



HIGHWAY 17 JOINT PENINSULA STEERING COMMITTEE (Central Saanich, North Saanich, Sidney, Tsawout First Nation)

Minutes of the **HIGHWAY 17 JOINT PENINSULA STEERING COMMITTEE** Meeting
Thursday, September 24, 2009, at 2:00 p.m.
Central Saanich Fire Training Centre

PRESENT:

Central Saanich (host)	Mayor Jack Mar Thomas Kouk, Community-at-Large Representative Gary C. Nason, CAO Recording Secretary: Ruby Shea
North Saanich	Mayor Alice Finall Councillor Peter Chandler Bob Williamson, Community-at-Large Representative Heather Gartshore, Community-at-Large Representative Bruce Williams, CAO
Sidney	Mayor Larry Cross Councillor Steve Price John Treleven, Community-at-Large Representative
Saanich Peninsula Chamber of Commerce	Gina Handley

ABSENT:

Central Saanich	Councillor Terry Siklenka
Sidney	Murray Clarke, CAO
Tsawout	Chief Allan Claxton Councillor Tony Underwood Gary Jung, Director of Operations

Call to Order

Mayor Mar called the meeting to order at 2:05 p.m. and requested all attendees to introduce themselves.

Mr. James Letham, 6698 Rey Road, also introduced himself as an interested resident.

Appointment of Chair (and Vice-Chair)

Mayor Mar invited members of the Steering Committee to volunteer themselves for the position of Chair of the Committee. He then suggested Thomas Kouk (Central Saanich) let his name stand for the position.

Councillor Peter Chandler (Sidney) nominated Thomas Kouk, who agreed, and was unanimously accepted as Chair of the Highway 17 Joint Peninsula Steering Committee.

Mr. Thomas Kouk invited members of the Steering Committee to volunteer as Vice-Chair to cover any meetings in his absence.

Councillor Steve Price (Sidney) volunteered to stand as Vice-Chair. Mr. Price was unanimously accepted as Vice-Chair.

Background

Mr. Gary Nason (Central Saanich) gave an overview of the evolution of the Highway 17 Joint Peninsula Steering Committee. Mr. Nason advised that the District of Central Saanich has lobbied with the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MOT) over many years. During various meetings with MOT it has been suggested that the Peninsula municipalities should come together to the fullest extent possible and approach the Ministry with one voice.

Mr. Nason noted MOT also suggested there is no Capital funding available on the horizon, with the exception of the McTavish Road interchange. Mr. Nason recommended that the Committee approach MOT with a report or memorandum which includes the Committee's priorities to assist with MOT's budget prioritization.

Mr. Nason advised that MOT recommended that the Tsawout First Nation be included in this process.

Mr. Nason also advised that while MOT would be responsible for dealing with the major Highway 17 traffic corridor, the secondary access roads would be the responsibility of each individual municipality.

Mr. Nason noted he received an expression of interest from the District of Saanich to be liaisons to the Highway 17 Joint Peninsula Steering Committee, without being active members of the Committee, however they wish to be notified of the meetings and receive a copy of the Minutes from each meeting. Mr. Nason also advised the Tsawout First Nation were invited to attend this meeting and received a copy of the agenda package for distribution to their Committee members.

Councillor Peter Chandler (Sidney) expressed concern that while the municipalities are responsible for the secondary roads within their jurisdictions, would they have access to

MOT's resources to see if road closures are viable. Councillor Chandler also noted that MOT needs to be aware of what the municipalities are doing.

Mr. Nason (Central Saanich) advised that MOT is aware of this Steering Committee meeting.

Mayor Mar (Central Saanich) noted that much of the information has already been supplied by MOT in the "Highway 17 Corridor Planning Strategy" Report.

Mayor Cross (Sidney) advised that it is unlikely the BC Ministry would offer any financial funding unless there is a commitment of funding from the municipalities.

Mr. Nason (Central Saanich) advised that the District of Central Saanich was successful in booking a meeting with the Honourable Shirley Bond, Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure, at the UBCM Annual Convention. Mayor Finall and Mayor Cross have subsequently been invited to attend the meeting with Minister Bond.

Mr. John Treleaven (North Saanich) expressed concerns regarding the vehicular safety when travelling along the Pat Bay Highway noting "what role does the Pat Bay Highway play with the citizens". Mr. Treleaven stated that the engineers signed off on drawings that in his opinion should not have been signed off and that the north portion of Highway 17 does not fit under the definition of "highway". Mr. Treleaven advised that reducing the speed limit to 70 Km/hr would be a low cost approach to achieve safety for travelers. He also stated that the highway was originally built to move people from the Swartz Bay ferry terminal to the City of Victoria.

Councillor Steve Price (Sidney) questioned what the District of Saanich's role is in this process? Is the Steering Committee looking at the Highway from the Central Saanich border north, or from Sayward Road north?

Mr. Nason (Central Saanich) replied that Saanich is happy to participate in a liaison capacity, but is not prepared to be full participating members of the Committee.

Mr. Bob Williamson (North Saanich) queried what are the procedures and the priorities of the Steering Committee?

Mr. Nason (Central Saanich) advised that the ultimate outcome of the Steering Committee is a letter or report to MOT outlining the set of priorities such as an action plan, time frame, cost sharing, and the Steering Committee's expectations.

Mr. Williamson (North Saanich) advised that Sidney, Central Saanich, and North Saanich must come to an agreement in unison, with the priority being safety as the first focus on the intersections.

Councillor Chandler (North Saanich) advised that the Steering Committee needs to consult with other key agencies i.e. BC Ferries, Victoria Airport Authority, etc.

Ms. Gina Handley (Saanich Peninsula Chamber of Commerce) added that the Police, Ambulance, and Rescue agencies can contribute ideas for safety at the hub interchanges.

Mayor Mar (Central Saanich) advised that MOT addressed safety and reliability on page 7 of the "Highway 17 Corridor Planning Strategy" report. He also stated that he currently sits on the Victoria Regional Transit Commission.

Mayor Finall (North Saanich) advised BC Transit learned that the design proposal for the McTavish interchange has been changed to address pedestrian and cyclist needs. She will find out the name of the individual responsible for the changes.

Mayor Cross (Sidney) stated the Steering Committee needs to be mindful of the suppliers of goods, industrial areas (Keating) and the economic / social life of the citizens.

Mr. Treleaven (Sidney) queried what the current average travel time is from Swartz Bay to the City of Victoria and that the corridor should allow faster results.

Councillor Price (Sidney) requested that at the meeting with MOT at the UBCM Convention, MOT be asked what the municipalities can expect over the next 10–20 years in regards to improvements to Highway 17.

Ms. Handley (Saanich Peninsula Chamber of Commerce) noted that MOT indicated there is no post-Olympics capital planning for the Highway 17 traffic corridor, however could that change if the Peninsula municipalities come together with one voice?

Mr. Nason (Central Saanich) suggested the Steering Committee include MOT at the next Steering Committee meeting to make a presentation, including an update on their latest position in regards to capital funding and what they would be looking for from the municipalities in regards to capital funding contributions for major improvements / upgrades.

Mr. Treleaven (Sidney) advised safety is the first priority and suggested MOT should be made responsible for the design to meet BC highway standards.

Mayor Mar (Central Saanich) noted MOT's position is to have no level crossing, and traffic lights must be a minimum of 8 km apart.

Councillor Price (Sidney) advised there have been many multi-car collisions at Beacon Avenue from Ferry traffic and that ICBC would be able to provide valuable statistics accordingly. He noted the highway is used as a main supply route for all entities (i.e. ferries; transit; military)

Councillor Chandler (North Saanich) requested Mayor Mar to inquire if the Capital Regional District "Travel Choices" dovetail with the Steering Committee's initiatives to reduce overlapping of duties / costs.

Mr. Nason (Central Saanich) will contact Mr. Dave Edgar, Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure, to attend the next Steering Committee meeting. Mr. Nason advised the Honourable Murray Coell may be present at the MOT meeting at UBCM. Mr. Nason offered the services of Central Saanich to provide administration and secretarial support to the Steering Committee, and questioned if other resources would be required (i.e. a consultant) which could cost each municipality \$5,000 to \$10,000.

Mr. Treleaven (Sidney) suggested Police and Ambulance Services could be contacted to supply accident rates at specific areas on the Pat Bay Highway.

Mr. Kouk thanked everyone for their ideas and suggestions.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 3:20 p.m. Central Saanich will host the next Highway 17 Joint Peninsula Steering Committee meeting. Date to be determined.