



City of Surrey

Environmental Advisory Committee

Minutes

Executive Boardroom
City Hall
14245 - 56 Avenue
Surrey, B.C.
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 16, 2008
Time: 6:42 p.m.
File: 0540-20

Present:

B. Stilwell - Chair
Councillor Bose
M. Deo
C. Dragomir
M. Harcourt
H. Locke
D. Maher
G. Sangha
A. Schulze
W. Stewart

Absent:

K. Keshvani
S. VanKeulen

Staff Present:

C. Baron, Drainage & Environment Manager
J. McLeod, Manager, Long Range Planning and
Policy Development
D. Luymes, Policy Planning Manager, Planning
& Development
L. Anderson, Legislative Services

A. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

It was

Moved by Councillor Bose

Seconded by C. Dragomir

That the minutes of the Environmental Advisory

Committee meeting of February 20, 2008 be adopted.

Carried

B. DELEGATIONS

C. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

1. Employment Land Strategy and Metro Vancouver Regional Growth Strategy

At the January 16, 2008 EAC meeting, the Committee suggested that discussion around the metro planning exercises and some background on the regional planning would be beneficial.

At the February 20, 2008 EAC meeting it was noted that J. McLeod, Manager, Long Range Planning and Policy Development had been invited to the next EAC meeting to provide the Committee with information on the Employment Land Strategy and a review of the Regional Plan and any potential involvement in this regard for the EAC.

As information to this presentation, a copy of Corporate Report R028, as received by Council on February 25, 2008, was provided.

J. McLeod provided a PowerPoint presentation overview of what the Region is proposing and Council's response. Comments were as follows:

- All regions in the province are required to have a Growth Management Strategy.
- The current Liveable Region Strategic Plan (LRSP), adopted in 1996, is based on four pillars:
 - Protect the Green Zone
 - Build Complete Communities
 - Achieve a Compact Metropolitan Region
 - Increase Transportation Choice
- In November 2007, the discussion document "*Choosing a Sustainable Future for Metro Vancouver – Options for Metro Vancouver's Growth Management Strategy*" (the "Options Paper") was issued as part of the public consultation process in developing a new Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) for Metro Vancouver to replace the LRSP and to initiate dialogue on the directions for the RGS.
- A lengthy consultation period was given during which Surrey has held two meetings.
- The updated RGS will build on the four pillars of the LRSP with reference to housing supply and affordability, strong, diverse regional economy and ecological values.
- The Options Paper is based on a 25 year plan to 2031 to accommodate the assumptions of 820,000 more people, 420,000 new dwellings and 400,000 more jobs, at which time Surrey/Delta/White Rock will have a population of 766,600 (25.2% of the regional population) and 324,000 jobs (20.8% of regional jobs).
- The Vision:
"Metro Vancouver will be a liveable and sustainable region... of well-designed, connected and diverse communities where people of all ages, incomes and origins can live, work and play in safety and comfort. The conservation of land, water and energy resources will drive regional decision-making. Valuable farmland and natural areas will be protected and enhanced. An affordable and efficient transportation system will support economic prosperity, healthy living and community well-being."
- There are five goals and a choice of 11 strategies.
- A major theme of the Options Paper is governance, and for each of the 11 strategies the public is asked whether the RGS should contain:
 - A. broad policy goals; or
 - B. general guidelines and objectives; or
 - C. regulations and specific targets.
- The City of Surrey is opposed to the RGS being overly prescriptive and Metro Vancouver becoming another regulatory agency with respect to local land use decisions.
- There is concern the Options Paper does not capture a significant issue driving land use decision – municipal finances. Which has:
 - lead core municipalities to permit conversion of industrial land to higher-value uses,
 - placed pressure on ALR for back-up and transshipment industrial uses related to port, and

- penalized municipalities that protect ALR and lower intensity industrial lands.
- Council were concerned that Surrey city centre did not have the predominance that it should have.
- The following options that provide general policy guidance, rather than regulation or prescription were selected for each Goal/Strategy:

GOAL 1: A sustainable, compact metropolitan structure.

Strategy 1: Focus growth in centres and along transit corridors.

- b) Map centres and corridors, set guidelines on types of uses encouraged in centres and corridors.

Strategy 2: Establish defined areas for urban growth.

- b) Designate an urban area and green zone similar to the current plan to act as a boundary for urban growth.

GOAL 2: Diverse and affordable housing choices.

Strategy 3: Increase housing supply and diversity, including the supply of housing for low and moderate income households.

- b) Establish targets by sub-region. Require municipalities to prepare Housing Action Plans to identify objectives and actions.

GOAL 3: A strong, diverse regional economy.

Strategy 4: Maintain an adequate supply of industrial lands to meet the needs of the regional economy.

- b) Identify significant industrial lands on a map and state their importance.

Strategy 5: Facilitate the location of major retail, office and entertainment activities in centre locations to enhance access for workers/customers and build prosperous, attractive centres in every sub region.

- b) Designate centres and other strategic economic growth areas. Develop policies and guidelines to set development expectations including commercial and residential density objectives.

Strategy 6: Maintain the agricultural land base for food production through supportive land use and development policies.

- b) Provide a regional agricultural land designation to reinforce the ALR.

GOAL 4: Protect and enhance the region's natural assets.

Strategy 7: Ensure the long-term protection of critical habitat areas, drinking watersheds, riparian areas, parks, recreation corridors, forests and agricultural lands.

- a) Designate a Green Zone in the RGS and provide general guidance to municipalities on what areas should be included.

Strategy 8: Ensure the protection and enhancement of ecological and recreational connectivity across the region.

- a) State general goals and provide high level guidance for integrating ecological values into land development processes and for the provision of regional ecological and recreational corridors.

GOAL 5: A sustainable regional transportation system.

Strategy 9: Increase transit supply throughout the region and promote walking and cycling.

- b) Identify a frequent transit network for the region and set targets for increased transit trips in the RGS.

Strategy 10: Advance a regional network of roads and highways that prioritize goods movement, transit operations and high-occupancy vehicles.

- c) Identify a regional roads and highways network on a regional map and identify specific road management principles.

Strategy 11: Manage transportation demand.

- a) State general goals on managing transportation demand. (TransLink would design DTM programs to achieve regional goals).
- Vancouver has redeveloped its old industrial lands and now have very little options or opportunities to re-establish industrial land; to service Vancouver's population, warehouse space is needed. They are looking at making outlying communities take up the industrial land needs.
 - The objective of having a more balanced labour force in Surrey will require a share of industrial land and jobs.
 - The RGS is very much looking at the centre locations to enhance access for workers/customers and to build prosperous attractive centres in every sub region.
 - Council was comfortable with designated centres and other strategic economic growth areas.
 - There is, underlying all of this, the concern that Metro Vancouver will become a planner for the municipalities. These plans are in lieu of what was once a very regulatory scheme. Housing is a good example, people are beginning to understand the value of solving the housing issue locally within each municipality.
 - It is important to think through the strategies and determine what each municipality can do for itself as opposed to the region dictating.
 - The following items were noted as missing from the Options Paper:
 - o Climate change: little discussion or responses to significant issues like increased local flood risks, rising sea level and salinity issues, increased interface fire risk, etc.;
 - o With the exception of housing, there are no socio-cultural goals. No discussion of significant demographic and cultural changes, such as an aging population, public health issues, cultural diversity and immigration trends, immigrant settlement issues etc.; and
 - o There is little mention of other important regional plans and initiatives such as the Liquid Waste Management Plan, Solid Waste Management, regional air quality programs, etc.
 - Actions and next steps:
 - o Council approved Corporate Report R028 and forwarded comments to Metro Vancouver.
 - o Council met with Regional staff to discuss Surrey-specific issues.
 - o Metro Vancouver staff are preparing a draft RGS document for the Regional Board to endorse for the next round of consultation.

- Once the draft RGS document is available for consultation, time should be taken by the Committee to review it thoroughly.

Further information can be found on the Metro Vancouver website publication: “Choosing a Sustainable Future”.

<http://www.gvrd.bc.ca/growth/pdfs/RGSChoosingASustainableFuture-ppt.pdf>

D. NEW BUSINESS

E. ITEMS REFERRED BY COUNCIL

1. Ecosystem Management Study (EMS)

At the March 31, 2008 Regular Council Public Hearing meeting, Corporate Report No. R053, “Update of Environmental Inventory for the Official Community Plan Review”, was received by Council as information and referred to the EAC for comments. Don Luymes, Policy Planning Manager, Planning & Development Department, was in attendance to provide the PowerPoint presentation given to Council and to review any questions and comments the Committee may have. Comments were as follows:

- The City is updating the previous environmentally sensitive area (ESA) work:
 - o to make it consistent with the draft Sustainability Charter;
 - o to adapt to Urban Development changes in Surrey since the 1990 ESA Study; and
 - o to assist in the OCP major review required in 2008-2009 (OCP must identify areas where land uses are restricted by hazardous or environmentally sensitive conditions).
- The Current ESA was developed based on:
 - o the 1990 Study entitled “Finding the Balance”;
 - o a “high”, “medium” & “low” rating system; and
 - o linkage to the database with management recommendations.
- ESA’s have a real value as they:
 - o have guided parkland acquisition decisions;
 - o been the base for various City plans i.e. Parks Natural Area Management Plan;
 - o used to manage parkland to enhance habitat values; and
 - o are referenced in the land development process and NCP process.
- ESAs are one of the City’s many environmental initiatives.
- ESAs were considered cutting edge in 1990 but now more contemporary focus on biodiversity not just the preservation of landscaped features.
- “Ecosystem Management Approach” offers a more holistic approach to protecting biodiversity or “ecosystem function”.

- Whistler's Protected System Area Management Plan is an example of an ecosystem approach.
- ESAs are familiar to use, simple and concise, however the ratings can be misunderstood by land owners and the public. They also only focus on protecting environmental features no processes.
- Ecosystem approach is less concise with fewer persons familiar with the approach however it recognizes all areas that contribute to overall biodiversity, avoids misunderstandings and focuses on what is required to maintain biodiversity as opposed to landscaped features.
- Ecosystem Management study objectives were:
 - o to conduct and map an updated City-wide ecological inventory and assessment;
 - o classify and map "ecosystem management areas"; and
 - o to develop a set of ecological indicators and measures.
- Study components consist of:
 - o synthesis of existing information;
 - o inventory (air photo interpretation & field work);
 - o mapping of key elements;
 - o defining and mapping EMAs;
 - o to define criteria for candidate restoration areas; and
 - o develop indicators and monitoring programs.
- Study process consists of:
 - o Stage 1 Ecological Inventory – Spring/summer 2008.
 - o Stage 2 Ecological Assessment with public consultation Summer/fall 2008.
 - o Stage 3 Define Management Areas – winter 2008/2009.
- Next steps include:
 - o Corporate Report and Terms of Reference for Council's approval (March 2008);
 - o Request for Proposals – retain consultant (March/April 2008);
 - o undertake study (spring 2008- winter 2009);
 - o present study to council (January 2009); and
 - o Study findings folded into OCP Review (2009).
- C. Baron is to keep EAC advised as the Study progresses and bring forward relevant dates and issues when appropriate.
- The study is being done with parks, engineering and planning staff. Looking at using the Boundary Bay Habitat atlas as there is a lot of good material outside this area.
- The original Baseline ESA studies are to be used to ensure longevity of the new study so that important landscaped features such as the bluff areas are not overlooked.

Discussion ensued regarding indicators and biodiversity and the impact of pesticides on our natural environment. Invasive species presence could be another indicator in parks, to determine if the City's management of those riparian areas is working or not.

F. INFORMATION ITEMS**1. Metro Vancouver – Strategy for Updating the Solid Waste & Liquid Waste Management Plans**

Metro Vancouver discussion documents “Strategy for Updating Liquid Waste Management Plan – January 2008” and “Strategy for Updating the Solid Waste Management Plan – February 2008 (Revised March 15, 2008)”, together with a list of the upcoming public meetings pertaining to these issues, were provided for information to the EAC.

C. Baron briefly reviewed the documents, noting the cost concerns, the huge bills that are expected and what this will mean regionally to the public. There is a request for public input for which the Committee was encouraged to review the documents further and to consider attending one of the upcoming public meetings.

G. OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS**1. Stokes Pit Guided Community Hike**

The EAC was invited to attend the Stokes Pit Guided Community Hike on March 30, 2008. EAC members in attendance for the hike provided an update as follows:

- Attendance was approximately 50.
- Some experts were there.
- Walked a fair distance, seeing a lot more of what has failed and discovering some of the things that have been put in to rebuild and make good of the damage done, which isn't working.
- The banks are caving into the ditch, the plants are not growing because it is dehydrated, the sun hits it because the trees aren't there.
- There are some places that are still alive; what is still in tact should be saved or whatever one can be done.
- The ditches don't look healthy, certainly fish will not live in that environment.
- Paving over more will not solve anything.

2. Sustainability Charter Workshop

The EAC was invited to attend a Sustainability Charter Workshop, relating to the Environmental Pillar of the Charter, on April 9, 2008. A. Schulze was in attendance and provided a brief update. Comments were as follows:

- The Mayor chaired the workshop, with an attendance of approximately 15.
- Impressed by the overall vision, priorities set and time established.
- Those in attendance perused the document and suggested the elimination of the lexical items such as “were practical to the extent possible”, “promote”, “strive to” and “should” and replaced them with “achieve”, “create” and “will”.

3. EAC 2008 Priority Items & Work Plan

At the February 20, 2008 EAC meeting, the 2008 Priority Items & Work Plan was reviewed. It was agreed that this item will be an ongoing agenda item as a guideline, for review and updates, for the Committee meetings for the ensuing year. The following was noted:

Item 3(a):

- *ISMPs* will be discussed at the May meeting. Delegation - R. Dubé, Drainage Planning Manager.
- *Large item pick up/Surrey Reuses* – delegation from R. Costanzo to be postponed until September.
- *Tree Bylaw & Habitat Preservation* – a review to be scheduled.

4. Semiahmoo Fish and Game Club Public Meeting – March 6, 2008

Information on the March 6, 2008 Semiahmoo Fish and Game Club public meeting was provided as follows:

- There was approximately 100 in attendance.
- The presentation commenced with comparative photographs of Stokes Pit and Latimer Lake, before and after Phase I of the Campbell Heights development.
- There were also photographs of the initial remediation work, which was judged by the presenters to be a failure.
- The fish hatchery experienced historically unusual levels of flooding, gravel deposition and silt-laden flows in late 2005 which it was thought to be attributed to Phase I of Campbell Heights. Subsequently, similar problems were experienced in 2006 which were traced to the High Point residential development in Langley Township.
- By the winter of 2006/2007 18 inches of excess gravel deposition had been recorded; over \$20,000 in the past 1 ½ years on streambank repairs (not including the volunteer labour) was spent.
- Statistics were given on numbers of live salmon returning to the area of the hatchery (2007 compared to 2001) which were discouraging as numbers for some species were down by almost 80%.
- Hatchery representatives expressed grave concern about the future of their operations – if numbers continue to decline, DOF may prohibit the hatchery from taking wild salmon from the river for brood stock.
- Broader issues concerning Phase I were discussed, including the lack of transit in the area, the lack of significant workforce resident nearby, limited sharing of information with the public, and the loss of recreational opportunities.
- Five problems identified with Phase I were listed:
 - o major habitat damage to a large watershed area;
 - o wildlife displaced;
 - o decline of water quality in the Little Campbell;
 - o water well problems being experienced on the Langley side of Phase I; and
 - o reduced salmon stocks.

- The meeting organizers presented four recommendations:
 1. Stop further development immediately (Phase II).
 2. Fix Phase I damage.
 3. Re-evaluate and re-draw (with public input) Phases II and III to reflect the real economic, environmental and recreational needs and desires of Surrey residents.
 4. “Leave it Natural, make it Recreational”.
- It was apparent from several attendees that notices of public meetings were far too restricted in geographical terms. The location of the development on the Surrey/Langley border compounded this problem.

The question of receipt of notices of public meetings and the limitations, especially in the rural areas was raised. It was noted that Surrey does not advertise directly or distribute public meeting information directly to the neighbouring municipalities, to which the Committee concurred, with regard to nature issues, that it would be beneficial for Surrey to remove the municipal boundaries for providing such public notification, and further, that the neighbouring municipalities be asked to provide same.

It was

Moved by Councillor Bose

Seconded by C. Dragomir

That the Environmental Advisory Committee

requests staff to provide a review of the public notification legislation and the policies that are applied in the City of Surrey. In particular, reference on how to mutually notify residents of neighbouring communities (e.g. rural properties).

Carried

5. Open House - Campbell Heights Phase II - April 22, 2008

The Committee was informed of the proposed open house being hosted by the Campbell Heights Development Corporation to be held on Tuesday April 22, 2008 at East Kensington Elementary School. This open house is required to inform the public of the Corporation's development intentions for Phase II.

H. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the EAC will be held on May 21, 2008 at 6:30 p.m. in the Executive Board Room.

I. ADJOURNMENT

It was

Moved by B. Stewart

Seconded by C. Dragomir

That the Environmental Advisory Committee

meeting do now adjourn.

Carried

The Environmental Advisory Committee adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

Margaret Jones, City Clerk

Bill Stilwell, Chair
Environmental Advisory Committee