

Transition Sooke Monthly Regular Meeting Notes 6 October 2021 7 pm

- 1 Welcome, Land Acknowledgement, and Social Circle
- 2 Facilitator: Alan Note-taker: Allie
- 3 Agenda review
- 4 **Motion: Approve Notes of last meeting (1 September 2021). Moved by Lynn; seconded by Moki. Passed.**
- 5 Treasurer's Report (see below)
Motion: Receive and approve report of the treasurer. Moved by Lily; seconded by Lynn. Passed.
- 6 Update on Action Items
 - a Sign and banner update (Alan) – sign and banner procured! Used at recent events around Sooke.
 - b Update on Climate Posters (Gord) – Susan Percival at EMCS is launching a climate poster contest (ending 6 November); Gord is donating \$200 for prizes. We had been hoping posters would be displayed in the bus shelter, but someone at the school objected. Gord will talk to the Sooke News Mirror to see if they want to display the winning posters. Other suggestions: West Coast Medical Clinic displays student art; other medical or dental offices; VIRL; SEAPARC; Sooke Region Museum; JdF Rec Centre; rotation around businesses: all potential ideas that we could give to the school.
 - c Alan to work with Gord to put out a news release on the Climate Change Posters – not done, since it isn't yet known where the posters will be available for viewing. Could just say that TS helped/donated and leave it at that? – **Ongoing Action**
 - d Climate solutions tour update (Susan C, Alan) – it was decided to come back to this in the spring.
- 7 Watchdog Reports on Sooke Council Meetings (Hester) – regarding the meeting on 20 September.
 - 7.a The big issue was the Lions' proposal for JPMP. Two main things going on from the perspective of the public as presented at this meeting: dissatisfaction with the alternative approval process, and various green space issues around the proposal. Mayor Tait and Tony St-Pierre were both upset about the kind of response they got; Jeff Bateman also mentioned getting negative feedback, and quoted things that had been accused. Dana Lajeunesse, the only other council member present, appeared to have no problems with the issue. Seemed like an unproductive discussion; no direct answers were given to any of the public's concerns. How to respond?
 - 7.b In addition, there were two rezoning requests, both approved: one to make 4 lots, one to make 2. One had no public response and one had positive response from the neighbours. Can have two duplexes on each lot, resulting in an increase in density for all of them. In both cases, there were issues of trees having been clear-cut already; staff cited the developer saying that those trees had to be removed because they were life-threatening.

In one of the instances the owner apparently applied for rezoning, clearcut, and immediately sold to someone else. Jeff Bateman pointed out that there's a financial penalty for not doing this correctly, but not if safety reasons are cited. It is unclear who said that the trees were life-threatening, whether this was a legitimate arborist's report or what. It is even unclear what documentation is necessary in such a case, because the tree bylaw issue disappeared into council and never came back out.

- 7.c Also one variance request, to 7 lots: denied. They wanted to reduce setback from a pond. Jeff Bateman asked why riparian rights are so often ignored, and the answer given was that the provincial guideline was found 'excessive' – that it is standard practice in Sooke that a 30m setback from water is deemed unnecessary, and that an environmental expert will be brought in to say that 15m is fine. This was refused; it can be 6 lots instead of 7, so that the 30m setback can be honoured.
- 7.d A number of times, Jeff Bateman has not spoken on issues, saying that this was because he is a member of TS and felt he therefore had a conflict of interest. This time he said he had had legal advice, which stated that if there is something he believes is in the public interest, and he's an advocate for that, then there is no conflict of interest. He spoke this time on pesticides.
- 8 Report on tables at Celebrate Sooke and Apple Fest (All) – 18 September was Celebrate Sooke and 26 September was the Sooke Food CHI Apple Fest at the Sunriver Community Gardens. Some in-depth conversations were had about Sooke's responsibility and GHG reductions with people visiting the booths. The positioning of the tent at Celebrate Sooke was in a tough place competition-wise; the stickers for the kids were good, but next time we need more blatant bribes! Several people gave their contact info and were invited to come to tonight's meeting, but none attended. Such events are a great way to engage with people, so we need something to draw folks in, something short and provocative. Lots of people had no idea what TS is.
- 9 WE-CAN Report (Lily) – had official launch on 5 October. There are now 200 groups of all sizes in WE-CAN (a group can be as few as 3 people working together on climate action). Transition town members: Sooke, Alberni Valley, Nanaimo, Kamloops, Salt Spring. Coming up: the Indigenous Engagement Team is planning series of 4 webinars beginning 20 October, on Indigenous perspectives on climate action; the Climate Solutions Team is putting on a 4-webinar series on transportation solutions starting in January; the Municipal and Rural Engagement Team's goal is to get at least 200 climate champions elected in upcoming elections for municipal boards. WE-CAN is looking for good people to run and can provide some support.
- 10 Lions in the Park Update (Gord) – Gord has heard nothing back from councillors despite asking to speak to a number of them about what they plan to do next; maybe it's a done deal, though apparently Mayor Tait stated many times that it's not, that this merely gives them permission to consider a permit. On the one hand, the alternative approval process specifically stated that the DOS would enter into a lease agreement with the Lions if sufficient negative votes were not received. On the other hand, there is apparently going to be more public engagement; but perhaps this coming consultation is around the nature of the proposal, not whether or not it will happen at all. There is apparently dissension within the Lions about the project as well. JPMP is some kind of exception to the usual regulations around the use of parkland, such that it isn't fruitful to argue that one can't do certain things in parks; but it was pointed out that private commercial activity is not an 'active park'. It was also pointed out that Mayor Tait in particular

responds to issues of children and family, such as parents of playing children not wanting sight lines blocked by buildings; perhaps that avenue could be explored.

11 Team Reports:

- a OCP and Climate Action Team (Alan, Susan C) – deadline is 17 October for engagement around OCP; the team is meeting on 7 October. Some committee members attended some stakeholder meetings and developed feedback on the OCP that we can submit individually and/or as TS. Prepared material for public tables. Sent a letter to council, praising them for 7% solution and telling them it was going to take a lot of rethinking and re-budgeting, but offering that Transition Sooke could help. The Climate Action Committee asked what that might look like, so there will be a preliminary meeting happening between some team members and the committee. It was encouraged that all of us should send in something as OCP feedback: pick a chapter on the draft that interests you and comment in relation to making climate the biggest priority.
- b Local Economy Group (Jo) – Has not met. Took part in the engagement process for a Community Economic Development Strategy. TS filled out a survey as a non-profit and Jo did an interview. Alan did an interview as a local home-based business. There is now a draft CED Strategy on which people can comment until 18 October. Jo wrote down some comments and will send them out to everyone to share what she found.
- c Water Group (Lynn) – meeting on 8 October; people from Langford and Metchosin invited as well.
 - c.a The possibility of putting in observation wells out here; apparently only one person in BC is responsible for observation wells and the interior has been getting them all. Mike Hicks is looking into them for our area.
 - c.b Wants to get information on streamwater allocations updated. Who we can identify that's responsible for this?
 - c.c The idea of setting up a weather station. Rainfall predicts water flow and what goes into the aquifer, affects tree cover and fish and *everything*. Alan shared that he met a couple who has just moved here who has a lot of interest in weather stations, noting that Sooke doesn't have a proper one. They asked Alan if TS would have any interest in supporting them if they tried to get one. Alan will email them and ask them to come to meetings and share what they're thinking about doing.
 - c.d Water Sustainability Act of 2016 states that people have to obtain a licence for a well if they are using the water for other than domestic use. 15,000 or so people are affected who have not yet applied for a licence, and the deadline is coming up: 1 March 2022 in order to keep one's place in line. Mike Hicks is trying to get a better explanation of this into the Sooke News Mirror. Home-based businesses are at risk, and stratas that are identified as a water-providing groups, who may not realize they need to do this.

12 District of Sooke Committees

- a Climate Action (Bernie) – working on the date for the 7% solution (hoping for a deadline of Earth Day 2022 for activation). The new budget was presented with not a lot of alternatives; included things like rebates for heat pumps and whether or not there would be bus passes &c. Only had a certain amount of overlap with the 7% solution, so it's confusing at the moment. Council has voted on and agreed to the 7% reduction and a hard target of 50% reduction by 2030; but OCP and reference material was all saying 40% or 40-50%. Trying to work off set of figures from some years ago, but the methods used to come to these

figures were less than perfect, so it's difficult. Perhaps the people who are writing the material that's going out to the public may not be using the 50% figure because they don't like it? Maybe it would help if people wrote in and asked why we are seeing this other figure when they passed 50%. It was thought that Mayor Tait had directed staff to get that changed. Of course, this will be destroyed by all the development Sooke is facing, which will cancel out the reduction AND add more carbon. 12-1800 houses are essentially approved and are all carbon bombs, and it's not clear what we can do about that.

- b OCP Advisory? – SusanC: haven't met since before they made their presentation to council. Were going to be reviewing public engagement info before it went out.
 - c Land Use and Development (Susan B) – Susan B not present.
 - d Economic Development (Jo) – held a meeting in September, for which the notes were sent out. Sue Welke, the DOS Community Economic Development officer, is leaving; apparently they're in the process of hiring someone new. The CED folks finished their survey of businesses.
- 13 Other business / announcements – Alan: Susan B has taken over layout of the newsletter (thank you Susan!), and her first issue has gone out. Thanks to Christa Brenan who has been doing layout for the past six months or so. Thanks to Bernie who is corralling input. Get material to (Bernie: “Yes please!”) so he can edit it and get it to Susan.
- 14 Next Meeting: Nov 2, 2021. 7 pm. Facilitator: Susan B Note-taker: Allie