

District of Metchosin

Minutes

Environmental Advisory Select Committee Meeting

May 28, 2024 at 7:00 p.m.

Council Chambers

Metchosin Municipal Hall

Present: Councillor Steve Gray, Merrilee Hoen (Chair), Andy MacKinnon, Bill Cave, Erin Van de Water (Recorder)

Regrets: Anna Hall, Garry Fletcher, Ric Perron

The meeting was called to order at 7:10 p.m.

1. Agenda, Additions and Approval

Change Item 9e from ‘Gypsy Moth’ to ‘Spongy Moth’.

Moved and Seconded by Steve and Andy that the Committee approve the agenda as amended.

Carried

2. Presentations

None.

3. Public Participation

Brent Donaldson spoke about the tax exemption for the Victoria Motorcycle Club. He is a member of the Victoria Motorcycle Club which owns more than 100 acres of undeveloped property on Boulderpath Road. Brent has been a director of the club for 15 years and if anyone has questions about the tax exemption feel free to contact him.

Kathy Atherton wanted to bring two items up for discussion. First, the Beckingham Road development proposal, which she is mystified about why the developer has put lots up for sale when the subdivision hasn’t been approved yet. Kathy feels this is “putting the cart before the horse” and finds it problematic. She also pointed out that many of the proposed lots have building sites encroaching on riparian zones (especially lot 8), and the area designated for parks and trails is located particularly close to riparian zones and sensitive moss bald areas.

Kathy also wanted to discuss herbicides and pesticides. She has a Habitat Acquisition Trust (HAT) ‘Good Neighbours’ designation on her property and is involved with the Metchosin Invasive Species Cooperative (MISC). Kathy thinks treating holly with a spot dab on the trunk after cutting should still be allowed. She is concerned with changing parameters, as we must bear in mind reasonable applications to allow the good work of invasive species control to continue.

4. Adoption of Minutes

Moved and Seconded by Andy and Steve that the Committee approve the minutes of the Environmental Advisory Select Committee meeting held on April, 23 2024.

Carried

5. Receipt of Minutes

a) Environment and Natural Areas Committee, May 13, 2024

Moved and Seconded by Steve and Merrilee that the Committee receive the Council and Standing Committee Minutes for information.

Carried

b) Parks and Trails Advisory Committee Meeting, April 24, 2024

Moved and Seconded by Bill and Andy that the Committee receive the Advisory Committee Minutes for information.

Carried

6. Business Arising from the Minutes

a) Human/Wildlife Conflict

A joint Special Meeting with PTASC & MEASC is scheduled for July 9th.

b) Climate Action Plan – Community Engagement

Merrilee contacted Karyn Woodland, from Regenerate BC, looking at education programs with either a Metchosin focus or including Metchosin residents. Karyn brought this up at their board meeting last night and the other members sounded keen to participate in any Metchosin-related activities or to include Metchosin residents in any regional events. Regenerate BC is offering an online five-week course on climate solutions beginning in Sept/Oct, and they are also happy to offer an in-person version of same course, possibly at Royal Roads, the Metchosin Community House, or somewhere in Colwood - a convenient location for Metchosinites to attend is the goal. It would be great if we could encourage Metchosinites to attend through various channels (Muse articles, Facebook groups, District Website).

Steve offered to talk to staff about putting this on the district website and Merrilee said she would get something in the Muse and on social media. There was a Letter to the Editor written for the June 2024 Muse about the Climate Action Plan making progress and ways to get involved on an individual basis.

Action Item: Steve will talk to staff about putting on district website.

Action Item: Merrilee will get an article into the Muse and post in various social media groups.

c) Beckingham Subdivision Referral

Steve gave an update on a group effort from Steve, Ric, and Erin who put together a list of recommendations with input from wetland and terrestrial ecosystem experts including Provincial ecosystems biologist, Sacha O'Regan, from Ministry of Water, Land, and Resource Stewardship. Sacha has worked with the District before and has offered to put together a team of provincial experts on wetlands and riparian areas to advise on best practices to assist our Approving Officer.

We discussed and made edits to our list of recommendations and reviewed the Hewitt Creek Groundwater Assessment.

7. Reports

a) Chair's Verbal Report

None.

b) Council Liaison Verbal Report

Buffer Lands: A motion was passed to bring the Buffer Land Working Group Report to an upcoming meeting of the Planning Committee to discuss recommendations from the working group. There was also some discussion around engaging with the Capital Regional District (CRD) about a potential sale of the Buffer Lands.

Bill spoke about the need to keep biosolids from being spread on land in Metchosin. He recalled some of the history on this topic as it relates to the CRD who had committed to a ban on land application years ago. He noted that the option of land application is under consideration again and the CRD is seeking input.

Moved and Seconded by Bill and Andy that the Committee recommend a ban on land application of biosolids in Metchosin.

Carried

8. Correspondence

None.

9. Other Business

a) 2013 Shoreline Protection Plan

Steve talked to Councillor David Grove and Director of Planning, Ian Bourhill at City of Colwood. Colwood is happy to liaise with Metchosin about their shoreline plan so that the two communities could work together on adjoining shoreline areas – two key areas are sea level rise and tsunami.

A question arose about whether we talk to HAT again about their 'Good Neighbours Program' and engaging with Metchosin shoreline property owners; can we get a report on what happened last time?

Action Item: Andy will contact Habitat Acquisition Trust to request a report on their landowners contact program for shoreline residents.

Action Item: Steve will touch base again with Colwood's Councillor Grove to arrange a follow-up meeting on shoreline planning.

b) Mapping of Potential Sensitive Areas in Metchosin: Conservation Data Centre, Data Submission

Andy is waiting on Garry to deliver the box of data.

c) District of Metchosin Public Works Policy W-100: Elimination of Pesticides and Herbicides for Cosmetic Purposes on Municipal Grounds

The Committee needs direction from the Environment Committee on this; we had ideas of expanding from cosmetic purposes and expanding from municipal properties. Control of Black Knapweed using hand-sprayed herbicides on Tower Point has been successful. Exceptions for invasives in the policy are needed.

Moved and Seconded by Andy and Steve that the Environment Committee consider expanding Policy W-100 to apply beyond cosmetic use and expand beyond use on municipal grounds.

d) Tax Exempt Properties

It is important that these properties have no resource extraction, no logging, no road building, no tree cutting, and take into account the value to the community for tax exemption. Do these properties need a covenant? Do they require a change in zoning? What are the criteria?

Action Item: Andy and Steve to work together to come up with some criteria for tax exempt properties in Metchosin for our next MEASC meeting.

e) Spongy Moth Spraying Program

We have questions about the adjuvants used in pesticide formulas. What justification there is for spraying? Steve had received correspondence from Metchosin resident, Jochen Moehr, who is a butterfly enthusiast and says he is concerned about insect populations.

Action Item: Erin to research this and report findings at next MEASC meeting.

10. Adjournment and Next Meeting Date

Moved and Seconded by Steve and Andy that the Committee adjourn the meeting at 8:55 p.m.

Carried

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, June 25, 2024 at 7:00 p.m.