

District of Metchosin
Minutes
Environmental Advisory Select Committee Meeting
Tuesday, June 24, 2025 at 7:00 P.M.
Council Chamber
Metchosin Municipal Hall

Present: Bill Cave, Garry Fletcher (Chair), Councillor Steve Gray (Council Liaison), Anna Hall, Merrilee Hoen (recorder), Andy MacKinnon, Ric Perron

Regrets: Erin Van de Water

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

1. Agenda, Additions, Approval:

Two items were added to Business Arising from the Minutes: 6 d (Sensitive Environment Mapping) and 6 e (How community groups can connect with UVic students).

Moved and Seconded by Steve and Andy
THAT the Committee approve the Agenda as amended.

Carried

2. Presentations

None

3. Public Participation

None.

4. Adoption of Minutes

Moved and Seconded by Garry and Anna
THAT the Committee approve the minutes of the Environmental Advisory Select Committee meeting held on May 27, 2025.

Carried

5. Review of Minutes

Moved and Seconded by Ric and Merrilee
THAT the Committee receive the Minutes of the Parks & Trails Advisory Select Committee, May 20, 2025, for information.

Carried

Moved and Seconded by Merrilee and Andy
THAT Councillor Steve Gray follow up with the Approving Officer to determine how and whether MEASC recommendations re: Beckingham Subdivision were incorporated.

Carried

6. Business Arising from the Minutes

a) Race Rocks Ecological Reserve Update

Metchosin could request that Race Rocks be added to Metchosin. This would require approval from the Minister of Municipalities, consultation with First Nations, and a Referendum. Steve will continue to investigate.

b) Draft Invasive Species on Municipal Land and Roadsides Update

Steve provided an update on the development of Metchosin's invasive species management policy. Councillor Shukin had developed a draft new policy after receiving input from various stakeholders (including MEASC). There were concerns about the potential unintended consequences of changing the current approach, which involves working with CRISP and CRD professionals. MISC has requested more consultation on the proposed policy

Changes to CRISP's priority invasive species list are being considered. The word "priority" is being removed to emphasize the importance of targeting all invasive species for removal.

Council has asked the CAO to investigate options under the Weed Act for dealing with gorse and other noxious weeds on private land.

Please put this item on the agenda for our next MEASC meeting for an update.

c) MEASC Meeting with Western Canada Marine Response Corporation

This is being set up now – likely for 2nd or 3rd week in July. Stay tuned.

d) Sensitive Environment Mapping

Andy discussed the importance of protecting sensitive environments in the OCP Bylaw, highlighting the need for an updated inventory of sensitive environments, including native species, rare plants, and riparian areas. He noted that Map 4, Sensitive Environments, has not been updated since 1995 and lacks clarity in its categories and legends. Andy suggested creating a new version of Map 4 using data from the Conservation Data Centre and Capital Regional District, including threatened species and ecosystems, wetlands, and riparian areas. He proposed contacting these organizations to determine the most appropriate databases for mapping these categories.

MEASC discussed refining categories for a new map and sought Council's blessing before proceeding. They questioned the accuracy of the community water supply area on the map and considered consulting CRD Water Commission. The conversation touched on the importance of ephemeral wetlands and their potential impact on well water, suggesting these areas may need re-evaluation given climate change and population growth. They also discussed the need to consult wetland specialists and consider ecosystem services in their mapping efforts.

Moved and Seconded by Anna and Andy

THAT Steve & Andy prepare materials for Steve to bring to Committee of the Whole.

Carried

e) How community groups can connect with UVic students

Merilee has written the article and submitted it to the Muse.

7. Reports

a) Chair's Verbal Report:

MEASC won't meet over the summer, except at the call of the Chair.

b) Council Liaison Verbal Report:

MEASC's Council Liaison Councillor Steve Gray updated us on several Council initiatives of potential interest to MEASC members.

Steve has been talking to former Colwood planner Iain Bourhill, to learn about Colwood's shoreline planning experiences that could be relevant to Metchosin. Steve will invite Iain to give a presentation to MEASC.

Metchosin Council has endorsed a proposal to build a new fire hall on a large community field, with a preliminary cost estimate exceeding current available reserves. Concerns have been raised about the process, noting that a smaller subcommittee recommended the endorsed option and removal of land from the ALR without full Fire Hall Steering Committee approval, and about whether the proposed facility would exceed our community's needs. Steve highlighted potential issues with debt and the loss of valuable green space.

Recent housing needs assessment report that Metchosin has the capacity for 852 new dwellings over the next two decades, leading to planned updates to the OCP and Land Use Bylaw by the end of December. Council's Committee of the Whole received a draft survey on housing policies and recommended gathering more detailed feedback on concerns rather than just binary (support/don't support) responses. MEASC members emphasized the importance of considering ecological impacts, such as biodiversity and dark sky preservation, and highlighted issues like transportation infrastructure and healthcare capacity. One point of discussion at COW was matching rules for housing for agricultural workers to those of the Agricultural Land Commission, and/or exploring strategies for accommodating farm workers in the community without creating additional dwellings.

MEASC will have a table at Metchosin Community Day.

8. Correspondence: none

9. Other Business

a) Proposed 10-lot Subdivision, 3816 Duke Road

MEASC members discussed the proposed subdivision on Duke Road (10 lots on approximately 10 acres). The area contains significant trees and a possibly seasonal creek; there are no agriculture land designations. Will there be some sort of park dedication as a component of the subdivision?

We should organize a MEASC site visit.

Moved and Seconded by Ric and Bill

THAT Steve work with Staff to set up a MEASC visit to the proposed Duke Road subdivision.

10. Adjournment and Next Meeting Date

Moved and Seconded by Ric and Anna that the Committee adjourn the meeting at 8:40 p.m.

Carried

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, September 23, 2025, at 7:00 p.m.