

**MINUTES OF THE RUXTON ISLAND ADVISORY PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
HELD ON FRIDAY, MARCH 1, 2013 AT 11:00 AM
AT THE VANCOUVER ISLAND CONFERENCE CENTER
101 GORDON STREET, NANAIMO, BC**

Members Present:

Sue French	Local Trustee (Thetis Island)
Roger Kimmerly	Advisory Planning Commission Chair
Dennis Rutherford	Advisory Planning Commission Member
Larry Ross	Advisory Planning Commission Member
Mike Higgins	Advisory Planning Commission Member
David Paterson	Advisory Planning Commission Member
Gina Couchman	Advisory Planning Commission Member
Dan Giesbrecht	Advisory Planning Commission Secretary

Staff Present:

Courtney Simpson	Regional Planning Manager
Aleksandra Brzozowski	Island Planner
Jessie Sherk	Recorder

Others Present:

Approximately three (3) members of the public.

1. Call to Order:

Chair Kimmerly called the meeting to order at 11:00 am.

2. Approval of Agenda

The agenda was adopted by consensus with the following amendments:

- Under Other Business add items:
 - Lines of Communication
 - How minutes are handled
 - Conflict of Interest Guidelines
 - Elect a new secretary as David Paterson has resigned

3. Minutes

3.1 Ruxton Advisory Planning Commission Minutes dated October 19, 2012

The minutes were adopted by consensus with the following amendments:

- In page 4, 5th bullet down delete the words “seem general accepted”
- In page 3, last 2 bullets should be their own bullets not a sub paragraph

A discussion regarding the style of minutes ensued with the following points noted.

- The minutes will be published as draft after the members have had a chance to review and before the next meeting.
- The members like the style of minutes where information is more point form and less detailed, especially when speaking on controversial topics.

Planner Brzozowski started a discussion regarding conflict of interest with the following points noted:

- Local Government Act is silent on the point of Conflict of Interest in Advisory Planning Commissions
- If there is a direct conflict of interest when dealing with something like a bylaw, it is up to that member to excuse themselves from making comments as an Advisory Planning Commission Member
- Someone with a conflict of interest can still participate in other parts of the process (eg. Community Information Meetings, Public Hearings) and speak as a citizen, but not as a member of the Advisory Planning Commission
 - It is acceptable for a member to have bias in an Advisory Planning Commission. The expectation is that appointed members will bring their bias.

4. Update on Community Plan Timeline and Progress

Planner Brzozowski reviewed the timeline. She explained that they are still in the tail end of the goal-setting phase and still looking at what is important to include in the policy. She wants to be clear on the “why” before we start working on the “how”. It was mentioned that there is significantly more discussion about Ruxton Island than any other. Planner Simpson added that they are arranging meetings with property owners on other islands as needed and they should expect much less content for those islands.

There was discussion between the members and staff, which included the following topics:

- Eelgrass mapping has been completed and will be useful info to have when talking of bylaws surrounding docks.
- Location of middens (first nations, archaeological...) and that discovering them is building permit driven. First Nations groups are concerned about middens being ransacked, so that information is kept private. Negotiations are going on with First Nations groups about property owner's rights.
- There has been a letter sent to several First Nations groups describing the process that is being embarked on. Regarding the Lyackson First Nation, staff has committed to consultation once there is a draft plan, tailoring the referral to detail what changes would be relevant to the Lyackson First Nation and follow up with them.
- Next phase for Community Plan review involves information gathering and technical reports, including feasibility report of a community dock. Planner Simpson is responsible for contracting the technical reports, nothing down on paper yet.
- APC members noted there is a correlation between community docks/helicopter landing areas and emergency access.

5. Results of Feedback Survey

The results of the community feedback survey were reviewed and discussed at great length by staff and members. The goal of the survey and the method of gathering comments were also discussed.

6. Refining Draft Goals for Ruxton

It was discussed that one of the purposes of an Official Community Plan is to give whoever is a trustee at the time of possible change information about what the community chose to put in as their vision for the future and that all policies made in an OCP don't necessarily lead right to regulation.

Staff and Members then went through the list of draft goals to decide what was in the Islands Trust jurisdiction, what was not in their jurisdiction, or in mixed jurisdictions. The following groups were made:

In Jurisdiction:

- Protect the natural aesthetic of residential development
- Address setback regulations
- Improve the protection of groundwater resources and quality of drinking water
- Consider a policy regarding commercial activity

Mixed "Jurisdiction"

- Address access to and from the island
- Improve emergency preparedness and response
- Increase the area of protected land
- Recognize the wetland ecosystem on Ruxton and support CVRD in stewardship

Not In Jurisdiction:

- Address noise nuisance (CVRD)
- Address overcrowding of mooring buoys (DFO)
- Address sewage disposal (VIHA)
- Maintain roads at their current small scale of development (MOTI)
- Improve management of existing parks (CVRD)

It was noted that there may be a need to make advocacy statements about matters not in the Islands Trust's jurisdiction.

It was decided that the goal of "strengthening the sense of community" be noted as an underpinning goal for the review process, but not to be included as a goal for the Official Community Plan.

BREAK 12:30pm – 12:54pm

The "In Jurisdiction" goals were discussed in depth as described below.

Consider a policy regarding commercial activity

- There are existing bylaws in place regarding commercial business
- Maintain current zoning bylaws and put policy around home based business

- In favor of businesses that benefit Ruxton Islanders, not in favor of business that benefits non-islanders
- Noise, environmental impact, and safety of residents are concerns in regards to commercial businesses

Address side setback regulations

- The survey indicates that no one is defining this as an issue, the existing situation is fine going into the future

Improve the protection of groundwater resources and quality of drinking water

- The water in existing wells are tested regularly but it's a volunteer thing, not a policy or legislation.
- Wells are owned by the Province of BC and may be removed, it will be up to islanders to get their own water
- Look into making rainwater catchment systems a requirement for new construction. Encourage property owners to put money into that instead of a well.
- Look into possible rebates and incentives
- Encourage the continuation of existing community wells
- Educate property owners about best practices for irrigation and water supply.
- Improving the protection of groundwater resources and quality of drinking water is a very important topic.

Protect the natural aesthetic of residential development

- Survey results show that the public does not want docks
- One APC member indicated that it appeared that those who are in favor of docks seem to be driven by their concern about safety. If we address safety with helicopter/emergency/boat access, it may address the dock issue.
- A community dock will be expensive, may have impact on roadways and may attract an element that the islanders really didn't want, concern of vandalism with increased ease of access
- The wording in the current bylaw is "Preserving the Natural Beauty of Ruxton Island's Coastline." Is that too vague, too subjective at this point?
- The majority of members feel that there should not be any private docks and they should postpone any more discussion about a community dock until after more studies have been completed.
- Educating property owners may be more effective than strict regulations around tree cutting, destruction of land, setbacks, water ...
- Goal is to put something in place to protect the way things look now. Maintain the beauty, coastline protection, and environmental aspects.
- Keeping rural residential character.
- Protecting riparian areas.
- Proper stewardship
- Current bylaw language about shoreline is good.
- Consider regulation to protect ecosystem

Break 2:05 – 2:10

The "Mixed Jurisdiction" goals were discussed in depth.

Increase the area of protected land

- The map of Ruxton Island was reviewed and areas were discussed.
- There should be discussion with the Province of BC through Islands Trust now, in order to get our hands on Crown Land that may be sold into private hands further down the road
- Lots 56 and 84 were noted as two properties that should become parkland.
- Possibilities of putting covenants on private land

Improve emergency preparedness and Response

- Route access and alternative routes if a road gets washed out, were discussed
- Possibilities of making agreements with private land owners for helicopter landing sites
- Work with CVRD

Recognize the wetland ecosystem on Ruxton and Support Cowichan Valley Regional District in stewardship

- Covered already under previous topics.

The “Not In Jurisdiction” goals were then discussed in depth.

Address noise nuisance

- Would be a part of the “protecting the natural beauty” goal
- Support CVRD noise bylaw being enforced if necessary

Maintain roads at their current small-scale of development

- Support current Ministry of Environment and Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure regulations.

Addressing overcrowding of moorage buoys

- Current bylaw states that buoys are permitted
- Can't mandate the number of buoys permitted per lot
- It was agreed amongst the members to stay silent on the subject of moorage buoys

Address Sewage Disposal

- Cowichan Valley Regional District and Vancouver Island Health Authority have policies in place already
- We need to protect flora, fauna and marine ecosystems
- Protect health
- Has impact on groundwater, protecting groundwater is of the highest priority
- Possibility of adding water catchment systems as conditional for building permits?
- Support alternative technologies (composting toilets, grey water etc.)

Improve Management of Existing Parks

There was discussion about encouraging the Cowichan Valley Regional District to develop a management plan for parks on Ruxton Island. It was decided to leave this goal alone for the time being.

Discussion about the next steps

There was discussion around when the next meeting should take place. The work plan was reviewed and it was noted that the first draft would be in June and the Advisory Planning Commission could review it in July. It was also noted that it would be useful to have the community review of the Official Community Plan at the same time as the annual August long weekend meeting with the Ruxton Island Property Owner's Association.

7. Other Business

- Lines of Communication
 - The proper guidelines for cc'ing members in email discussions and roles of members was discussed
 - It was agreed that if you are in a committee, you must include all committee members in discussions pertaining to the committee.
- Draft Minutes
 - The procedure of handling draft minutes was discussed
- Conflict of Interest Guidelines
 - The conflict of interest guidelines were discussed after 3.1
- New Secretary
 - Dan Giesbrecht was appointed as Secretary

It was noted that they could put a statement in the Official Community Plan that recommends a review in 10 years, as the world changes very quickly and 30 years may be a little long to revisit these topics.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:00 pm by consensus.

Recorder

Chair