



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

Date of Meeting: Tuesday, April 21, 2026

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

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

Staff Present: Chris Hutton, Regional Planning Manager
Peter Thicke, Island Planner
Katherine Vogt, Recorder (Electronic)

Others Present: Tim Peterson, Salt Spring Island Local Trust Committee Chair
(electronic)

1. AGENDA

Chair March called the meeting to order at 10:04 a.m. He acknowledged that the meeting was being held on the territory of the Coast Salish First Nations.

1.1 Approval of Agenda

By general consent the agenda was approved as presented

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

2.1 Draft Minutes of the January 29, 2026 Meeting-For Adoption

The following changes to the minutes were presented for consideration:

- On Page 3, 2nd paragraph, remove the entire last bullet.

It was MOVED and SECONDED,

that the Salt Spring Island Project Advisory Planning Commission remove from the January 29, 2026 minutes the following inaccurate bulleted sentence: “A Commissioner suggested that all engagement strategies acknowledge that Salt Spring has become a divided community.”

DEFEATED

The motion was DEFEATED by Commissioners who expressed belief that the quoted statement was accurate.

A Commissioner expressed disappointment at the perceived double standard that Project Advisory Planning Commission (PAPC) members were not permitted to attend meetings electronically, though other participants were, including trustees and consultants.

- Manager Hutton clarified that legislation does not permit commissioners to participate in meetings electronically. Any member of the public, including an elected Trustee are not able to participate in the meeting in the same way as the commissioners, and legislation is therefore not concerned with how observers view the meeting. The RPM added that Senior Management, Trust Council and Trustees are aware of the issue; and added that this latest concern would again be raised to senior management.

It was MOVED and SECONDED,

that the Salt Spring Island Project Advisory Planning Commission adopt the minutes of January 29, 2026 as presented.

CARRIED

3. BUSINESS ITEMS

3.1 Review final deliverables from McElhanney-Verbal Presentation on the following report sections: Public Engagement Summary Report; OCP Major Topic Summaries; OCP Policy Gap Analysis; Background Documents Technical Review Summary Report; SSI Land Use Bylaw Review Memo; Draft Vision and Guiding Principles

Planner Thicke summarized the “Salt Spring Island Official Community Plan and Land Use Bylaw Amendment Project: What We Heard Report” prepared by the consulting company McElhanney, dated March 2026 and comprising 77 pages. He noted the following:

- The Public Engagement Summary Report section of the report contains the consultant suggestion that further public engagement is needed, especially regarding housing and reconciliation issues.
- The OCP Major Topic Summaries section of the report is a 4 page distillation of what consultants heard from members of the public regarding what could be included in a future OCP.

- The OCP Policy Gap Analysis section of the report addresses areas of the OCP that need modernizing.
- The Background Documents Technical Review Summary Report section of the report is a summary review of previous technical reports conducted on Salt Spring regarding farming, housing, and many other land use topics
- The SSI Land Use Bylaw Review Memo section of the report contains a number of suggestions for updating the Land Use Bylaw to make it more modern, readable, and consistent.
- The Draft Vision and Guiding Principles section of the report has been derived from what consultants heard from members of the public throughout the engagement process.

Planner Thicke discussed a recent Local Trust Committee (LTC) resolution which includes the LTC is requesting an updated project plan for the Official Community Plan/Land Use Bylaw project; and considered that the best time for public engagement may be in the fall; and reminded that elected official elections are also coming up in the fall, and noted the OCP-LUB bylaw adoption process will likely be pushed to the spring of 2027 due to these circumstances.

Commissioners asked or noted the following:

- It would be beneficial to receive the raw data with which McElhanney arrived at their definitions and conclusions
 - Planner Thicke responded that staff were attempting to gain this raw data and would pass along any information received to the PAPC.
- Why did McElhanney not renew their contract after completion of their report?
 - Planner Thicke responded that it was currently not known why the consultants were unwilling to renew their contract.
- Winter is a difficult time for public engagement because many people on Salt Spring Island leave for the winter; and summer has long been considered a poor time for civic engagement.
- More general public engagement is unnecessary, except to include winter absent residents; rather, intricate public engagement, for which there is apparently no interest expressed, is needed.
- In the “Housing Section Summary” of the McElhanney report on page 19 of the agenda package, many of the housing items are written as if the current housing section in the current OCP was not completely considered.
- The definition of affordability regarding housing needs to be expanded.
- Members of the public should be asked for their definitions of affordable and workforce housing.
- The McElhanney report sections on environmental sustainability and climate change resilience could be strengthened.
- The commission should have worked with the consultants more closely from the beginning.
- The loudest public opinions are overriding more quiet ones.
- The community engagement process, as conducted by McElhanney, is incomplete.

- Lessons on public engagement may be learned from McElhanney's public engagement process.

It was MOVED and SECONDED,

that the Salt Spring Local Trust Committee direct staff to share any raw datasets that were collected to inform the consultants final reports including all numerical data, all survey results, wording of any questions, methodology of collection, and any additional relevant information

CARRIED

It was MOVED and SECONDED,

that the Salt Spring Local Trust Committee request staff to provide the Project Advisory Planning Commission with any and all information related to the motivation behind the decision of McElhanney not to renew their contract

CARRIED

4. OTHER BUSINESS

The commission discussed the value and viability of a second round of public engagement. Commissioners noted the following:

- The McElhanney Report could be reviewed and debated by the commission and then presented to the public.
- The Terms of Reference are insufficient.
- The McElhanney proposal for further engagement with specific community groups should move forward.
- Important documents and submissions have been excluded from the McElhanney Report; these gaps could have been prevented if the PAPC had been more closely a part of the consultant-led public engagement process from the beginning.
- Many employees and other residents of Salt Spring are still unhoused.
- The list of community groups to engage with will need to be clarified and updated.

It was MOVED and SECONDED,

that the Salt Spring Local Trust Committee request staff to move forward with supplemental engagement as proposed by the consultants, including consulting with community groups, and other actions previously listed by McElhanney

CARRIED

5. ADJOURNMENT

A commissioner suggested to have more frequent PAPC meetings.

It was tentatively considered that the next meeting of the PAPC could be on May 26, 2026 at 9:00 a.m.

By general consent the meeting was adjourned at 12:00pm.

Eric March, Chair

Certified Correct:

Katherine Vogt, Recorder