

Notes from December 7, 2020 COW meeting taken by Jo Phillips

It was noted at the start of the meeting that they would not be reading all of the received correspondences this time because there are too many of them and some are quite long.

### Waste Management Strategy

Laura Hooper presented some waste management options to council with the objective to give staff direction to develop a waste management strategy.

There are many waste streams. The Regional District looks after recyclables and leaves the rest to local governments and individuals. Otherwise there is garbage, kitchen scraps, yard waste, large recyclable items and household hazardous waste. She envisions: 1) public engagement 2) expressions of interest 3) a business plan for each of those waste streams 4) draft a strategy over 6-12 months. For this she feels there is a need of expertise and thus a budget of \$75,000 for consultants and engagement of the public.

Discussion:

C. St. Pierre: what does Langford do? What about sewage plant waste and putting it together with compost and have a composter in Sooke? Answer (by Jeff Carter??): Langford relies on private waste collecting businesses. As to biosolids, the CRD is working on dealing with that. Doesn't feel a composter is feasible.

C. Beddows: in favour of contracting it out instead of the District buying trucks. Answer (Hooper): That's what we're asking.

C. Bateman: is council working with the CRD who also have a tentative plan in the works?

M. Tait: going "full out" is too much but we need to deter illegal dumping. Everyone's needs are different; some people make no garbage. Can there be a twice a year anything goes collection and a once a year hazardous waste collection?

Jeff Carter: yard waste is more complex and needs to be more often. What does council want for each stream?

C. Beddows: we should not have in-house waste collection. Collect taxes and pay contractors. There should be mandatory bi-weekly garbage collection.

C. Lajeunesse: should scrap the idea of contractors because it would take business out of private company hands.

C. McMath: agrees with LaJ. Need to impose burning restrictions so need to focus on yard waste.

C. Logins: We should concentrate on yard waste for sure plus large recyclables and hazardous waste.

C. St. Pierre: agrees with Logins

C. Bateman: agrees with LaJ. Also 30% of people in Sooke do not have regular garbage pick up; rather take it themselves to Marilyn Road depots. What about a "free stuff Saturday" as is done in Oak Bay once a year. What's left over is hauled away on Monday.

M. Tait: leave garbage as it is, Develop a plan for collecting yard waste, large recyclables and hazardous waste.

C. Lajeunesse: 2 or 3 days a year hire a contractor to pick them up but we won't know what we are getting into. It could be expensive.

Someone ???: We need to create an information circular to inform the public where are all the options for recycling (e.g. lightbulbs at hardware store).

C. McMath: why do we we need to have public consultation?

C. St. Pierre: because the public will be paying for it.

PLAN: staff to present COW with a plan to develop collection and disposal options for yard waste, large recyclable items and toxic (hazardous) waste.

Tree Management Bylaw: created by staff based on the responses of the online survey and stakeholders zoom meetings (starting at 8:11 on the video):

Sooke lost 255 hectares of forest between 1986 and 2010 (a hectare is 2.5 acres).

The survey was answered by 9.5% of dwelling units or 4% of the population, predominantly property owners. According to the survey “the community” (in quotes because in my estimation 4% of the population does not represent the community) is split with conflicting opinions on tree management. There were 900 individual comments, equally divisive. It was felt by many council members that “we need to redefine our purpose” and “develop a purpose-based engagement strategy”. For those who cannot decipher that bureaucratic jargon, it means we really need to hone in on what the bylaw is for. Emphasize that it is for development only, not private land holders if that is the case.

C. Logins: You can’t trust survey results. This survey was taken by folks who were confused about what the bylaw is about, thus the 50% who were against the tree management bylaw. For instance it was not made clear that you can cut down a dangerous tree on your own property. We need to base the parameters of this bylaw on industry standards. We need a good starting point that people feel comfortable with. We can change it later.

C. Beddows: Is an individual on less than 1 hectare exempt from the bylaw? Answer (Hooper): yes unless they live on a stream on the ocean. What is the cost of an arborist? Answer: \$100-200. “I’m not sure what we are trying to do here besides anger a bunch of people”.

C. St. Pierre: what is the intent of the bylaw? Not clear. Is it to keep those eco-systems intact and for carbon sequestration and natural asset management? Why is the bylaw focusing on the growth area? We need to focus on outside the growth area; that’s where trees are going down. Answer (Hooper): we want council to give us some direction. Should we just focus on stopping clearcut slaughters in development sites? St. Pierre: could we use money set aside for trees to purchase swaths of lands to protect them?

C. Bateman: We are discovering what every community in Canada, perhaps worldwide, has found: results are split between what he termed “individualists and those working for the common good”. This is a particularly lenient tree bylaw compared to most. How many properties over 1 hectare would be impacted? Answer (Hooper): 502 private properties. Bateman: Can we currently stop pre-development clearcutting (this is one of the main concerns of many people in Sooke)? Answer (Hooper): There are no tools for that currently; I’m not sure what it would take legally.

C. McMath: shelve it. Climate is not the main concern right now: the economy is.

C. Lajeunesse: not in favour

C. Logins: don’t shelve it

C. St. Pierre: don’t shelve it. We need to do it right now. There is a climate crisis. There were a large number of responses to this survey, both for and against, but it indicates that people care. We should not let it fade away when we have everyone’s attention.

M. Tait: Is this the tool we’re looking for? For myself I am sort of with C. McMath – that we shelve it.

At this point the sound went on the video, never to return. But apparently Mayor Tait changed her stance and voted to not shelve it, rather to send it back for revision to make it more concise and easier to understand. The vote was: Bateman, Logins and St. Pierre for and McMath, La Jeunese and Beddows against: shelve it.