



CORPORATION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF ESQUIMALT

Minutes - Final

Municipal Hall
1229 Esquimalt Road
Esquimalt, B.C. V9A 3P1

Committee of the Whole

Monday, April 15, 2024

6:00 PM

Esquimalt Council Chambers

Present 7 - Mayor Barbara Desjardins
Councillor Ken Armour
Councillor Darlene Rotchford
Councillor Andrea Boardman
Councillor Duncan Cavens
Councillor Jacob Helliwell
Councillor Tim Morrison

Staff: Dan Horan, Chief Administrative Officer
Bill Brown, Director of Development Services
Ian Irvine, Director of Financial Services & IT
Sarah Holloway, Deputy Corporate Officer
Jonah Ross, Recording Secretary

1. CALL TO ORDER

Councillor Morrison, Acting Mayor, called the Committee of the Whole meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

Mayor Desjardins acknowledged with respect the Lekwungen people, the Songhees and Kosapsum Nations, thanked them for their stewardship of these traditional territories, and noted that we look forward to working with them to a future of prosperity for all.

Mayor Desjardins noted the arrival of the HMCS Max Bernays to CFB Esquimalt, and acknowledged the HMCS Esquimalt Memorial Ceremony taking place at Memorial Park on April 16th.

2. INTRODUCTION OF LATE ITEMS

- 1) [24-207](#) Late Correspondence
- 1) Item 7.2 - Small Scale Multiple Unit Housing (SSMUH) Update - Report No. DEV-24-026
 - Bill Brown, Director of Development Services - additional information for consideration.

3. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Moved by Councillor Rotchford, seconded by Mayor Desjardins: That the agenda be approved as circulated with the inclusion of the late

items. Carried Unanimously.

4. **ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

- 1) [24-202](#) Minutes of the Committee of the Whole meeting held March 11, 2024

Moved by Councillor Rotchford, seconded by Councillor Cavens: that the minutes of the Committee of the Whole meeting held on March 11, 2024 be adopted as circulated. Carried Unanimously.

5. **PUBLIC INPUT ON ITEMS 6 AND 7**

There was no public input.

6. **PRESENTATIONS AND DELEGATIONS**

Presentations

- 1) [24-191](#) BC Transit Update - Chelsea Mossey, Senior Manager, Government Relations

Chelsea Knossey, Senior Government Relations, and Levi Megenbir, Senior Transit Planner, presented updates on the Victoria Regional Transit System, BC Transit strategic planning, and service changes, and responded to Committee of the Whole questions.

The presenters provided the following responses to Committee of the Whole questions:

- Work can be done with the Township's Engineering Department to look at options for an additional bus stop closer to Parklands Road when that street is removed from the #24 bus route.
- The removal of the loop through Parklands neighbourhood from the #24 bus route is expected to mostly affect student riders, but further feedback will be heard as the information is communicated to the public.
- There are smaller buses in BC Transit's fleet with better turning radii for tighter streets like Parklands, but there are efficiency tradeoffs with other route designs.
- Information can be provided on the uptake of bus passes purchased by developers.
- BC Transit will be a key partner as Esquimalt Road is redesigned, and with consideration to Rapid Bus program, it appears that additional consideration of Right of Ways would be needed.

Committee of the Whole comments included:

- It would be beneficial to understand what uptake is for bus passes purchased by developers.
- There is interest in engaging BC Transit as the redesign of the Esquimalt Road corridor proceeds.

The Committee of the Whole recessed at 6:27 PM and reconvened at 6:31 PM with all members of the Committee of the Whole present with the exception of Councillor Rotchford.

- 2) [24-167](#) Esquimalt Community Arts Hub Society (ECAH) 2023 Annual Report - Jade Guan and LJ McGlenen, Directors at Large

Jade Guan and LJ McGlenen, Esquimalt Community Arts Hub's (ECAH) Directors at Large, presented updates on ECAH's programs, operations, and economic impact for 2023.

- 3) [24-166](#) Council Discussion with Advisory Committee Chairs, to provide feedback on:
- The role of the Committee;
 - Assisting Council to achieve its Strategic Priorities and Objectives;
 - Suggesting future enhancements and adding further value; and
 - Effective communication between Council and its Committees and how to maintain ongoing communication.

Graeme Verhulst, Chair of the APC Design Review Committee, provided an overview of the Committee term, feedback from members and responded to questions from Committee of the Whole.

APC Design Review Committee feedback included:

- As development projects incorporate more complex sustainability measures, there is a need to slow the pace of applications to ensure the appropriate review occurs.
- The Committee is supportive of the Province's direction to move away from project by project evaluations towards broader OCP-level decision-making as it offers improved clarity and predictability to development proponents and potentially offers the Township more control over the shape of development.
- There can be challenges in maintaining meaningful discussions when applicants raise financial feasibility concerns in response to Committee questions; identifying any opportunities to address this in the application stage, prior to the application's consideration at Committee meetings, is of interest.
- An observed trend of including environmental sustainability measures without sufficient evidence of their impacts introduces risks of greenwashing, and is of concern.
- With the adoption of Small-Scale Multi-Unit Housing (SSMUH) regulations, more multi-family homes will be done without registered professional teams,

and having separate streams for such projects may be of benefit.

- Having staff prepare questions for Committee discussion is helpful when feedback is desired on policies like SSMUH, but there is also interest in exploring other workshop formats which, if appropriate for the Committee, could generate valuable feedback.

Nathaniel Sukhdeo, Vice Chair of the Advisory Planning Commission, provided an overview of the Commission term, feedback from members and responded to questions from Committee of the Whole.

Comments from APC included:

- The Commission is mixed in its interpretation of housing regulations, and would like to see gaps in the OCP bridged.
- The Commission continues to recommend the creation of Design Guidelines to provide direction with questions of design.
- With the amount of development projects coming forward, it would be beneficial to take advantage of Development Cost Charges (DCCs).
- Some members are supportive of parking regulation, but wish to avoid a zero-parking approach.
- Filling the upcoming Commission vacancies in a timely matter will help avoid split-votes.
- Clear guidance on Council Liaisons' roles and voting abilities would be beneficial.

The Committee of the Whole extended an invitation to the Chair of the Environment, Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee, who was unable to attend this evening, to present at a future Committee of the Whole meeting.

Moved by Councillor Armour, seconded by Councillor Cavens: That the Committee of the Whole recommend to Council that staff be directed to produce a staff report summarizing recommendations from the Advisory Planning Committee, the APC Design Review Committee, and the Environment, Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee, to be reported at a subsequent meeting. Carried Unanimously.

7. STAFF REPORTS

1) [24-087](#) Local Grants, Staff Report FIN-24-007

The Director of Financial Services & IT introduced the report, and with the Manager of Economic Development, was available to respond to Committee questions.

Councillor Armour, Local Grants Committee Chair, provided a brief overview of the Local Grant policy discussion questions, and noted the Committee's interest in determining Council's direction regarding a review of Local Grants

policies. The following questions were noted for discussion:

- Does Council wish to continue issuing local grants?
- Is Council comfortable with the amount allotted?
- How should Council handle requests in excess of the allotted amount?
- How does Council wish to address the varying types of applicant organizations and initiatives which seek grants?

Councillor Rotchford joined the Committee of the Whole meeting via conference call at 7:07 PM.

Committee of the Whole comments included:

- There are local established events which rely on funding received through the Local Grants program, and whose initiatives and events are valued by the community.
- Some local grant applicants are filling gaps in services which are responsibilities of higher levels of government, but it is a challenge to deny funding given their contribution to the social fabric of the community, and the lack of other funding options.
- Events run by community groups have been significant to the social fabric in the Township, and funding should continue, but prioritization may be necessary.
- Evaluating requests against Council's strategic priorities is of interest.
- Local Grant policy should support established groups, but also ensure opportunities are available to new and innovative community initiatives.
- As it becomes more common-practice for organizers to hire or contract fundraisers, it could be beneficial to consider whether Council wishes to provide funding to groups with these resources.
- The amount and size of applications can be a challenge for Local Grant Committee members to evaluate in a timely and effective manner; considering alternative models, such as incorporating volunteer evaluators, or having staff representation on the Committee, may be of interest.
- Review of the application form and process may reveal other opportunities for improved decision-making and accessibility.
- Given the number of reviews the Local Grant Policy has undergone in recent years, it may be beneficial to hire a consultant with expertise on grant policies to improve the longevity of the revised policy.
- Current practice of allowing requests made outside of the application cycle creates a challenge as they are removed from broader budget discussions.
- Further analysis is requested on the array of policies and operational approaches around the region, with regard to who is responsible for decision-making, the frequency and length of funding terms, and whether financial sustainability is a requirement.

- Consideration of an additional innovation fund, or of separate sub-categories for funding, such as events and festivals, economic development, arts and culture, social services, or other types of organizations and initiatives is of interest.
- It is noted that some groups have been denied funding, despite their submission of more fulsome applications because more established groups have been approved.

Moved by Councillor Armour, seconded by Councillor Helliwell: That the Committee of the Whole recommend to Council that staff be directed to conduct a review of Local Grant policies of comparable municipalities in the Capital Regional District, and identify policy options with regards to funding criteria and amounts, processes used to make approval decisions, types of categories, and lengths of grants. Carried Unanimously.

2) [24-180](#) Small Scale Multiple Unit Housing (SSMUH) Update - Report No. DEV-24-026

The Committee of the Whole recessed at 8:30 PM and reconvened at 8:36 PM with all members present.

The Director of Development Services presented a PowerPoint, and noted he was seeking Committee of the Whole feedback.

Committee of the Whole comments included:

- The impact of infill housing on the urban tree canopy is of concern as Esquimalt's tree canopy has previously been reliant on private green spaces, and there remains a limited amount of public space suitable for tree-replacement.
- Height over massing is of benefit for minimizing the loss of green space as housing units are added.
- Provisions for open space are of interest.
- There is interest in being able to amend the policy should problems arise during implementation.
- Discussion of tree conservation is a bigger discussion that could also be revisited during strategic planning.
- Alternative avenues for achieving open and flexible public spaces beyond the Recreation Centre and parks, such as patios and smaller green spaces, are of interest.
- Further consideration is needed to ensure that the Township is able to provide adequate public green spaces, and source funding for infrastructure expansion.

8. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Graeme Verhulst, resident, spoke regarding the Province's standardized

housing designs, noting that they have not been released yet as the Province's Request For Proposals (RFP) is still open.

Andy Fiore, resident, suggested the use of a survey to establish the Community's needs for Local Grants; that accessibility be considered for those without grant-writing experience; and spoke in support of collaborative art programs.

9. ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Mayor Desjardins, seconded by Councillor Helliwell: That the Committee of the Whole meeting be adjourned at 9:15 PM. Carried Unanimously.

MAYOR BARBARA DESJARDINS

THIS 13TH DAY OF MAY, 2024

SARAH HOLLOWAY,
DEPUTY CORPORATE OFFICER
CERTIFIED CORRECT