



## DECISIONS AND ACTIONS

**Steering Committee**  
**Wednesday, 17 September 2014**

Victoria Canoe and Kayak Club

**Present:** Julian Anderson, Sara Stallard, Yogi Carolsfeld, Vicki Blogg, George Blogg, Dorothy Chambers, Don Monroe, Craig Elder, Kitty Lloyd, Jody Watson, Tricia Demacedo, Rick Daykin, Sean (PIPS), Patty MacDonald, Alia Johnson

**Guests:** Presenters: Ian Sutherland (with Susan Blundell, Wendy Bowkett), Adam Steele  
 Community: John King, Frank White, Jim Rowl (sp?), Joyce Rowl, maybe 2 others  
 UVic students: David Norwell, Laura Larsen

### DECISIONS

<b>1</b>	GWI will write to four municipalities requesting to be included in the review process for rezoning and development permit applications on the Gorge Waterway and Portage Inlet			
<b>Next Meeting: 19 November 2014</b>				
<b>ACTIONS</b>			<b>ACTION BY</b>	<b>DUE</b>
<b>1</b>	Name tag for Alia Johnson, CoV Senior Parks Planner		Kitty	Nov
<b>2</b>	Write a letter to four municipalities requesting GWI be consulted as part of review process for development permit process		Kitty/All	Nov

### INFORMATION

**Presentation: Rezoning and subdivision application at 955/961 Portage Rd – Ian Sutherland**

- Described how project aligns with GWI objectives of protecting shoreline
- EnKon Environmental Consulting (Susan Blundell) – conducted environmental assessment of the property, located 100 m west of Admirals Bridge
- Adjacent land uses: mix of lot sizes, mostly ¼ acre
- In Saanich’s urban containment and sewer enterprise area
- Proposing 6 lots with an average size 1/3 acre
- Existing 2 homes will remain onsite, additional 4 proposed
- Nothing will be disturbed between houses and water, therefore no Environmentally Sensitive Area development permit needed
- Low impact development (LID) techniques will be used throughout
- Reduction of roof and pavement areas from what would be allowed under the proposed RS-12 zoning (3,100 ft<sup>2</sup> house footprints)

**Decisions and Actions – GWI Steering Committee****17 Sept 2014****Page 2**

- Currently the rainwater from road runs through a ditch along the west side of property, then into a collector that runs parallel to shore and discharges near the Admirals Bridge. This would be replaced by stormwater retention features.
- Waterfront area would remain untouched
- Consulted with local plant expert Hans Roemer, there are mostly non-native plants onsite
- Significant trees and native vegetation were identified by Roemer, these areas will be covenanted, approximately 23% of property to remain in a natural state
- Tillicum Local Area Plan of the Saanich OCP is an old document, LAP policy states that properties in this area should remain zoned Rural A-1 to protect waterfront by retaining upland natural areas. Sutherland points out that stormwater management practices have improved since that was written and with proposed rainwater management techniques, run-off from the property would be reduced and quality improved.

**Questions:**

Did Roemer give suggestions about removal of invasive plants? Yes: west side of property – lots of ivy, blackberry, Daphne that will be removed. Sutherland has made a commitment to remove invasives from covenanted areas, probably a crew of landscapers would come in and clear these out.

Do you live there? No, but has lived there about 5 years of the 26 years that he's owned the property

What was the outcome of last meeting [community meeting organized by developer and facilitated by Gorge Tillicum Community Association, Sept. 11]? PISCES members are not supportive, but he has canvassed others in the neighbourhood and many wrote letters of support to Saanich for the proposal. Comment from community member who attended that meeting: predominant view there was not favourable

Will you build the houses, then sell? Depends on the market, may build some, sell some as lots

How many trees have and will come down? Twenty were removed to build new house, 31 to come down for this proposal. Douglas firs on property are in decline, most have root rot.

Have new trees been planted on the property over the years? Twelve or 15 over the years. For this project 46 native trees will be planted at beginning, then as individual lots get built, trees will be replaced at 2:1 ratio, either on site or in a Saanich Park. Road is main area where trees will be removed, these will be replaced first.

What does neighbour think? Prefers it not to be developed

What LID features for houses? Rain gardens, bioswales with detention chamber, existing house has one which works well.

What is the nature of covenants? Natural state covenants, those areas will remain untouched except to remove invasive plants; Saanich has a template of what can occur in covenanted areas.

Who will monitor the covenants? Sutherland will as long as he is there. Saanich would hold the covenant, they would be required to act on any complaint from a neighbour, etc. There are organizations that do this type of monitoring (ie 3<sup>rd</sup> party covenant) but many are too short of funds to

**Decisions and Actions – GWI Steering Committee**  
**17 Sept 2014**

**Page 3**

monitor those properly over the long term. Sutherland has established covenants on other properties that are working well.

Suggestion was made to post notices explaining what a covenant is about so that the public will recognize why an area might not look manicured.

After subdivision Sutherland will continue to own heritage house in centre of property, so he will be a member of the building scheme. Building scheme is a covenant in which all lot owners are members, and each is able to enforce the terms of the scheme. Landscaping will be done with native species as much as possible, this would be outlined in the building scheme.

Does the shoreline have invasive plants? Some but not as bad as upland area. Comes down to how much you want to disturb the area in order to enhance it. Need to be careful about what is removed, it's a steep shore along there, erosion could be a problem.

How does the ditch that runs down west side of property enter Portage Inlet? Through a silt trap, then through an outfall at the bridge; if this proposal goes ahead there will be a rain garden in the boulevard at the top.

Timeline? Won't go to council before late spring, doesn't want to do any road building in winter

What about planting western white pine? Used to be all over the south island, but blister rust affected it. Now there are resistant strains that would be good to replant in this area.

**Discussion and Comments:**

- No problem with the plan, but concerned about ripple effect of cutting trees for areas nearby
- PISCES: not in favour of changing the zoning, as per letter submitted to Saanich in August. Changing rural A-1 to RS-12 should be looked at carefully. With existing zoning and Tillicum Local Area Plan policies, Saanich has long recognized the area as an environmentally sensitive amenity; migratory bird sanctuary, buffer and rural nature of area maintained, this zoning change is considerable; gateway to sensitive riparian area, would set a precedent to further rezoning and loss of habitat; trees and a lot of habitat have been removed and replaced with grassed areas; consider why should we encourage zoning change, motivation is profit, and changes won't benefit the property. Major concern is that this could set a precedent for other properties on this street.
- Developer said all the right words, but is it window dressing? Not certain what the eventual density will actually be; best to think in a conservative way
- This is a big change from rural to a much denser zoning
- It would set a precedent for changing the LAP policy
- Two issues: zoning change and the fact that we weren't consulted
- We are on the stakeholders' list now after discussions with Saanich planning staff
- Neighbours are very concerned about this change; feeling is that current zoning should be retained until someone can prove that RS-12 is going to be an improvement over existing A-1

**Decision:** No general consensus that GWI should submit a coordinated response to Saanich, individuals or member groups can send a letter independently as desired.

**Decisions and Actions – GWI Steering Committee**  
**17 Sept 2014**

**Page 4**

**ACTION:** GWI will write a letter to all four municipalities on the waterway stating that we would like to be consulted about rezoning and development proposals on the waterway

**Presentation: City of Victoria Stormwater Utility – Adam Steele, Stormwater Management Specialist**

- CoV stormwater system is one of the oldest in Canada, 60% was installed prior to 1920. Currently there are 243 km of mains.
- First attempt to establish a stormwater utility was in 2001, but there was insufficient support at that time. The current effort was started in 2007, and starting in 2016 payment for stormwater services will be transferred from property taxes to the new utility.
- Desire to change from grey to green infrastructure, and will include all properties
- Benefits:
  - reduced flooding from overflowing stormwater system as more rainwater infiltrates the ground onsite rather than being conveyed straight to underground pipes.
  - Cleaner beaches and creeks (Bowker, Cecelia) as stormwater will be less contaminated, and less chance of infrastructure being overwhelmed in storm events and mixing with sanitary sewer system
- Model being used will be revenue neutral; 80% of funding for stormwater maintenance will move from property taxes to a utility bill, 20% will remain on property taxes
- Fees will be based on 4 factors:
  - Impervious Area factor: building footprint on property plus 3% (driveways, sheds, etc)
  - Street Cleaning factor: dependent on street frontage of property
  - Intensity Code (commercial activity has higher intensity code than single family residential)
  - Codes of Practise factor: automotive industries or businesses with more than 10 parking spaces
- Rainwater Incentive Program: quality over quantity, system of credits (ongoing reduction to stormwater bill ) and rebates (one-time payment for projects like installing a rain garden)
- **Credits** must be approved prior to work being done, then accepted when inspection is complete. This will be followed by random inspections to ensure that the installation is still there and functioning properly.
- Case studies were done to help inform the final program details, these will be publicly available soon
- **Rebates** only available to low density residential properties that are not part of a business. These are likely to be 5 – 50% rebates up to a maximum amount.
- There will be a phase-in period for permissive tax-exempt properties and schools, and possible grants available from the tax revenue this generates.
- Adapting the program as they work through the details, public input welcome

Learn more about the program

here: <http://www.victoria.ca/EN/main/departments/engineering/stormwater.html>

**Anchored boats:**

- Public hearing Aug 28 regarding the proposed Gorge Waterway Park Zoning, passed 3<sup>rd</sup> reading by CoV council

**Decisions and Actions – GWI Steering Committee****17 Sept 2014****Page 5**

- GTCA has heard concerns about boats moving further up the Gorge if that bylaw is passed
- Yogi – some of the boats are starting to anchor in Esquimalt Harbour again. He did a dive in the area off Banfield Park in late August, and saw no eelgrass where the boats are anchored, and no sign of anchors dragging; pea gravel throughout the area (under the mud), not sure what the source of that is. No piles of wood debris on the sea floor, although that's what he expected due to years of log storage there. If the area is going to be a park, maybe should consider planting eelgrass where boats are now.
- GWI coordinated response included recommendation that CoV work with other municipalities to establish a regional approach

**CRD Harbour Program update - Jody**

- Planning to repeat the inventory done for the Harbours Atlas in 1999/2000; underwater and shoreline surveys; relatively expensive project, could maybe get a supplementary budget (one time);
- Working on a grant application to National Wildlife Conservation Fund that targets wetlands including tidal lagoons and marshes; look at vegetation analysis, shoreline trees, eelgrass, other sensitive habitats; big part of the grant fund is for restoration and enhancement of wetlands; grant application will include seasonal bird surveys; this grant is not applicable for federal lands (Victoria and Esquimalt harbours are federal);
- Wants to talk with municipalities about restoring road ends abutting Portage and Gorge Waterway; inventory first and assessment of potential of ecosystem shift for wetlands in tidal areas due to sea level rise; identify areas where conservation covenants with waterfront homeowners could be established; eelgrass planting could be part of the proposal; Selkirk and Railyards area could be good candidates for enhancement too.
- Yogi: sedimentation is not well understood, that's likely what wiped out the oyster replanting effort; sedimentation is not part of most monitoring programs but is a significant factor in the Gorge; Sean (PIPS) has lived on Gorge many decades, when he was young there was always 6 -8ft of water at low tide; this summer he saw a fellow walk across the Gorge and only got wet up to his thighs.
- Ed Lyons wrote a series of reports on geomorphology of Portage Inlet and the Gorge for a local newsletter in the past, could request these from him. He recently offered a box of old survey reports to Dorothy (possibly UVic student reports from the 1960s).

**Point Ellice Update:**

- Work party 21 Sept, going to measure the last cleared area to calculate how many native plants to order for the final replanting
- Onsite work will be completed by end of October, final summary report to be submitted to Heritage Branch by end of December.

Suggestion by Yogi that the forested area behind the Nature House could be next restoration project for GWI

**Partner Updates**

**VCKC** – annual cleanup of Cowichan River if there's enough water in it; there's always lots of stuff to clean up; club has lots of courses underway

**Decisions and Actions – GWI Steering Committee****17 Sept 2014****Page 6**

**BGCA** – Invasive plant removal continues regularly in Cecelia Ravine, giant sewer mains there are being inspected

**Esquimalt** - Wayfinding signage in several parks, lots of festivals, Sculpture Splash this weekend, open house for tree bylaw and animal control bylaw coming up. Question: what about the failing seawall on the Esquimalt shore (Rhoda Lane)? Municipality will rebuild with concrete cylinders as it is now.

**WFT** - New students now after the summer; no funding for Nature House, will soon look for people to sit on a steering committee for the NH

**PISCES**- View Royal is in negotiation to purchase Portage Linear Park from Pacific Capital Commission even though it's in Saanich

**GWAS** - summer hiatus

**Victoria** - New representative on GWI is Alia Johnson, senior parks planner; she's been on the job 3 weeks

**GTCA** - Gorge Park Gardens are under construction; Gorge Park cleanup next weekend

**Swan Cr** - Six riffles added to creek, boulders and rocks now in place

**FoCH** – Fall work parties will start up soon; students from UVic, David and Laura, attended meeting, there are about 10 students interested in restoration, would like to do work in the Colquitz with salmon; fisheries window is closed now for the spawning season

**PIPS** – no report

**Saanich** - New website focused on stormwater management will be live in next few weeks, it will include a virtual tour of some of Saanich properties with innovative rainwater management

**Meeting Adjourned:** 9:40pm