

Municipality of North Cowichan Environmental Advisory Committee MINUTES

June 27, 2023, 1:30 p.m.

Large Committee Room

Members Present Councillor Mike Caljouw, Chair
Cam Campbell
Carolyn Drugge
Dianne Hinkley
Dr. Jana Kotaska
Sandra McPherson
William Valentine

Staff Present David Conway, Director, Subdivision and Environmental Services
Heather Power, Legislative Coordinator
Jennifer Aldcroft, Climate Change Specialist
Dave Preikshot, Senior Environmental Specialist

1. CALL TO ORDER

There being a quorum present, the Chair called the meeting to order at 1:32 p.m.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT the Committee add the following items to New Business:

(1) 5.1 August Agenda Review

(2) 5.2 Dr. Shannon Waters Presentation on Natural Gas

CARRIED

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT the agenda be adopted as amended.

CARRIED

3. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

That the Committee adopt the minutes of the meeting held May 23, 2023.

CARRIED

4. BUSINESS

4.1 Progress Report on North Cowichan Biodiversity Assessment

Dave Preikshot, Senior Environmental Specialist and Mike Coulthard, consultant from Diamond Head, gave presentations on the Draft Biodiversity Assessment Report and answered questions from the Committee. Staff captured feedback.

June 27, 2023 Environmental Advisory Committee Minutes

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT the Committee extend the meeting to 4:00 p.m. CARRIED

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT the Committee take a 10-minute break. CARRIED

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT the Committee extend the meeting to 4:30 p.m. CARRIED

Dianne Hinkley left the meeting at 3:58 p.m.

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT Council endorse the following comments and suggestions from the Environmental Advisory Committee to be forwarded to Diamond Head Consulting in relation to the June 2023 – Draft Biodiversity Assessment Report for consideration in the preparation of the actions and policies document:

- (1) Enhance and emphasize relationships and connectivity to other and adjacent jurisdictions managing biodiversity in North Cowichan and identification of actions underway by other jurisdictional partners (for example, the Ministry of Agriculture for agricultural lands).
- (2) Clarify agricultural types and areas (ie, grassland, crop land) and definition of biodiversity types within different agricultural jurisdictions and activities.
- (3) Consider importance of protection and clarity of restoration terminology when considering areas of lower biodiversity ranking, for policy development consideration in areas with potentially higher historical biodiversity rankings.
- (4) Include missing biodiversity threats of forest conversion to agricultural land, loss of forested land for groundwater retention, water pollution, industrial and infrastructure uses.
- (5) Provide indication of what kind of ecosystem is predicted in 2040 with climate changes or large disturbances (section 8.2).
- (6) Develop plain language summaries at each phase of the report development to capture what was learned for public communication.
- (7) Use alternate language to green infrastructure network such as habitat network.
- (8) Provide habitat networks between Somenos to Mount Prevost, Somenos to Maple Mountain, and south of highway 18.
- (9) Use First Nations individual names when referring to indigenous population.
- (10) Change language in section 8.3 to clarify that indigenous practices were stopped.
- (11) Add area of Coastal Douglas Fir with and without forest cover. CARRIED

4.2 Environmental Programs

Jennifer Aldcroft gave an update on North Cowichan’s participation in the Circular Economy Accelerator Program hosted by the Vancouver Island Coast Economic Developers Association and Synergy Foundation.

5. NEW BUSINESS

5.1 August Meeting Agenda

The Committee discussed whether to cancel or proceed with the August meeting as scheduled, with an agenda that includes Council’s solar energy referral.

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED

THAT the Environmental Advisory Committee meeting, scheduled on August 22, 2023 continue and include an item on Solar Energy. CARRIED

5.2 Dr. Shannon Waters Presentation on Natural Gas

Receiving a presentation on the health impacts of natural gas was briefly discussed.

The Committee discussed whether to invite a presentation at an upcoming EAC meeting by Dr. Shannon Waters on the health impacts of natural gas. Staff advised that a delegation to Council would be the best route for this item to come to Committee.

6. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting ended at 4:29 p.m.

Certified by Recording Secretary

Signed by Chair;