

Present:

Mayor Locke, Chairperson
Councilor Bose, Vice-Chair
D. Jack
M. Lamont
K. Purton
S. Sajda
D. Smith

Absent:**Staff Present:**

S. Neuman, General Manager, Engineering
Y. Yohannes, Manager, Utilities
L. Townsend, Climate Program Lead
D. Merry, Manager, Parks Planning
N. Aven, Manager, Parks
J. Owen, Manager, District Energy
A. Sodha, Administrative Assistant

A. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA**1. Adoption of the Agenda**

It was Moved by D. Jack
Seconded by K. Purton
That the agenda of the Environment and
Climate Change Committee meeting of May 9, 2023, be adopted.
Carried

2. Adoption of April 4, 2023 Minutes

It was Moved by D. Smith
Seconded by K. Purton
That the minutes of the Environment and
Climate Change Committee meeting held on April 4, 2023, be adopted.
Carried

B. DELEGATIONS**1. Annie Kaps and Jaeger Mah, Representatives, Friends of Bear Creek**

Annie Kaps and Jaeger Mah provided a PowerPoint presentation regarding the restrictive use of the extension on 84th Avenue from 140th Street to King George Boulevard to walking and non-motorized traffic, highlighting the following points:

- The northern section of Bear Creek Park was gifted to Surrey in 1932 by the province. The importance of responsibility that comes with ownership of the park was expressed by the Friends of Bear Creek.
- The significance of the Southlands as an integral part of the park was emphasized, providing habitat for diverse flora and fauna, including Class A red-listed salmon.

- The Southlands were acquired for park purposes and were intended as a gift for future generations. However, the Friends of Bear Creek criticized a politically motivated decision to separate the Southlands from Bear Creek Park.
- Mr. Mah also mentioned the opposition of the parks manager in 2013 to the construction of two temples in the park, highlighting the potential devastation caused by decisions made by those who do not live in Surrey and are insensitive to the need for change.
- The importance of considering the well-being of children and involving them in discussions about the environment was stressed, citing the influential efforts of individuals like David Suzuki in protecting the park.
- Community collaboration was deemed crucial to preserve Bear Creek Park for future generations.
- Concerns about climate change impacts, such as heatwaves and forest fires, were raised, emphasizing the need for community action.
- Remedies to address historical destruction in the park were considered essential.
- The uniqueness of Bear Creek Park, offering an escape from city noise while being surrounded by urban areas, was highlighted.
- Despite being a small park, it is a biodiverse habitat of high value.
- The park plays a vital role in supporting biodiversity, providing a habitat for salmon and other species.
- The park is like a wildlife nursery, helps reduce flooding, and mitigates the impacts of climate change. Furthermore, it is accessible to everyone and supports the reconciliation of First Nations' traditional food sources.
- The southern part of the park used to be a dump but was closed in 1967, while the northern part was protected in 1973.
- Opposition to the proposed 84th connector road through the park has existed since 2000.
- Concerns were raised about the negative consequences of road construction, including the destruction of a greenbelt, increased pollution runoff, and the contribution to heat island effects.
- Additional concerns involved speeding and distracted drivers, as well as the impacts on mental and physical health.
- The presentation included various remedies to address these issues. The presenters proposed amending bylaws to include lands south of the 84th Connector as part of the public park land. It was also suggested to declassify the 84th connector from an arterial road to a local road and enforcing a speed limit of 30km/h through the park, implementing traffic calming measures near crossings and corners. Regular testing of pollution catchment tools and creeks for pollution runoff, particularly 6PPD, was recommended. Installing native trees and vegetation along King and Bear Creeks, as well as along the roadway, was also suggested.
- To maintain cleanliness, it is proposed to conduct bi-monthly garbage clean-ups in the park.
- The presenters emphasized the importance of the city adhering to its own biodiversity, conservation, and climate strategies.
- The reinstatement of the promise of \$850,000 for habitat damage remediation exclusively, rather than park trails, was requested.

- Additional measures were suggested, including exploring the cost of installing an innovative 'green wall' along the road for safety and noise reduction, as well as safe animal crossings in the park.
- Community involvement was deemed crucial in advocating for the protection of Bear Creek Park and exploring alternative solutions to the proposed road construction.

C. STAFF PRESENTATIONS

1. Bear Creek Park Improvements – Corporate Report R053

The Manager of Parks Planning, Research and Design provided a PowerPoint presentation providing an overview of the Bear Creek Park Improvements and highlighted the following information:

- The proposed improvements and additions to Bear Creek Park include various aspects such as the park's amenities, trail network expansion, natural restoration, and the construction of a boardwalk.
- The park currently has multiple playgrounds, a dog off-leash area, an arts centre, and a new stadium that is on track for completion.
- The athletic center project is expected to be completed soon, featuring a 2200-seat stadium, change rooms, public washrooms, and a public plaza.
- The trail network expansion aims to connect existing trails and fill in gaps in the park. The proposed trails would be a combination of gravel paths, boardwalks, and bridges across the creek. The additions would allow visitors to access different sections of the park more easily.
- The boardwalk construction is specifically designed for areas with wet ground cover. It helps with water drainage and provides a pleasant experience for park visitors. The boardwalk also serves the purpose of guiding people toward designated trails.
- Natural restoration efforts focus on replanting areas under BC Hydro lines and riparian areas to enhance biodiversity and habitat.
- Examples of plant species that could be used in restoration efforts were provided.
- Wildlife mitigation fencing could be considered to guide animals toward designated crossings, reducing road mortality.
- In terms of construction materials, the use of ground screws instead of traditional footings and concrete reduces the environmental impact and allows water and critters to flow through.

In response to questions from the Committee, staff provided the following information:

- Specific details regarding trail alignment, tree planting, and other aspects would be refined in future stages.
- The proposed plan aims to connect the area south of 83 Avenue to the two sides of the park that were land north of 84 Avenue, potentially through a boardwalk connection.

- Efforts would be made to create a sense of separation from traffic along the proposed route.
- The wetland previously proposed was not included.
- Construction material for the road was managed onsite, with proper offsite waste disposal of excavated land fill material.
- Future development related to the Bear Creek connector, between King George and 140 street, is not required with 94 Ave now constructed.
- There are design considerations about the possibility of a four-lane expansion.
- The current road design is for two lanes, and fitting a four-lane cross section would be challenging, especially due to the protected northern boundary of the park.
- The bridge structure is designed to accommodate four lanes, but the rest of the road may not be suitable.
- Approval from the province would be required for any major changes to the road north of the 84 Avenue boundary.

2. Climate Change Action Strategy

The Climate Program Lead provided a PowerPoint presentation on the updated Climate Change Action Strategy and highlighted the following information:

- The presentation highlights the urgency of climate change and its impacts, such as wildfires and flooding.
- The strategy aims to reduce community-wide emissions to net zero and corporate emissions to absolute zero by 2050.
- The strategy focuses on six guiding principles, including carbon resilience and maximizing overall benefits.
- The strategy is organized into six components: bold city leadership, carbon-neutral buildings, 15-minute neighborhoods, zero-carbon transportation, zero-carbon energy, and sustainable ecosystems.
- Quick-start actions are proposed within three years to initiate changes.
- The need for extensive tree planting and preservation of green areas to mitigate carbon emissions is discussed.
- The importance of living green roofs and walls in buildings is emphasized.
- The final report will be presented to the council for consideration, followed by communication, implementation, and an inclusion strategy.

In response to questions from the Committee, staff provided the following information:

- There is limited jurisdiction due to the Building Act, which restricts the city's authority to require green roofs and other building requirements.
- Staff are exploring options to encourage green roofs and other sustainable building practices within the legal boundaries.
- Emissions must be reduced in addition to tree planting as a strategy to address the climate crisis.
- The climate crisis is an urgent matter requiring swift action.
- the city's declaration of a climate emergency was highlighted and the commitment to taking action.

- When comparing Surrey's progress to other cities in the region, such as Coquitlam, the need for improvement is recognized.
- The 5 step code and other accelerated zero-carbon initiatives should be considered.
- Incentivizing sustainable building practices through financial incentives or tax breaks should be considered.
- Urban Biodiversity Design Guidelines should be considered for city projects.
- Recognizing the challenges of managing population growth, there is a need to address transportation and emissions accordingly.
- The climate strategy is not fixed and can be updated with new targets and actions based on evolving science.
- The provincial government's introduction of the zero carbon step code, allows for greenhouse gas emission restrictions in new construction.
- Density bonuses and incentives for developers who incorporate zero emission building practices should be considered.
- Funding opportunities from philanthropic organizations for biodiversity and environmental projects should be explored.

D. ITEMS REFERRED BY COUNCIL

1. Bear Creek Park Improvements – Corporate Report R053

File:6120-01

A copy of Corporate Report R053 was circulated for information.

There was a request to consult with the Friends of Bear Creek and establish a subcommittee or hold a meeting to discuss the vision and next steps. The idea is to gather more information, including costs of trails and investments in plants, and provide more substance to the design. The option to consider this under Roundtable or with Item D.1 was also mentioned.

It was

Moved by S. Sajda

Seconded by D. Smith

That a subcommittee of the Environment and Climate Change Committee be established to work with staff and representatives of Friends of Bear Creek Park to address issues arising and restoration of lands, as a result of the Bear Creek Park Connector.

Carried

E. OTHER BUSINESS**1. Terms of Reference**

Discussion regarding a specific sentence in the terms of reference of the committee. The sentence in question is about representing the city's position on specific issues. Some committee members expressed concerns about this requirement, stating that as a non-partisan group, they should not be obligated to be consistent with the city's position if they disagree with it. ECCC committee members believe that they should be able to speak out against decisions or policies that they believe are detrimental to the environment or climate change. There is a suggestion to review and reword the language in the terms of reference to address these concerns and ensure consistency across committees.

Additionally, it was mentioned that committee members are not allowed to speak to the media as representatives of the committee but can speak on behalf of their respective organizations.

It was

Moved by S. Sajda

Seconded by D. Smith

That the Environment and Climate Change

Committee recommend that Council direct staff to review the Terms of Reference, Section 4 (c), of the Environment and Climate Change Committee to provide clarification regarding a committee member's responsibility while holding a Council Committee position and when making public statements on behalf of themselves or other organizations that they represent.

Carried

2. Roundtable

A roundtable discussion ensued and the following points were made:

- The importance of clear advice on climate change and the need for action was discussed.
- Suggestion to create bike paths within the rights-of-ways of utility companies with the utility companies contributing financially to these projects.
- Planting trees closer to roads and highways is suggested to benefit wildlife and reduce pollution.
- Creating wildflower areas throughout the city is something that other cities do.
- There is potential for urban farming and community gardens included within right-of-ways.
- The connection between the environment and agriculture was emphasized, as well as the need for collaboration.
- It was proposed that a staff planner specifically for agriculture-related matters would be beneficial.
- Updates were presented regarding the opening of 84th Avenue and ongoing construction work.

F. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Environment and Climate Change Committee is scheduled for Tuesday, June 14, 2023.

G. ADJOURNMENT

It was

Moved by K. Purton

Seconded by D. Jack

That the Environment and Climate Change

Committee meeting be adjourned.

Carried

The Environment and Climate Change Committee adjourned at 6:46 p.m.

Jennifer Ficocelli, City Clerk

Mayor Locke, Chairperson