

District of Metchosin

Minutes

Buffer Land Working Group

August 16, 2023 at 4:30 p.m.

Council Chambers

Metchosin Municipal Hall

Present: Councillor Jay Shukin (Chair), Councillor Shelly Donaldson (Vice-Chair), Bonnie Bouveur, Brian Grant, Anna Hall, Richard Simpson, Gary Smirfitt, Karen Hoffman, Bailey Spiteri (via Teams computer link).

The meeting was called to order at 4:30 pm

1. Agenda, Additions, Approval

Jay called the meeting to order and commented on how much work the group had done since it formed in April. The agenda was approved.

2. Presentations

There were no presentations.

3. Public Participation

There was no public participation.

4. Adoption of Minutes

The Buffer Land Working Group (WG) meeting minutes of July 26, 2023 were approved.

5. Business Arising from the Minutes

No business from the minutes.

6. Reports

There was general discussion on the following:

- There was general concern as to whether the WG had received enough information through the process to provide more than a “soft option” to Council.
- Discussion occurred on the stormwater management (SWM) plans for the Centre Mountain Estates (CME). Jay noted constraints due to Freedom of Information requirements on the circulation of this information as it was from a third party and may contain propriety information.
- Jay noted that information on the SWM plan had been circulated to Metchosin’s Environment (MEASC) and Parks & Trails (PTASC) advisory committees for their review per a District policy.

- Gary had received an earlier version of the SWM plan by way of a resident who had obtained through the FOI. Gary provided his comments. Gary had also sent these to Council and the WG.

7. New Business

a) WG's interim report to Council at the August 14 meeting

- Jay and Shelly reviewed Council's response to the report
 - Council was appreciative of the work.
 - There were questions about the option of a sale to the CRD. Jay had noted that this was an option, but one that would be considered with certain conditions / assumptions: a fair price, clarity on CRD's plans for the Buffer, respect for Neild Road residents, etc.
 - Discussion about the CME proximity and how this would make the Buffer very different than any of Metchosin's other parks (should it be rezoned a park).
 - Considerations for additional resources and budget likely would be part of a forthcoming recommendation.

b) WG's numeric ranking of Round II Concepts

- The WG reviewed the quantitative rankings from eight of the nine WG members.
- Highest rankings (most favourable) given to "Re-zone to Park Land; explore zoning options to support / conservation and protection of the Buffer Land."
- Lowest ranking given to "Sell to the CRD"; however, questions were raised about some of the scoring for this option.
- Consensus was that the exercise had been useful, but that the WG did not want to base recommendations solely on the rankings with the limited information currently available.

c) Options to take forward

- Further discussion to take place at the next meeting regarding immediately rezoning the Buffer Land to park, with a plan to incrementally step-up conservation and preservation initiatives in a way that aligns with WG's vision statement.
- This would allow for the future development of more specific zoning designation that had stronger conservation/protection elements within than the current P3 zoning (which allows for 9.88 acre lots).
- The WG will "park" the sub-initiatives it has explored to date, but would urge Council to look for opportunities to develop these or enable these, including:
 - Trail and Swale.
 - Looking at the North and South Lobes differently, in order to support conservation efforts (concerns were noted about viewing the parcel as anything but a whole).
 - Strategic use of access management.

- Working with land trusts or educational institutions.
- A critical element with the option to make the buffer lands a Metchosin Park is that it be adequately resourced, as in a budget and a park master plan.
- The WG agreed that the potential of a sale to the CRD is not our preferred option but should remain as an option as it has a clear cost-mechanism for achieving some of the broader environmental and management goals that may be a problem with other options.
 - **ACTION:** Jay to harmonize the options per discussion and provide to WG.

d) Community input meeting

- Dates for community input meeting #2 were discussed: currently these are Tuesday September 26 and Thursday, September 28.
 - **ACTION:** Jay to confirm dates with District staff and inform the WG. (NB: date has now been set as Thursday, September 28 @ 7:00 p.m.).
- Discussion occurred on the format of, including whether to include participatory elements.
- Another view was to keep the meeting simple: present the WG's process; the concepts reviewed; present the final recommendation and hear from the community (What do they think? What is missing/needs to be considered?).
- More discussion will take place at the next meeting.

8. Next Meeting Date and Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 6:45 p.m. The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, September 12 starting at 4:30 p.m.