



DECISIONS AND ACTIONS

Steering Committee
Wednesday, May 20, 2015

Victoria Canoe and Kayak Club

Present: Don Monroe, Patty MacDonald, Terry Eckstein, Jacques Sirois, Vicki Blogg, George Blogg, Sara Stallard, Rick Daykin, Melissa Huston, Tricia DeMacedo, Cathy Carolsfeld, Yogi Carolsfeld, Jody Watson, Kitty Lloyd

Guests: Marc Cittone, City of Victoria

DECISIONS				
1	GWI will send a response to the province regarding application by City of Victoria for license of occupation at Selkirk Water			
2	GWI will work with CoV to develop more ideas for Burnside Gorge local area plan			
3	GWI will develop a new display for outreach			
Next Meeting: 15 July 2015				
ACTIONS			ACTION BY	DUE
1	Identify potential MBS sign locations along waterfront		Jacques and Kitty	Spring/Summer
2	Send Kitty info used by BGCA for Cecelia Cr watershed outreach		Sara	ASAP
3	Submit coordinated response to CoV application for a License of Occupation for Selkirk Water; comments to Kitty by May 27		Kitty/All	June 16
4	Organize a design charrette to discuss concepts for developing Burnside Gorge local area plan		Jody and Marc	Fall
5	Notify those interested about next herring working group meeting		Kitty	Mtg is June 17
6	Work with CRD staff to develop draft GWI display template, bring to GWI for review		Kitty/Jody	Summer
7	Send out the media release regarding Eastside Sewage Treatment Sites		Kitty	ASAP

INFORMATION

Review of action items from 18 March meeting:

- From input at last meeting, main criteria for review of development applications along the Gorge: proximity to harbour and creeks (<100m), significant stream impacts, significant shoreline alteration, habitat alteration with a high impact, significant impacts to or change in runoff

- Speakers series on herring in the Gorge – the Victoria Natural History Society is bringing Dr John Matson to Victoria for a talk in Jan. or Feb., so GWI will not pursue this.

Presentation: Developing a Burnside Gorge Local Area Plan

Marc Cittone - Senior Planner, Sustainable Planning and Community Development, City of Victoria

Existing neighbourhood plan is 20 years old, needs updating as several key features of the area have changed including closure of Burnside Elementary School, establishment of Selkirk village on Jutland and opening of new Burnside Gorge Community Centre. Presentation focused on improvements that could be made to the neighbourhood, what do we as stakeholders feel is appropriate, what should be accommodated?

- Improvements could include amenities, waterfront access, watershed improvements
- What type of developments would people consider appropriate?
 - e.g. residential, commercial, industrial. This area is the main alternative to Langford for businesses to locate, close to core but with lower rents than downtown. Want to maintain and enhance these employment lands, where 14,000 people currently work
- In the planning horizon of 30 years, 20,000 people are expected to live in downtown core, primarily in urban centres/villages
- Selkirk is the main urban village area, also one at Humber Green, perhaps long term there could be a larger one near Mayfair mall.
- There are 350 units in the Selkirk development, the overall population in area is 6,000, with 14,000 coming in daily to work
- Things to consider:
 - Rapid transit plans on Douglas St corridor
 - Range of transportation choices
 - Want the area to be inclusive, livable
 - Maintain stock of employment lands at affordable prices
- Now in Phase 1 of public consultation process; report will go to council in August, engage the community further in the fall, draft should be done by March 2016

GWl members' comments on Burnside Gorge Neighbourhood Plan:

- Try to retain vegetation and plant more trees and shrubs along the shoreline including Cecelia Ravine
- Lack of green space in this local area, if higher density is wanted then should consider more green space near buildings
- Historically this area was important for Songhees and Esquimalt Nations, part of their traditional territory, this needs to be acknowledged and incorporated
- Offset the buildings from the road or place on an angle to prevent a wall effect
- No grocery store in the area, this is a basic requirement that should be associated with a village centre
- Need places to shop, through Selkirk area or in Rock Bay
- Burnside is very car-centric; if the streets are made attractive (e.g. by including amenities, sidewalks, trees) businesses will come to the area

- This is a Migratory Bird Sanctuary, groups are working on rewilding of the harbour, how can this be enhanced?
- Need for more shoreline vegetation for wildlife and aesthetics
- Lots of herons and other birds in this area – pilings could be used here for roost sites and more purple martin nest boxes
- Juvenile fish are often at the entrance to Rock Bay, the area also has many cormorants and mergansers in the winter/spring
- Algal bloom in the harbour starts in Rock Bay in the spring, likely due to increased nutrient and contaminant inputs entering the harbour there
- Point Ellice House property supports an important but isolated stand of native mature forest along a very industrial shoreline; promote connection along shore to this remnant forest by planting more trees
- Along Harbour Road, at Dockside Green and Railyards, neighbourhood is diverse and interesting with a mix of industrial and residential uses
- Scrap metal recycling – don't hide it, celebrate it, interpret it as is done along Harbour Rd for industrial working harbour area
- Galloping Goose is a valuable connection between the Gorge and Swan Lake (wildlife refuge area). Important wildlife corridor that could be impacted if trail is widened; need to keep wildlife needs on the neighbourhood planning agenda
- Many cities have partnered with industrial groups to create amenities, need a greenway through the concrete batch plant area
- Area has a high percent of impervious surfaces – major efforts on stormwater management need to occur in this area, requires site level planning to manage issues such as major urban heat island effect.
- Lots of issues around old infrastructure (e.g. cross-connections between sewer and stormwater systems)
- Highest level of contamination in this area from storm drains, which flow directly into the Gorge
- Can development cost charges be used for promoting green infrastructure? For example, this would be an excellent location for installing green roofs to manage rainwater
- Victoria Gravel Mart land is owned by City and they have caused many negative impacts to the shoreline, e.g. poison hemlock growing there is being transported in the soil to other sites in the region
- Could have a harbour ferry stop at Rock Bay for access
- Cycling network in this area is poor, need to have better cycling routes; Gorge Road – needs dedicated bike lanes
- There is talk of a connection from Galloping Goose to Maddock to access the Cecelia area.
- Interest in Burnside Rd being more pedestrian/bike friendly, big improvements were made to traffic flow along Esquimalt and Craigflower roads when traffic was calmed basically by adding left turn lanes
- CoV is looking at options for those roads, (e.g. left turn lanes to improve traffic flow)
- Bay St including the Pt Ellice Bridge is a big issue, including poor/non-existent sidewalks/bike lanes
- Many people have requested seasonal secure kayak/canoe storage along the water, next to a boat launch
- Look at coordinating a charrette session with the GWI in the fall, could also coordinate with a charrette for the Parks Master plan.

ACTION: Jody and Marc will keep in touch to organize a design charette

Discussion: GWI letter regarding Cuthbert Holmes Park Draft Management Plan, submitted to Saanich on 14 May 2015

- VCKC has an agreement with District of Saanich allowing the club to paddle in the river.
- VCKC respects natural areas and wildlife, club does not endorse paddling beyond the Admirals St. bridge during heron nesting and salmon spawning seasons

Discussion: Response to CoV application for license of Occupation at Selkirk Water

- Notice received of City of Victoria application for a License of Occupation at Selkirk Water, to create a Gorge Waterway Park Zone. GWI will submit a coordinated response to this, Kitty sent out a draft earlier for GWI review

ACTION: Review GWI draft response to the City of Victoria's application for a license of occupation for the Gorge Waterway; send comments to Kitty by May 27th, letter to be submitted by June 16

Outreach:

- Do we want a new GWI display? Banner? What are the key messages?

ACTION: Kitty and Jody will work with CRD communications staff to draft a template and bring to GWI for input

- Summer events:
 - Selkirk Waterfront Festival May 23
 - Oceans Day, June 6 at Nature House, 11am – 3pm
 - Canada Day on the Gorge – July 1, 8:30 – 4:00
 - Gorge Swim Fest – August 9, noon – 4pm
- Lost Rivers film showing?
- Herring working group – 2nd meeting being scheduled for mid-June; Yogi will attend, Jacques and Don are interested as well,

ACTION: Kitty will notify those interested when next herring working group meeting is scheduled

Partner Updates

GWAS – partnered with Ocean River Sports, Hoyne Brewery and Gorge Pointe Pub in canoe raffle fundraiser in January; raised over \$1000

VCKC – successful regatta on April 8/9, around 800 people; April 19th did the big Gorge clean up, noticed a difference this year – really bad area under the Admirals Bridge (piles of garbage such as mattresses, and lots of needles and drug paraphernalia - Saanich Parks was contacted regarding drug issue), otherwise the rest of the area was pretty good, some garden waste was an issue and lots of garbage and litter along Christie Point shore; Sooke Disposal supported the clean-up. Other club news: lots of ocean canoeing and outrigger courses coming up

Friends of MBS – will re-survey all the sites in the harbour around summer solstice; two weeks of work done on Trial Is, rare plants there are doing better than ever; pacific sand lance – auklets feeding frenzy in the MBS, Jacques will come up with a prototype sign that will go along

with the blue MBS signs being posted around the harbour. GWI members thought Jacques did an excellent talk for the speakers series in April

Esquimalt – Tree protection bylaw going to council May 25th, there was little public comment tree diameter will determine how many replacement trees are required (2:1 for trees <60cm diameter, 3:1 for >60), 7 protected tree species, replacement trees are protected as well. There are 6 new brochures relating to this on Esquimalt website including how to plant trees, why to hire an arborist, etc. Earth Day event in Highrock Park was a great success, goats were brought there for 3 days to eat the invasive plants. On second day goats were in a pen in the centre of the area and the kids fed the goats with invasive plants they pulled, big thrill for the kids. Bloomin' Beautiful garden competition is ongoing – more categories this year, lots of entries already; Branch Out invasive pulling event at Macaulay Point Park on May 30th; replacing 4 playgrounds in the area, Fraser Park will be a new water park, currently being designed.

Saanich – Environmental Awards given out recently; Environmental Development Permit Area in the news lately; it's been in place for 2 years but in the media due to certain properties being affected, getting lots of calls and counter enquiries; likely to be some more public open houses around the EDPA, Portage Inlet is in the EDPA; no new development applications

PISCES – Pacific Capital Commission lands in Portage Inlet are now part of Portage Park in View Royal (including area that is actually in Saanich); planning a beach clean-up in July

BGCA – Selkirk Waterfront Festival on May 23, kids' activities, dragon boats races, lots of tours for the Local Area Plan as well

WFT – did a survey of the herring fishermen on the bridges, 3,500 were caught at the bridges so there was a pretty significant run this year; surveyed for larvae in the bays, no herring larvae, but lots of juveniles caught, took some fin clippings to do DNA analysis, plankton haul on outgoing tide and caught smelt larvae, so they are spawning nearby; 2 waves of herring came in that were in 2 age classes, smaller ones are now maturing earlier than in the past, will see if it happens again next year. Interesting there were no herring larvae at all but now seeing lots of juvenile herring

CRD Harbours Program Update

- Still awaiting funding announcement for harbour inventory, starting to check with consulting companies for new technologies that could be used
- Budget planning based on new 4 year cycle is underway at CRD
- Water quality objectives report ongoing – incorporating the harbour use surveys and doing final edits, along with maps etc. Consultation meeting was held with municipal partners and Ministry of Environment, MoE wants to make some changes, ours is the first WQO document to use so much land use data, consultation to occur through the summer
- Map of technically feasible sewage sites was released recently, includes some areas on or near the Gorge

ACTION: Kitty will send out the media release regarding Eastside Sewage Treatment Sites

Meeting Adjourned: 9:40pm