



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

ADOPTED

Date of Meeting: Tuesday, May 26, 2026

Location: Boardroom, Salt Spring Office
111 Hereford Avenue, Salt Spring Island, BC

Members Present: Eric March, Chair
Tim Hiltz, Commissioner
Robert Steinbach, Commissioner
Riley Donovan, Commissioner

Regrets: Anne Gunn, Commissioner
Maxine Leichter, Commissioner
John Cade, Commissioner

Staff Present: Peter Thicke, Island Planner
Kalyaan Selvakumar, Planning Team Assistant (Electronic)
Michael Bukit, Summer Planning Services Student
Katherine Vogt, Recorder (electronic)

Others Present: There were no members of the public present

1. AGENDA

Chair March called the meeting to order at 9:12 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 adopted as presented.

A commissioner requested further clarification regarding provincial electronic participation legislation that is restrictive for commissioners.

- The Planner updated that the Islands Trust Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) had reached out to a provincial adviser who is currently on holiday leave; and offered to follow up on this ongoing issue;
- A Commissioner requested email updates as new information became available

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

2.1 Draft Minutes of the April 21, 2026 Meeting-For Adoption

By general consent the Advisory Planning Commission adopted the minutes of April 21, 2026 as presented.

3. BUSINESS ITEMS

3.1 Review of the updated project workplan-Verbal Presentation

The Planner acknowledged that Regional Planning Manager (RPM) Hutton was no longer with the Islands Trust; and that Stefan Cermak, Director, Planning Services, would be temporarily filling in for the RPM role.

The Planner noted that the Salt Spring Island Local Trust Committee (LTC) had recently approved the revised workplan for completing the Salt Spring Island Official Community Plan and Land Use Bylaw Update Project; and provided the following updates regarding the project:

- First Nations engagement will be strengthened in accordance with provincial expectations for itemized documentation of every communication; formal referrals to First Nations; and the achievement of consensus;
- Approximately 13 First Nations have interest in Salt Spring Island;
- The unknown outcomes of trustee elections in the fall may possibly lead to adjustments or redirection of the project;
- More consistent, Trust-wide Official Community Plan (OCP) policy frameworks are being considered as supportable from a staff perspective;
- It is expected that an OCP draft could be completed by early spring of 2027 for general referral; and that the bylaw adoption process could occur in the early summer of 2027;
- Planner Thicke is currently working with the Islands Trust Communications Specialist to draft a communications and data plan to best accommodate the further public engagement recommended by McElhanney in their March 2026 “Salt Spring Island Official Community Plan and Land Use Bylaw Amendment Project: What We Heard Report.” It is expected that the communications plan will be ready for the June LTC meeting; and then for Project Advisory Planning Commission (PAPC) review within a month;

Commissioners asked or noted the following:

- Are there any updates regarding why the consultant company McElhanney decided not to renew their contract with the Islands Trust for further work on the Salt Spring Island Official Community Plan and Land Use Bylaw Amendment Project?
 - The Planner speculated that the complexity and small-scale of Salt Spring in comparison to larger-scale municipal/developer processes may have led to a business decision by McElhanney that, given the amount of further work to do on the project, a renewal of the contract would not be economically viable.

- Is the raw data from McElhanney’s public engagement processes available?
 - The Planner affirmed that the raw data had been received a week ago and would be presented to the LTC for their next meeting; and would be put on the agenda for the next meeting of the PAPC;

3.2 Review of the draft Vision and Guiding Principles-verbal presentation

The Planner explained the significance of the Vision and Guiding Principles portion of the Official Community Plan (OCP), noting the following:

- All OCP public policies going forward would be aligned with it;
- A community vision statement is aspirational;
- The current Vision and Guiding Principles draft, as written by McElhanney from their initial public consulting activities, is considered a very rough draft; planning staff have added some language to it;
- The LTC has thus far expressed concern that the draft acknowledges historical First Nations interests but does not address current and ongoing First Nations interests

Commissioners asked or noted the following:

- The draft vision statement describes Salt Spring as a “rural” island; however, Salt Spring is actually rural and semi-rural. The word “rural” has powerful implications and may lead to lesser housing development flexibility in the future;
- Existing rural designations are currently conflicting with housing needs;
- Current noise restrictions are similar for large farms as for small more suburban plots;
- Given that the entire Salt Spring Island Official Community Plan and Land Use Bylaw Amendment Project was initiated by a lack of local housing, Guiding Principle 5. Community Resilience, Diversity, and Well-Being should be moved to the number one position because housing needs fall under this category;
 - The Planner noted that while the numbering of the guiding principles was not intended to suggest priority, that there is an implied perception of priority;
 - A Commissioner suggested that an explanation of priority be embedded in the draft document itself;
- A Commissioner suggested that Guiding Principle 2. Deep Connection to Place and Environmental Stewardship be placed in the number one position;
- The existence of the McElhanney draft of Guiding Principles infers that the entire OCP is being rewritten; which is conflictual given that the entire project was initiated by the request for a focus on housing;
 - The Planner responded that part of the process, outside of improving housing options, was to improve the readability of the OCP;
 - The planner added that the weighting of the Guiding Principles is better conveyed in the policies that follow;
- The lack of progress on housing has been harmful to the community;

- Housing protections should be more explicitly mentioned in the Guiding Principles; because previous policy frameworks, such as the 2008 Salt Spring OCP, have been so narrow as to completely preclude housing needs over the last 20 years;
- Both gentrification and sub-standard housing are significant issues on Salt Spring;
- Economic realities in most locales outside of Salt Spring force developers to build multi-story;
- Appropriate processes and documents of outside government agencies could be taken into consideration by the PAPC and the LTC, for example, the Local Community Commission's Integrative Housing Strategy

3.3 Materials review process-Verbal Presentation

The Planner expected that the Salt Spring Island Official Community Plan and Land Use Bylaw Update Project would, going forward, be divided into four or five sections, each to be worked on alone for some months at a time.

The Planner explained that draft sections would be given first to the LTC for review, and then to the PAPC for additional review, and then back to the LTC for further review, and possibly back to the PAPC for more review, until the draft section was considered finished enough to be referred formally to First Nations. Outside consultants would only be used for minor technical aspects of the project.

4. OTHER BUSINESS

None

5. ADJOURNEMENT

By general consent the meeting was adjourned at 10:36 a.m.

Eric March, Chair

CERTIFIED CORRECT:

Katherine Vogt, Recorder