a duplication of efforts with limited resources
- buying data is a solution for an organization on the scale of Islands Trust without putting more people in the field to monitor changes
- Hatfield is developing eelgrass mapping at a 10 metre resolution to be made public in May 2027
- Islands Trust is looking to further partner with Hatfield for finer resolution data of select sites

Trustee Graham joined the meeting at 10:13 a.m.

- a project bringing together indicators and mapping data is an opportunity that supports Trust Council Strategic Plan objectives
- can we create a model that is dynamic, co-created with First Nations, based on partnerships, to move forward in a new way?
- a \$150,000 item will be difficult to get through the budget process this year
- pre-planning and project structuring will be critical
- a multi-year project should have projected deliverables and demonstrate how each stage of the project can be built upon
- how can First Nations interests and concerns help drive this initiative?
- growth is not inevitable
- Denman LTC is discussing removing subdivision potential in response to growth and living on an island with finite resources
- a trustee hears from their constituents that as growth occurs, community values are changing or lost
- static systems and data are not effective in a time of accelerating climate change
- human activity is what is managed
- this project is trying to understand and model fundamental information more effectively
- a better understanding of human habitation on the islands is needed
- compare current land use patterns with the vision in original Official Community Plans
- start small and targeted, and build this project in layers
- Islands Trust could coordinate a workshop with various data-collecting parties on the ground
- a workshop could discover if there is a coordinating issue; what data is missing; and what opportunities exist when thinking regionally
- a drawback of consultant involvement is in the loss of relationships when their contract is complete
- many island residents are professionals or retired professionals with technical understanding and deep observations of what occurs on island
- trust is built over time with personal connections

DRAFT

- a trustee advocated for the project to involve an accountable staff member in order to not deliver a static report
- a consultant can perform a needs assessment and coordinate partners
- the Puget Sound Vital Statistics Project provides an example direction
- it involves many partners including Indigenous groups and government agencies
- Islands Trust does not have baseline indicator information on private lands outside of protected areas
- biodiversity varies across protected lands
- build a strong needs assessment by convening the table and coordinating different agencies and knowledge holders
- gather key metrics with consideration of the specific needs of islands
- a governance report recommendation involved making more use of local experts in their fields
- establish a baseline of knowledge with pre-work by talking to First Nations and experts, then use the community to add value
- a trustee supports convening a technical panel or working group of experts and First Nations knowledge holders to help design a project framework
- identify agencies who would contribute to the project
- co-creating deserves serious thought towards designing a new methodology
- growth management may be an inaccurate name for the project
- new terminology to title this project could include well-being, sustainability, and human and ecosystem indicators of health
- the Puget Sound Vital Statistics project demonstrates that a healthy ecosystem is deeply interrelated with human indicators
- the three Strategic Plan initiatives involved are growth management and community resiliency, ecosystem health, and climate change
- growth must be defined with, not for, First Nations partners
- convening is a matter of bringing together partners and experts and empowering them to lead data gathering in their areas
- sound, updated data and mapping layers will contribute to strong preserve and protect decision-making
- define a minimum set of required data for land use planning decisions
- artificial intelligence could be used to analyze data, after good data is produced
- a business case for this project needs to indicate that it is going to be a novel approach and a multi-phase strategy
- detailed work plans and decision-making points are required to bring Trust Council along on the path of its development
- the Chair of Regional Planning Committee could give a verbal report at September Trust Council to introduce the project ahead of a December business case
- the appropriate holder of this project may be Regional Planning Committee, Trust Programs Committee, or a select committee
- use the terminology of ecosystem health and community resiliency indicators in a resolution to link it to Strategic Plan initiatives

DRAFT

- a trustee supports removing the appellation of growth management from this project

Regional Planning Committee recessed on a break at 11:39 a.m. and returned at 11:46 a.m.

RPC 2025-028

It was MOVED and SECONDED,

that Regional Planning Committee indicate support for Trust Programs Committee resolution *TPC-2025-063* and requests staff to develop a business case with appropriate budget for Phase 1 (initial development) of a multi year project related to ecosystem health and community resiliency indicators, scoping in relevant agencies, academics, First Nations partners, that will co-develop the project framework and methodology.

CARRIED

Committee discussion continued:

- capacity funding for First Nations partners to participate should be considered
- strategy for long-term funding of this project is required
- give an indication that other sources such as grants will be sought
- partnering agencies may have specific funding available for research or other elements contributing to the project
- a co-creation concept means that the ultimate outcome or deliverable is uncertain
- emphasis at Trust Council needs to be on the process of development

RPC 2025-029

It was MOVED and SECONDED,

that Regional Planning Committee request staff to develop a strategy for long-term funding, investigation of the use of reserve funds, including funding partnerships and potential grants, as indicated in resolution *TPC-2025-063*.

CARRIED

RPC 2025-030

It was MOVED and SECONDED,

that Regional Planning Committee proceed no further with a business case for eelgrass and kelp forest mapping due to federal mapping efforts and request staff to pursue data sharing agreements where feasible.

CARRIED

Committee discussion continued:

- does a more robust geographic information system require a wholesale change in hardware or expertise?
- new information input is limited with current tools
- data sharing across planning functions and conservancy functions is limited by lack of a coordinating platform

DRAFT

- an investment in a platform could integrate large amounts of data from different data sets
- the delineation between data and information systems infrastructure required is unclear
- business cases to clarify differences between the two are desired
- this supports ecosystem health and community resiliency indicator work and cuts across the work of multiple committees

RPC 2025-031

It was MOVED and SECONDED,

that Regional Planning Committee indicate support for Islands Trust Conservancy Board, Executive Committee, and Financial Planning Committee resolutions (*ITC-EC-2025-001, EC-2025-094, and FPC-2025-041*) prioritizing resources for a more robust geographic information system in order to advance Trust Council's Strategic Plan.

CARRIED

5. NEXT MEETING

The next scheduled meeting of the Regional Planning Committee is October 31, 2025 at 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

6. ADJOURNMENT

By general consent the meeting adjourned at 12:15 p.m.

Mairead Boland, Chair

Certified Correct:

Rob Kroeker, Planning Services Administrative Assistant / Recorder

Minutes are not official until adopted at a subsequent meeting.