

ADOPTED
MINUTES of the SALT SPRING ISLAND
LOCAL TRUST COMMITTEE SPECIAL BUSINESS MEETING
Monday, December 10, 2012 – 2:00 p.m.
Baptist Church, Lower Level, 520 Lower Ganges Road, Salt Spring Island, BC

Members Present:

George Grams, Local Trustee (Acting Chair)
Peter Grove, Local Trustee

Advisory Committee Chairs Present:

Neil Morie, Chair, Advisory Design Panel
Sally John, Chair, Advisory Environment Committee
Andrew Haigh, Chair, Advisory Planning Commission (left the meeting at 2:50 p.m.)

Staff Present:

Leah Hartley, Regional Planning Manager (RPM)
Justine Starke, Island Planner
Kathryn Luttin, Recorder

Others Present:

Approximately 4 members of the public

These minutes follow the order of the agenda even though the sequence may have varied.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Grams called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m. He welcomed everyone, and introduced the committee chairs and staff.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was adopted as presented by general consent.

3. ADVISORY COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE

Island Planner Starke reviewed the staff memorandum dated November 28, 2012 regarding staff recommendations on the Advisory Committee Terms of Reference review. She clarified that the desired outcome of the meeting is to get direction on what to suggest to the Local Trust Committee (LTC), with standardization where possible across committees. She noted that the Agricultural Advisory Committee is not represented but she would try to bring their interests to the table based on previous consultation.

3.1 General Discussion

The following points and concerns were raised:

- that it will be important to first decide whether there will be Advisory Committees (ACs) or Advisory Planning Commissions (APCs) (referenced as number 15 on the Staff Report Chart);

- staff noted the creation of a temporary Industrial Advisory Planning Commission (IAPC). If all 4 regular committees were collapsed into one, there would still be the option to strike specific committees as needed;
- if people with environmental expertise were removed, not many would be left for the APC;
- formerly, there was one Advisory Planning Commission with subcommittees that had a wide range of people with diverse expertise ~~all on one committee~~ – seemed well rounded. APC is an umbrella for diverse aspects of planning. Advisory Design Panel (ADP) could still be independent and deal with design and character issues;
- what are the cons of one big committee?;
- who would chair? if one chair had a focus towards a certain area, it could be difficult. Could have a floating chair, or more than one so that the chair's direction would be appropriate to the issue;
- could have sub-chairs for specific topics;
- applications like Channel Ridge, referred initially to the APC had lengthy deliberations on issues that could have taken the Advisory Environment Committee (AEC) a shorter time to decide and which were referred ~~to them late in the process~~;
- there is a concern that committees don't interact – it would be better to only have one committee;
- suggestion to send committee minutes to all committees when they are published;
- still believe that the ADP is a separate entity – because it is specific to guidelines and details;
- ADP referral is for a further stage in the permit process;
- ADP only gets referrals for form and character;
- APC receives more substantial, conceptual referrals;
- the Official Community Plan (OCP) calls upon establishing more committees – such as heritage, or possibly transportation (however, there are similar committees under the Capital Regional District (CRD) commission);
- there could be more committees, question is whether they are totally separate or simply subcommittees;
- more flexibility – add people to the committee when needed for special issues (with one big committee);
- a view was that the APC is missing key expertise (APC lacks environmental knowledge);
- a view was that it is not thought that the APC lacks environmental knowledge – belief that the 4 separate committees are fine;
- it is only the APC and AEC that really need to work together more;
- thought the APC separated into Advisory Committees—in 2004. Previously, environmental expertise was part of the APC. It should be put back;
- staff commented that the Agricultural Advisory Committee (AAC) has a special role in advising on Agricultural Land Reserve applications and the Agricultural Land Commission has encouraged communities to create Agricultural Advisory Committees. The Agricultural Land Commission gives a lot of weight to the advice they receive from the AACs;
- if there was one APC, the AAC AEC might not have the time/patience to deal with non-agricultural issues; ~~ALC gives a lot of weight to is~~
- suggestion for a possible agricultural advisory sub-committee that doesn't attend all meetings;
- participants concluded that a decision on item #15 (to collapse committees into an APC) would not be arrived at this meeting.

Discussion on Item #1 – Committees advise on wider range of issues

The following points and concerns were raised:

- this item is important to all committees;
- staff pointed out that if committees worked on a wider range of issues, but didn't feel their advice is considered, it could be unsatisfying. Staff cautioned that committees need to know that the LTC only has 5 top priorities; however, don't want to restrict committees from providing advice;
- it may not be helpful to provide input on matters that are not in the 5 top priorities as the LTC may not be able to act on it;
- concern to not silence the committees on a hot topic;
- identification that there is a difference between bringing something to LTC attention and spending time working on it, though;
- complaint that ADP meetings aren't regular enough;
- ADP should be more involved in community processes, but issues should still be referred by LTC;
- present issues include Island Paths and SSI Park & Recreation Commission's call for bus stop ideas. These are visual community components that aren't referred to the ADP as they are initiatives outside of Islands Trust.
- it was noted that architects can't give free advice, so they are limited;
- an example of a visual issue is that there are too many sandwich boards proliferating in Ganges. A committee could look into a signage policy;
- work for the ADP could include the future fire hall, etc;
- staff pointed out that the AAC was keen on this item. Members attended a conference where other agricultural advisory committees were working on policy issues;
- it was noted that committees cannot call their own meetings in the Terms of Reference (TOR);
- 2 way communication is required – able to let the LTC know when an issue should be referred to them;
- referrals aren't made for proactive purposes, currently;
- need to open it up so that chairs can bring issues to the attention of the LTC;
- need more long-term planning, as opposed to spot planning (e.g. Ganges core);
- committees need more flexibility – don't restrict what they can talk about;
- suggestion for an open topic meeting? Or officially approve more flexibility;
- a problem with more flexibility could result with a competing top 5 priority list from the committees. A note that political decisions are necessary, though difficult;
- staff pointed out that issues could be added under new business including resolutions that could be referred back to the LTC;
- caution that the ADP provides advice, not a pro-bono service. Its role is advisory only not consultative. The ADP needs to let the LTC know if it is becoming too consultative.

Discussion on Item #19 – Site visits

The following points and concerns were raised:

- the need for improved communication with the chair to plan site visits ahead of time – need to see the site before the meeting;
- is it a good rule of thumb to always have a site visit?
- if it is a well-known site, then maybe not necessary (i.e. Ganges);

- if the site visit occurs without staff, can chairs manage a discussion with the applicant's representative? It was noted that staff are normally there;
- the AEC would always request a site visit;
- could establish a routine meeting schedule with site visits prior to an AAC meeting on the same day;
- the chair could advise committee members if a site visit is needed.

Discussion on Item #3 – Early referral to committees

The following points and concerns were raised:

- previously an early referral worked (e.g. library);
- it is awkward to sometimes coordinate an early referral;
- could an applicant request Advisory Committee (AC) input prior to submitting an application – that would be a service that many applicants would appreciate, however, this could become problematic (asking for lots of advice);
- ADP is open to any referrals that affect the community;
- the Development Permit Area 1 (DPA 1) guidelines in the OCP for the ADP are questionable (zoning is sometimes not compatible with LTC, OCP guidelines are vague and not graphic, scope of guidelines should be enlarged, jurisdiction is an issue i.e. right of ways, sidewalks, such as the Rainbow road gas station sidewalk, etc.);
- liability issues with pathways, frustration with the scope of the guidelines;
- staff suggested that the LTC can refer rezoning applications for ADP advice; however, the LTC may not be able to act on that advice, it may not have the authority;
- concern raised that it would be inappropriate for the ADP to advise on re-zoning issues;
- committees should receive more broad referrals (not just spot zoning) – i.e. pick an area and up zone it for industrial;
- has to be better background documentation for ADP to work with – more solid concrete guidelines;
- the Trustees recognize the need to include a Ganges master plan in their top priorities. ACs would be involved in this and it would require regular meetings. Timeframe is unspecified at this time. The scope would require a review of the “Central” area and village boundaries.

Discussion on Item #5 – Follow up for committees on LTC decisions

The following points and concerns were raised:

- typographical error noted, should say; “Follow up for Committees on LTC decisions”;
- staff noted that they do not go back to the AC to tell them the outcome of the LTC decisions on which the AC was working;
- staff suggested that there could be one staff member that is linked to each AC as a main contact. Other staff may be involved with the AC for individual applications, but there is always one main staff person that works with that AC. Staff might not give a presentation of their report at the AC meeting, as is currently the case. Some chairs suggested that this structure might have more cons than pros;”
- It was noted that the committees also need to know what other committees reported on applications;

- staff suggested sending all committee minutes ~~to all~~ chairs. They would then distribute to their committees;
- summary sheets from AC periodically? Could be quarterly. May take a lot of staff time;
- each AC is a mini LTC that needs staff support;
- staff note: AC minutes are in LTC agenda packages, but can be hard to locate;
- new minute taking software being introduced in 2013 may improve sourcing;
- AC's might like having their own staff person;
- more frequent meetings would also be helpful;
- AC's need to make sure they are informed, and LTC need to facilitate this.

Discussion on Item #6 – Regular meetings

The following points and concerns were raised:

- LTC still need to refer, but could refer entire top priority list;
- don't wish to meet if recommendations won't be useful;
- if there are topics for advice, then refer;
- bus stops, pathways, etc. are not part of LTC jurisdiction so not referred to ADP. Discussion on this problem requested.
- it was felt that cross-discussion would happen when a Ganges master plan is formulated and reviewed;
- scope of ADP jurisdiction (LTC jurisdiction);
- staff noted ADP only receives referrals on Development Permit 1 and 2 applications; however, this could be broadened;
- it was noted that the AAC would like to meet more regularly – but as farmers their time is limited. They request an efficient meeting/referral system;
- request for greater clarify on how the LTC want the AC's to interact with them? AC's goal is to help LTC. The Trustees note they wish to receive all information.

Discussion on Item #7 – Advisory committees calling their own meetings

The following points and concerns were raised:

- lack of clarity - when can more than one meeting be called to discuss a request?;
- need to be clear that the chair can call a second meeting to discuss a referral;
- request for staff to edit the wording in the Terms of Reference;
- all ACs are under the same local government act, ~~but still could add clarity to each one~~;
- staff agrees that clarity is needed here.

Discussion on Item #8 – Hold informal “brainstorming” sessions

The following points and concerns were raised:

- informal brainstorming might offend an applicant and should be avoided when they are present;
- the committee structure hampers the creative process;
- staff noted that the applicant has a right to be there if their application is being discussed;

- ADP brainstorming could only happen if a broader scope on the topic was referred to them;
- it was noted that a committee can meet without a quorum;
- committees need to be accountable and transparent;
- suggest a brainstorming committee that's a smaller group?
- could be problematic if only some committee members were meeting beforehand;

Discussion on Item #9 - consulting with external agencies

The following points and concerns were raised:

- a caution was raised that if external agencies are consulted by an AC, it could be confusing for the agencies;
- committees don't talk to agencies, people talk to people;
- individuals may speak to each other, just not as an AC member;
- this is about formal meetings, about an agency presenting to an AC;
- The LTC would consult with agencies if the committees are not asked to adopt this practice.

The meeting recessed at 3:20 p.m. and reconvene at 3:23 p.m.

Discussion on Item #10 – Notice of meetings advertised in paper and posted to IT website

The following points and concerns were raised:

- staff noted that there is no statutory requirement to advertise an AC meeting;
- a suggestion was made to advertise on the local on-line Salt Spring list;
- it was noted that the public are not provided with an opportunity to talk at these meetings;
- staff pointed out that members of the public have said they would like greater opportunities to speak which could be at the discretion of the chair; however, that this is a separate issue that does not affect the present item of discussion;
- meeting notices are currently posted on the office notice board;
- -or could they be advertised in the local paper?
- With the APC in particular, is this the best way for community members to provide input, or should they voice their opinion to the LTC (are those voices lost if they only speak at APC meetings?);
- it comes down to what is the purpose of the meetings;
- if they are public meetings, they need to be adequately posted;
- free advertising is available, like the Trust website which could be much better;
- purpose of public coming to an AC meeting is to see and hear the deliberations. It is up to chair if they think discussion would be enhanced by public input;
- the chairs require meeting procedure training, possibly once per year? More resources to draw on would be helpful.

Discussion on Item #12 – Resource binder for members

The following points and concerns were raised:

- thought to publish material on the web, members would not require a paper resource binder – easier to find things;
- ADP needs a hardcopy;

- people should have the option of a hard copy;
- could give people a flash drive;
- staff is working on a committee section on the new website.

Discussion on Item #13 – Committee members should have relevant expertise and training

The following points and concerns were raised:

- how much expertise is required?;
- do the LTC want committees to represent the public? That is different than providing expert advice. The AEC provides expert advice;
- do the LTC want committees to just represent the public? If not, do they want expertise? Specialty advice must be objective, but may vary by committee.

Discussion on Item #14 – Trustees should attend meetings

The following points and concerns were raised:

- staff informed that most committee members want Trustees to attend meetings because minutes are so brief;
- the LTC must be able to advocate for the committee advice; therefore, they need to have been present to be able to argue well for the AC advice (planner may not get the point across as well);
- a caution against Trustees giving opinions at AC meetings – seems to be working well as it is now;
- Trustees reinforced their observatory role which does not include debate;
- it was felt that at least one Trustee should attend AC meetings;
- Trustee schedules may not permit regular attendance. Would not want the AC's to cancel a meeting if occasionally a Trustee cannot attend;
- opinion that at least one Trustee should be there – very important.

Discussion on Items #16 & #18 – Improve communications/outreach for new members & review application form for recruitment of committee members

The following points and concerns were raised:

- place an application form on the on-line Salt Spring list, and on the IT website; however, it should still be a personal approach to encourage participation;
- some people just won't think of applying unless asked.

Discussion on Item # 17 – Add info about committees on the IT website

The following points and concerns were raised:

- staff clarified that this is about posting profiles of committee members on the IT website;
- it was felt that this is a really good idea;
- need to request and receive explicit permission from nominees (on the application form) to put info on website;
- members need to know that committee work is public information. This information should be on the application form.

Discussion on Item # 21- More cross-over of committee work

The following points and concerns were raised:

- how do we facilitate cross-over between committee members;
- could have an annual event – could be stand up so people walk around and mingle;
- could send agenda packages to all ACs when they are published; not all were in agreement with this suggestion;
- ADP seems more separate;
- could post agenda packages to the website;
- posting AC agenda packages on the website would need to be a Trust wide practice review ?
- only an ADP and an APC which would include AEC and AAC members was suggested.
- make agenda packages available, without having to actually send them to all AC members;
- The chair could receive agenda packages and forward to members?;
- The chairs may not necessarily want to distribute Trust info.

Any other issues to discuss?

The following points and concerns were raised:

Justine noted and reviewed public feedback received to date on the AC review.

4. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:54 p.m. by general consent.

George Grams, Acting-Chair

Kathryn Luttin, Recorder