



Salt Spring Island Local Trust Committee Minutes of a Special Meeting

Date: Thursday, February 11, 2021

Location: Electronic Meeting
200-1627 Fort Street, Victoria

Members Present: Peter Luckham, Chair
Laura Patrick, Local Trustee
Peter Grove, Local Trustee

Staff Present: Stephan Cermak, Regional Planning Manager (RPM)
Jason Youmans, Island Planner
Geordie Gordon, Planner 2
Kristine Mayes, Planner 1
Shayla Burnham, Administrative Assistant
Sarah Shugar, Recorder

Others Present: Brent Brochu-Ingram, Agricultural Advisory Planning Committee
Terry Clement, Agricultural Alliance
Bree Eagle, Agricultural Advisory Planning Committee
Anne Macey, Agricultural Alliance
Doug Pepper, Ministry of Agriculture
Conrad Pilon, Agricultural Advisory Planning Committee
Margaret Thomson, Agricultural Alliance
Ruth Waldick, Agricultural Advisory Planning Committee
Brian Webster, Agricultural Alliance
One member of the public

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

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Luckham called the meeting to order at 4:02 p.m. and welcomed everyone to an electronic meeting of the Salt Spring Island Local Trust Committee. Chair Luckham introduced himself, the Trustees and staff and acknowledged that the Local Trust Committee is meeting within Coast Salish Territory. Introductions were carried out.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

By general consent the agenda was approved.

3. BUSINESS ITEMS

3.1 Local Trust Committee Chair's Welcome and Opening Remarks

Chair Luckham reported this meeting is an opportunity for the Salt Spring Island Local Trust Committee to have a discussion with the members of the Salt Spring Island Agricultural Advisory Planning Commission (AAPC) and representatives of the Salt Spring Island Agricultural Alliance on agriculture related issues.

3.2 Protection of Coastal Douglas-Fir and Associated Ecosystems

Planner Youmans presented a PowerPoint presentation regarding the Protection of Coastal Douglas-Fir and Associated Ecosystems project.

In discussion the following comments and questions were noted:

- It is important to consider the use of language in the project charter and to be inclusive of all points of view on the topic.
- It is important to consider the Coastal Douglas-Fir and Associated Ecosystems project in association with other priorities such as food security.
- It is important to consider the connections between the Coastal Douglas-Fir and Associated Ecosystems project, wild fire risk, water availability, and other climate impacts.
- Meeting attendees were encouraged to attend the Transition Salt Spring Climate Action Network event on February 23, 2021.
- Incentives such as agro-forestry, permaculture crops and fruit crops could be used to protect sensitive areas such as forest edges.
- The Coastal Douglas-Fir (CDF) zone covers the most intense agricultural areas in the lower mainland, Vancouver Island and Southern Gulf Islands and a high percentage of the CDF zone is within the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR). There was a question regarding whether the Coastal Douglas-Fir and Associated Ecosystems project applies to the entire region. Planner Youmans reported the Coastal Douglas-Fir and Associated Ecosystems project is a Salt Spring Island Local Trust Committee project and applies to the Salt Spring Island Trust Area. The Coastal Douglas fir Conservation Partnership is a roundtable of stakeholders including the Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development (FLNRORD), local governments and conservation agencies with the goal to encourage local governments to maintain Coastal Douglas fir in the entire region.
- Concern was expressed regarding the CDF project objectives and the project charter does not acknowledge the complexity of the issues including farmland. Almost 50% of the actively farmed land on Salt Spring Island is not within the ALR. Some of the priorities in the CDF project are in conflict such as preserving the CDF zone and protecting local food security.
- There was a suggestion for community engagement to include early consultation with the agricultural community, to be specific to agricultural related issues and provide sufficient time for feedback and discussion.

- Support was expressed for the protection of CDF zones and that the large-scale deforestation such as the logging of large parcels on Mt. Tuam that has impacted the watercourses in that area.
- It is important to highlight the associated ecosystems as part of the CDF project. Many of the ecosystems that exist in farming areas including south facing slopes are compatible with agriculture. Many farmers utilize conservation covenants.
- There was a suggestion to consider an option such as an expanded or neo-ALR to help preserve the actively farmed areas that are not within the ALR.
- There is an active food sovereignty interest in the Saanich area and Salt Spring Island is considered to have valuable areas for food production. Many of the potential food production areas on Salt Spring Island are on the edge of forests with a range of native, deciduous woodland species. Most of these areas could be protected using initiatives such as conservation covenants.
- There was a suggestion that initiatives to compensate farmers not to farm on farmland would be a contentious issue.
- AAPC Chair Bree Eagle reported the CDF project has not been referred to the AAPC for comment.
- It was noted farmland within the ALR would not be significantly impacted by regulations to protect CDF zones. Approximately 44% of the actively farmed areas on Salt Spring Island are not within the ALR. There was a question regarding how the Right to Farm Act would protect existing farms that are not within the ALR. Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) representative Doug Pepper reported the Right to Farm Act protects farmers to conduct normal farm practices.

3.3 Draft Amendments to APC Bylaw No. 467 & APC Terms of Reference

Planner Mayes presented a PowerPoint presentation regarding proposed amendments to Salt Spring Island Local Trust Committee Advisory Planning Commission Bylaw No. 467 (APC Bylaw) and the Salt Spring Island Advisory Planning Commission(s) Terms of Reference (TOR) for discussion to address the recommendations of the AAPC.

In discussion the following comments were noted:

- Support was expressed to invite a MoA representative to be a member of the AAPC. Previous MoA representatives Derek Masselink and Rob Klein have provided technical information regarding activities within the ALR. Planner Mayes reported the ability to invite a MoA representative to be a member of the AAPC is included in the updates to the draft APC Bylaw and TOR.
- It was noted that it would have been valuable to have the input from a MoA representative when the AAPC was asked to review and comment on the Local Trust Committee project concerning the regulation of cannabis.
- MoA representative Doug Pepper advised he and his colleagues are available for consultation on any agricultural related topics.

3.4 Discussion of Agricultural Priorities

Chair Luckham advised this is an opportunity for the Salt Spring Island Local Trust Committee to have a discussion with the members of the Salt Spring Island Agricultural Advisory Planning Commission (AAPC) and representatives of the Salt Spring Island Agricultural Alliance on agriculture priorities.

In discussion the following comments were noted:

- Concern was expressed regarding climate change, seasonal weather shifts, heat, drought and related impacts to agricultural communities. Impacts need to be considered on a site-specific basis.
- MoA representative Doug Pepper reported there is work underway related to impacts of climate change in the Vancouver Island region that will be transferrable to the Gulf Islands.
- Support was expressed for ongoing consultation between the Agricultural Alliance and the Salt Spring Island Local Trust Committee.
- Agriculture has a long history on Salt Spring Island and has the potential to be a positive contributor to climate action.
- Concern was expressed that the Islands Trust Policy Directives document does not address the role of food production in a meaningful way and support was expressed to consider all issues through the lens of agriculture. Chair Luckham encouraged the Agricultural Alliance to submit input regarding the policy statement.
- Support was expressed for the importance of farm stands and places for farmers to sell their products during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- It was suggested that the term *food security* has an association to a food crisis and does not accurately represent local agriculture.
- The launch of the updated Area Farm Plan for Salt Spring Island has been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Priorities are articulated in the updated farm plan and would be beneficial to discuss with the Salt Spring Island Local Trust Committee.
- The agricultural community would like to form a task group to review Islands Trust bylaws that speak to composting to provide opportunity for farmers to be permitted to compost, improve soils in an environmentally responsible way. RPM Cermak suggested the process would be for the Agricultural Alliance to present to the Salt Spring Island Local Trust Committee and the LTC could refer the topic to the AAPC.
- Agricultural Alliance Chair Terry Clement recommended the use of language that is inclusive of agriculture and is not specific to land within the ALR.
- The MoA has composting regulations that would be helpful to inform discussions regarding composting.

4. ADJOURNMENT

The next meeting is scheduled on July 15, 2021 and the following meeting is scheduled on November 18, 2021.

By general consent the meeting adjourned at 5:35 p.m.

Peter Luckham, Chair

CERTIFIED CORRECT:

Sarah Shugar, Recorder