

District of Metchosin

Minutes

**Environmental Advisory Select Committee Meeting**

**Tuesday, 26 November 2024 at 7:00 P.M.**

Council Chamber

Metchosin Municipal Hall

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**Present:** Garry Fletcher (Chair), Councillor Steve Gray (Council Liaison), Merrilee Hoen (recorder), Bill Cave, Anna Hall, Ric Perron, Erin Van de Water

**Regrets:** Andy MacKinnon

The meeting was called to order at 7:01 p.m.

**1. Agenda, Additions and Approval**

**Moved and Seconded** by Ric and Anna that the Committee approve the agenda with two additions to 9f.

**Carried**

**2. Presentations:**

None.

**3. Public Participation**

Nicole Shukin, resident, recommended an expanded, well-researched, up to date, science-based policy be made available to District about the pesticides used on Municipal Grounds. It would specify which pesticides may be applied and the circumstances where their use would be appropriate. She commented that a District wide by-law would be difficult to enforce.

Alison LeDuc, resident, informed the committee that the pesticide Garlon is persistent (half-life of a 1,000 days) and water-soluble. Any half-life over 180 days is considered high risk. She asks that there be more research into the topic.

**4. Adoption of Minutes**

**Moved and Seconded** by Ric and Bill that the Committee approve the minutes of the Environmental Advisory Select Committee meeting held September 24, 2024.

**Carried**

**5. Receipt of Minutes**

**a) Environment and Natural Areas Committee, November 18, 2024**

**Moved and Seconded** by Erin and Steve that the Committee receive the minutes of the Environment and Natural Areas Committee meeting held November 18, 2024.

**Carried**

**b) Parks and Trails Advisory Select Committee Meetings, September 17 and October 15, 2024.**

**Moved and Seconded** by Steve and Erin that the Committee receive the minutes of the Parks & Trails Advisory Select Committee meetings held September 17 and October 15, 2024.

**Carried**

**6. Business Arising from the Minutes**

**a) Sensitive Environments in Metchosin – Fulfilling the Requirements of Section 2.3.9 of the Metchosin Official Community Plan Bylaw, No. 258, 1995**

As a consequence of the Beckingham subdivision referral, MEASC became aware of the importance of identifying sensitive ecosystems in Metchosin and specifically naming them in our OCP. In that instance, MEASC recommended following site-specific provincial expert advice on protecting two blue-listed endangered species (i.e. red-tailed frog and nearby coastal cut-throat trout), the wetlands and riparian areas on the property. Following this advice would mean exceeding minimum provincial standards in light of best practices and climate change and entail significant changes to the subdivision plan under the aegis of the Approving Officer subject to Sec. 86 of the *BC Land Title Act*.

Andy and Steve visited the Environmental Law Centre (ELC) at UVic and met with Deborah Curran, Director of the Centre and her graduate student to ask how Metchosin might improve ecosystem protection.

It was recommended that Metchosin develop a biodiversity strategy to inform our OCP and District priorities. This strategy would include further identification of the sensitive ecosystems of Metchosin in accordance with OCP Sec. 2.3.9 and actions needed to improve protections in keeping with community values.

While local governments cannot be clients of the ELC, individuals and community groups are invited to apply for assistance on environmental legal matters.

i. Mapping of Potential Sensitive Areas in Metchosin: Conservation Data Centre, Data Submission

It is important to add all the sensitive areas in Metchosin to complete Map 4 in our OCP at Sec. 2.3.9 in preparation for future development proposals.

ii. BioBlitz Species Data – Conservation Data Centre

The committee would like to submit the data which has been compiled by various groups over the years to the Conservation Data Centre's (CDC) Sensitive Ecosystems Inventory (SEI). The SEI could then be used in support of section 2.3.9 or the OCP.

The SEI could be updated with Metchosin's BioDiversity project data but not in its present format. In future, funding or volunteer student hours may be needed to convert the existing manual records into a format that the CDC can process.

Anna suggests revisiting some of the data to make sure the areas are indeed sensitive. Garry stated that the data is an index of the species rather than the ecosystems and that not all of Metchosin was included in our data (the SEI does cover most all of Metchosin). Anna suggested

a Geographic Information System (GIS) project defining different data layers similar to CRD mapping. Garry has a contact at UVic who may be able to advise us about next steps. Other sources of data include iNaturalist and the environmental assessments compiled during development applications. Anna emphasized the high value of this community knowledge. This data would be of particular importance when considering new development permits and during some bylaw investigations.

**Action Items:**

- Steve to check with District office re possible floppy disc in storage with the data on it
- Garry will talk with Ken Josephson at UVic Geography for his thoughts
- Steve to ask Andy if there is a straightforward way to move the iNaturalist data over to the CDC (perhaps they already have it?)
- Steve to ask that all QEP reports be made available for confidential data extraction to support sensitive ecosystem identification
- Ric will work to digitize the data himself in the meantime (Apple or Android phone, AI?)

**b) MEASC Internal Performance Review and Terms of Reference**

There have been discussions at Council about changing the District committee structure. The current volume of Council, Standing Committee and Advisory Select Committee meetings creates a heavy workload for office staff and leaves little time for attending to the directions of Council in terms of bylaw changes, staff reports and more.

It has been proposed that there be an amalgamation of all the current Standing Committees into a Committee of the Whole that would have one agenda for all the committees combined. The structure at the Advisory Select Committee level would remain intact but may meet less often. MEASC members reflected on our current Terms of Reference.

**c) Tax Exempt Properties**

**Action:** Steve will ask staff about including the maintenance of forest canopy as a criterion for tax exemption applications

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

Council has decided not proceed with revision of the pesticide by-law at this time.

**Action:** Ric will work on revisions to the policy

**7. Reports**

**a) Chair's Verbal Report**

None.

**b) Council Liaison Verbal Report**

Steve reported that staff have presented a draft budget showing a significant tax increase in part to cover increased policing and EComm costs passed on to Metchosin by other levels of government.

Our Planner has completed an Interim Housing Needs Study (IHNS) based on criteria set by the provincial government. It indicates that Metchosin should be zoned to accommodate an additional 852 dwellings by 2041. While work is now underway to confirm our existing capacity for growth under our current zoning, it appears that there is adequate capacity now to address the IHNS numbers. The OCP will need to be updated with these numbers next year. It may be important for MEASC to join the conversation on any OCP amendments to hold up our community environmental values.

Information was given about the Gull Survey. The public is asked to report any sightings of colour-banded gulls

Steve reported with regard to the storm water retention plan for the Centre Mountain development that the location of the detention pond may move to Langford property.

## 8. Correspondence

The Cougar Predation Response from Minister George Heyman Dated September 13, 2024 to Mayor and Council was received for information.

## 9. Other Business

### a) 2013 Shoreline Protection Plan

- i. Metchosin Shoreline Report 2013
- ii. BC Coastal Marine Strategy

### b) 2007 Green and Blue Spaces Strategy

It was proposed that rather than revising and updating the MEASC 2013 Shoreline Report and the 2007 Green and Blue Spaces Strategy documents, these be used as foundational documents for a Biodiversity and Natural Assets Plan. Both documents remain relevant and applicable today. This exercise may also show where further investigation is needed. MEASC members will start looking at how this effort might be accomplished in collaboration with community groups.

### c) Managing Invasive Himalayan Blackberry on District Grounds

Concern has been expressed that herbicides (i.e., Garlon) not be used for the management of Himalayan Blackberry on District property.

The Committee reviewed several information sheets from the Invasive Species Council for Metro Vancouver. Recommended approaches to controlling Himalayan Blackberry include prevention, manual cutting and digging or mechanical mowing. Chemical treatments are only considered when alternative measures have proved unsuccessful.

Presently, herbicides are used by the CRD and the District for control of black knapweed and poison hemlock. Herbicide treatment is also used to manage holly and European ash.

**Moved and Seconded** by Steve and Merrilee that Metchosin should follow regional best management practices for invasive species on a species by species basis

**Carried**

**Moved and Seconded** by Steve and Merrilee that Council ask MEASC to advise the District on invasive best management practices and pesticide use as issues arise.

**Carried**

**Action:** Steve will confer with the Capital Region Invasives Species Partnership (CRISP).

**d) Stan A. Orchard, Metchosin Bullfrog Management Project Results for 2024**

The committee members reviewed the report. There was a question about whether all reports to Stan are followed up. It was determined that there were some delays last season. Council has adopted all of Mr. Orchard's recommendations for ongoing bullfrog management.

**e) Spongy Moth Spraying Program**

Discussion about this is held over until the next meeting.

**f) Climate Action Plan – 2024 Update**

The Zero Carbon Step Code for new buildings was adopted by Council.

Merrilee reported on her attendance at the Regenerate BC Climate Chat on November 7, 2024 and Zoom meeting on November 14, 2024 where the CRD Climate Projections 2024 Report was presented by representatives of the Pacific Climate Impacts Consortium at UVic, the authors of the report. Steve has shared links with Council and CAO.

**Action:** Steve will work with Council to compile another update for the Climate Action Plan

**g) 2025 AVICC Deadline for Resolutions – February 6, 2025**

For information only.

**10. Adjournment and Next Meeting**

**Moved and Seconded** by Erin and Anna that the Committee adjourn the meeting at 9:03 p.m.

**Carried**

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, December 18, 2024 at 7:00 p.m.