



Salt Spring Island Project Advisory Planning Commission Minutes of a Regular Meeting

Date of Meeting: Thursday, January 29, 2026

Location: United Church, Upper Hall Meeting Room
111 Hereford Avenue, Salt Spring Island

Members Present: Eric March, Chair
Robert Steinbach, Commissioner
Riley Donovan, Commissioner
Anne Gunn, Commissioner
Maxine Leichter, Commissioner

Regrets: John Cade, Commissioner
Tim Hiltz, Commissioner

Staff Present: Chris Hutton, Regional Planning Manager
Carly Bilney, Recorder (electronic)

Others Present: There were 2 members of the public present.
Sandra Borton, McElhanney Consulting (electronic)
Kevin Brooks, McElhanney Consulting (electronic)

1. AGENDA

Chair March called the meeting to order at 9:07 a.m. He acknowledged that the meeting was being held on the territory of the Coast Salish First Nations.

1.1 Approval of Agenda

The following item was proposed to be added to the agenda:

- Discussion of Terms of Reference

By general consent the agenda was adopted as amended.

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

2.1 Draft Minutes of the December 16, 2025 Meeting – For Adoption

It was MOVED and SECONDED,

that the Project Advisory Planning Commission accept the minutes as presented.

CARRIED

3. BUSINESS ITEMS

3.0 Discussion of Terms of Reference

Discussion ensued about the expectations of the consultants, the Project Advisory Planning Commission, and of staff as the project progresses. Some Commissioners expressed concern about going beyond the scope of the Terms of Reference.

It was moved and seconded that the task of the Commission be kept to that described in the Terms of Reference which is to advise on the public consultation for this project.

Discussion on the motion was held, and the RPM read the Terms of Reference. Different views were expressed about whether the Project Advisory Planning Commission is to advise only on details related to the community engagement plan, or also on the Official Community Plan. A suggestion was made to amend the motion in such a way that does not describe what the Terms of Reference are.

The consultant noted that the meeting in March is to continue engagement on the overall process, ensure people are aware of upcoming engagement, and have a fulsome conversation about the expectations from the Terms of Reference. He commented that discussion can be had as needed if the Project Advisory Planning Commission is in disagreement with Islands Trust staff about the role the Commission was intended to play. He suggested that today's discussion focus on the engagement plan, the next steps – which will include marketing to ensure people are aware of the process – and the tools that might be used.

A Commissioner emphasized a need to clarify to the public that the Project Advisory Planning Commission is not providing advice on the amendments to the Official Community Plan, but is helping with related communication.

It was MOVED and SECONDED,

that the Project Advisory Planning Commission requests that the Local Trust Committee makes clear to the consultant and staff that the task of this Project Advisory Planning Commission should be limited to the Project Advisory Planning Commission Terms of Reference.

CARRIED

3.1 Review Communications and Engagement Plan

The consultant provided a presentation on the Communications and Engagement Plan, and highlighted the following points:

- The plan was developed to ensure efforts are strategic and aligned with the project budget
- Reviewed the timeline for engagement
- Reviewed various engagement tools to be used
- The Project Advisory Planning Commission plays a critical role as champions of the process

Discussion ensued and the following points were made:

- A Commissioner suggested the consultants and Islands Trust staff have a different view of the role of the Project Advisory Planning Commission
- A Commissioner expressed disappointment that the consultants did not acknowledge that Commissioners had already read the plan and were prepared to provide feedback before the presentation
- A Commissioner explained that Commissioners are already talking to their neighbours about the project, and a recurring message is that Salt Spring islanders are so divided that people do not want to get involved – there is extreme polarization, perhaps perceived as opposed to real, between housing and the environment
- A Commissioner suggested that all engagement and marketing strategies provide a balance between: housing, environment and Reconciliation with First Nations
- The consultant noted that Reconciliation with First Nations is included in the project scope (just not in the presentation)
- The consultant noted there is need to be clear that the project is a focused update to improve clarity, usability and effectiveness (not a rewrite)
- A Commissioner suggested CBC Radio and CHIR FM (Salt Spring radio) be used as a means to reach people (the consultant responded that the two stations are on the press release list)

A Commissioner expressed a desire to individually discuss engagement tools and provide feedback on how to use each of them to build trust. A Commissioner suggested an additional meeting be scheduled; the RPM suggested waiting until the consultants have had a chance to provide feedback.

It was MOVED and SECONDED,

that the Project Advisory Planning Commission has, as soon as practical, a meeting to provide input on the marketing and engagement strategies, and that the Project Advisory Planning Commission members provide input to the consulting team.

CARRIED

Commissioner Gunn left the meeting at 10:29 a.m.

The consultant asked which groups should be invited to participate in the engagement, and the following suggestions were offered:

- Positively Forward
- Transition Salt Spring
- Salt Spring accommodations providers
- The Chamber of Commerce
- Groups that would provide insight on accessibility: Gulf Islands Families Together Society (GIFTS), Community Services of Salt Spring, the Food Bank, the Salt Spring Island Primary Care Network, Island Health, Island Community Clinic Society, Chuan Society, IWAV, Ministry of Transportation and Transit
- Go to the people: sports activities (soccer or baseball), churches, etc.
- Do not hold meetings at the Salt Spring Island Multi Space (SIMS) because of limited parking
- Salt Spring Island (SSI) Conservancy, SSI Water Preservation Society, Keep Salt Spring Sustainable
- SSI Farmland Trust, SSI Farmers' Institute, SSI Agricultural Alliance
- North Salt Spring Waterworks District

In response to a question from a Commissioner, the consultant noted that there is no dedicated project email; rather, members of the public will submit emails to the Islands Trust Salt Spring Island info email address for staff to manage.

In response to a question from a Commissioner, the RPM described actions that have been taken or will be taken to consult with First Nations.

A Commissioner recommended the following documents be included in the review:

- An Ecosystem of Health Perspective related to Salt Spring Island's Official Community Plan Review
- The SSI Complete Community's Assessment Final Report
- Positively Forward – Pathways to Affordable Housing

A Commissioner requested that materials going out to the public be submitted to Commissioners to review in advance, and the consultant responded that all materials will be submitted through staff.

It was MOVED and SECONDED,
that the Project Advisory Planning Commission requests that the Local Trust Committee advise staff to submit written outreach materials to the Project Advisory Planning Commission in advance for comments and suggestions.

CARRIED

A Commissioner expressed disappointment that a meeting had not been planned for February to review the documents discussed. Discussion was held about how

the Project Advisory Planning Commission can continue to provide effective feedback while keeping the project in line with budget and timeline goals.

Comments were made about how the Official Community Plan relates to opportunities for affordable housing.

The consultant asked for feedback about suitable locations for pop-up engagement events and the following suggestions were made:

- Mother Goose events
- Library literacy program's reading groups
- 10% Tuesdays at Country Grocer draws people

The following venues were recommended for workshop events:

- Lions Hall
- Meeting hall at the Legion
- Fulford Hall (should be a south end location) or Beaver Point

The consultant asked for feedback on which landmarks to include in Crowdmapping, and a suggestion was made to allow Commissioners to send suggestions to the consultants, through staff, up to a given date. The consultant agreed to send a list of questions to all Commissioners with a deadline for feedback.

4. OTHER BUSINESS – None

5. ADJOURNMENT

By general consent the meeting adjourned at 11:21 a.m.

Eric March, Chair

CERTIFIED CORRECT:

Carly Bilney, Recorder