

District of Metchosin

Minutes

Environmental Advisory Select Committee Meeting

Tuesday, 24 September 2024 at 7:00 p.m.

Council Chamber

Metchosin Municipal Hall

Present: Councillor Steve Gray, Andy MacKinnon, Bill Cave, Merrilee Hoen (recorder), Garry Fletcher (Chair), Anna Hall, Erin Van de Water

Regrets: Ric Perron

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m.

1. Agenda, Additions and Approval

Moved and Seconded by Andy and Bill that the Committee approve the agenda as presented.

Carried

2. Presentations

None.

3. Public Participation

None.

4. Adoption of Minutes

a) Environmental Advisory Select Committee, May 28, 2024

Moved and Seconded by Steve and Anna that the Committee adopt the minutes of the Environmental Advisory Select Committee meeting held May 28, 2024.

Carried

5. Receipt of Minutes

a) Environment and Natural Areas Committee, June 10, 2024

Moved and Seconded by Erin and Andy that the Committee receive the minutes of the Environment and Natural Areas Committee meeting held June 10, 2024.

Carried

b) Parks & Trails Advisory Select Committee Meetings, May 29, June 26, July 16, August 7, 2024

Moved and Seconded by Erin and Andy that the Committee receive the minutes of the Parks & Trails Advisory Select Committee meetings held May 29, June 26, July 16, and August 7, 2024.

Carried

6. Business Arising from the Minutes

a) Beckingham Subdivision Referral

MEASC has submitted its referral to the CAO who is also the Approving Officer for this project. The response from Al Herle, District engineer (now retired) was that he believed the developers would need to change their plan if provincial government recommendations were followed to minimize development impact on wetland functioning and he asked for a map showing the boundaries of the wetland protection area. This was done and we have not had any further response.

Examination of OCP section 2.3 indicates that Council has responsibility for the sensitive area indicated on Map 4 and other sensitive areas not specifically shown on that map. Riparian areas are of particular concern. The Beckingham proposal would have a considerable impact on a wetland. Provincial experts have indicated that improvements to the plan can be made to reduce impact of the development on wetland function. Various provisions of OCP 2.3 indicate Council's general responsibility and encourage the Approving Officer to require developers to maintain the proper functioning condition of riparian-wetlands and protection of sensitive areas. Also, an inventory of sensitive areas must be updated on an annual basis or as required.

MEASC is investigating how the inventory of sensitive areas might be updated as indicated by OCP 2.3 but also as preparation for future development applications. Some suggestions were to contact the Conservation Data Centre for guidance and consult with Deborah Curran (UVic) to clarify some points of Environmental Law.

Moved and Seconded by Steve and Andy that the Committee explore ways to fulfill the requirements of the OCP section 2.3.9 referring to Sensitive Environments in Metchosin.

Carried

Action Item for staff: Add this item to our October agenda.

Action item for Steve: Bring OCP section 2.3 to the attention of the CAO.

Action item for Andy, Anna and Steve: investigate linking the BioBlitz species data to the Conservation Data Centre's list of Endangered and Threatened species. Investigate defining habitat requirements for those species to for reference when considering future development applications.

b) 2013 Shoreline Protection Plan

Steve is arranging a follow-up meeting to take place soon with Colwood to discuss what they have done to protect shoreline. We also want to ask Habitat Acquisition Trust about the educational activities relating to shoreline protection as part of their landowner contact programs.

It was noted that Chief Dunlop intends to make a shoreline spill response plan which is separate from the federal ocean spill response plan and will include an evacuation plan.

Action item staff: Attach the 2013 Shoreline Protection Plan to the October agenda. Steve will supply a link to the BC Coastal Marine Strategy which should also be included in the next agenda.

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

We are investigating how to convert our paper-based data into a form which can be added to the CDC's digital dataset. We will be contacting them about this, and the topics discussed in item 6.a.

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

Council has asked MEASC to advise about expanding our Pesticide and Herbicide policy. Colwood has recently updated their bylaw, and we have gathered a number of documents for study. We also have made note of Montreal's golf course pesticide ban. We believe, based on others' experience and the Green Bylaws Toolkit, a good approach is to say, in effect, "In our municipality – it is prohibited to use pesticides except for the following." e.g., to control invasive species where there are specific reasons to do so.

Action item: Steve will take all the information collected to the Planner for guidance.

Action item for staff: Add this item to the October agenda.

e) Tax Exempt Properties

If additional criteria are implemented for organizations to maintain their tax-exempt status, MEASC would recommend such things as the maintenance of the forest where applicable.

f) Spongy Moth Spraying Program

This year's spraying has already taken place although we don't believe Metchosin was included. Activities such as overhead spraying will be considered during the redrafting of the pesticide policy (item 6.d).

7. Reports

a) Chair's Verbal Report

The chair was pleased with the MEASC members' participation and the public response to our display at Metchosin Community Day and hopes that we can have a bigger tent next year. The "straw poll" was popular, and we should consider making one with more topics next year.

b) Council Liaison Verbal Report

The Building Step Code will be adopted soon. We expect that two new EV pay chargers will be installed in Metchosin by the end of the year. The Agriculture Plan was approved at the last meeting of the Finance Committee. The biosolids and predator letters have been sent. Steve will continue to forward information to us concerning potential invasive species. An inquiry has been made about installing a bat box on Blaney Trail Park. HAT could provide the materials and advise about siting. Tax increases are expected in response to initiatives being implemented by organizations outside our community such as the ECOM system.

8. Correspondence

The following correspondence was received for information.

- a) District of Metchosin letter to the Hon. Pam Alexis, Minister of Agriculture and Food and the Hon. George Heyman, Minister of Environment and Climate Change Strategy, Cougar Predation on Sheep in Metchosin
- b) District of Metchosin letter to the Capital Regional District, Long-Term Biosolids Management Strategy

9. Other Business

a) MEASC Internal Performance Review

There may be a reduction in the number of committee meetings during the year to reduce the workload on staff surrounding preparation of agendas and the receipt of minutes. At the October meeting, we will discuss if there are any changes we would like to make to the Terms of Reference. We would especially like to maintain a two-way communication with Council to respond to their initiatives and bring forward some of our own.

10. Adjournment and Next Meeting

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

Carried

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, 22 October 22, 2024 at 7:00 p.m. unless an arrangement can be made to change the meeting to the October 29, 2024 to accommodate the availability of the Chair.