

District of Metchosin

Minutes

**Buffer Land Working Group Meeting**

**October 11, 2023 at 4:30 p.m.**

Council Chamber

Metchosin Municipal Hall

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**Present:** Councillor Jay Shukin (Chair), Councillor Shelly Donaldson (Vice-Chair), Bonnie Bouveur, Brian Grant, Richard Simpson, Gary Smirfitt, Karen Hoffman, Bailey Spiteri

**Regreets:** Anna Hall

The meeting was called to order at 4:30 p.m.

**1. Agenda, Additions and Approval**

The agenda was approved with the addition of the supplemental agenda items under 7.(a).

**Carried**

**2. Presentations**

There were no presentations.

**3. Public Participation**

There was no public participation.

**4. Adoption of Minutes**

The Buffer Land Working Group (BLWG) minutes of September 12, 2023 were approved.

**5. Business Arising from the Minutes**

Gary asked if there was new information from PTASC or MEASC regarding the Stormwater Management Plan. Jay spoke to the September 11, 2023 Council motion, which called for staff to have third-party input on best management practices regarding stormwater quality and quantity management. The motion also states that the District will not approve the stormwater management plan until it has written assurances to ensure water quality protection measures, as well as clarity on post-construction management, maintenance practices, and other matters.

**6. Reports**

There were no reports.

**7. New Business**

Jay asked for the BLWG's impressions of the October 4, 2023 community input session. Key learnings from the Oct. 4<sup>th</sup> session? Where are we at based on that input?

Richard noted that the Oct. 4<sup>th</sup> public engagement session was beneficial to the BLWG in terms of helping consider the way forward. Well considered and constructive input throughout.

Brian suggested we follow up on potential value of carbon credits before committing on this initiative.

Jay has been in contact with the Coastal Douglas-fir Conservation Partnership, which has agreed to do a preliminary assessment on the potential value. The up-front costs in being involved on a carbon credit program may be high but the potential revenue could be significant as well. More information is expected in the coming weeks.

Bonnie raised several considerations: there is not enough information at this time to make a clear recommendation to Council. There have been no informational meetings arranged between Metchosin, Langford, and the developer; should we do “pause” and do a thorough job rather than rush a recommendation? Regarding the sale to the CRD should we keep open the potential of other partners? We need to research the federal funding under the new Climate Emergency Program that Chris Moehr has shared. Let’s take into consideration the Carbon Tax Credit system recently brought to light. She noted Bev Bacon's email note to the BLWG and the mention of a loop trail connecting the Galloping Goose on Happy Valley to Section 95, offering the CRD a trail easement with Metchosin still owning the land.

Bailey suggested the BLWG move forward with our recommendations, on time. Karen stated agreement. Gary said BLWG’s focus is the right one.

Discussion occurred on the recent input and whether the BLWG’s recommendations and whether these were off base with the climate issues and the related carbon credit potential. General comment: it would have been good to have this input earlier in the process.

Jay felt we should advance the BLWG’s recommendations, with the provision of being open to promising opportunities (potentially carbon credits; an initial assessment coming in several weeks). If Metchosin was to pursue the National Urban Parks (Parks Canada) route this could be a lengthy process. Several commented on a potential sale to the CRD also taking time.

Shelly noted that the Buffer Land is owned by the District; taking on partners may impact the control we have. There may be some value in taking a pause. We don't know what the impact of the retention ponds are either.

Gary commented on the process around the CME residential development and that there is likely little opportunity to provide input to the specific subdivision plans.

There was further discussion on how Metchosin could influence stormwater matters.

Allison Leduc, President of the Bilston Watershed Protection Association, discussed green infrastructure processes and how this could reduce the size of the detention pond. Metchosin should seek advanced treatment of stormwater from the CME development, drawing upon the potential of green infrastructure.

There was discussion about the lack of information about the CME stormwater plan and that recent plans have not been shared publicly.

Jay said that he has seen the third version of the plan; there is confirmation of a bioswale element; however, there were few other details.

General discussion followed about the BLWG providing its recommendations to Council.

Brian commented on the importance of a Park Management Plan. Developing a preliminary plan, for example a Table of Contents, could be helpful to Council; should focus on protecting the environment. Bonnie noted that several municipalities have these plans and we could draw from them – making this unique to Metchosin’s situation. (see “Action” noted below.)

Chris Moehr provided the BLWG with a copy of an article from Oct. 10<sup>th</sup> Times Colonist to consider regarding water retention. She reiterated the need for a good relationship with Langford. Asked why the APRM was not supportive of the BLWG recommendations regarding rezoning to park, Chris said they were not in favour if this was done just because of the provincial housing initiative. She spoke to the need for a new appraisal with the current zoning to keep options open. Discussion occurred. If the decision was made to sell the Buffer Land, an open public process would follow, as would an appraisal.

The BLWG members agreed that Metchosin has inherited a challenge.

Avril Yoachim asked about trails in the Buffer Land. Discussion followed, including comments about access points, dog walkers (private and commercial), and the need for a park management plan. Discussion occurred on how access could be limited to protect the Buffer Land.

The BWLG reviewed the letter from Morgan Yates. Comments: concerns with partnering with Langford and partnering with other organizations has complexities (this option was considered early on); the CRD tends not to ‘partner’ with others regarding parkland (there may be exceptions, but none were identified); the carbon credit potential is being explored; the Urban Park option would likely take considerable time to develop.

Fencing was discussed. Options of fencing the entire Buffer Land and strategic fencing had been considered.

The BLWG noted there were numerous topics that they did not have adequate information on, including the CME development and the subdivision layout.

**ACTION:**

- Jay will draft an initial report to Council for the BLWG’s review.
- Brian will draft a table of contents for an initial Park Management Plan, working in partnership with Bonnie. This will be incorporated into the report.
- The next WG meeting will be held after the October 23<sup>rd</sup> council meeting which we all should try to attend.

**8. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 6:20 p.m.