

DRAFT | Minutes of the 9:00 am Thursday, March 6, 2025 @ 9:00 am Town of Qualicum Beach Heritage Forest Commission meeting held in the Committee Room, Town Hall, 660 Primrose Street, Qualicum Beach, BC

PRESENT: Councillor Anne Skipsey, Member, Chair
Angie Price, Member at Large
Cormack Gates, Member at Large
Susan Gauthier, Member, Brown Property Preservation Society
Tom Whitfield, Member, Brown Property Preservation Society

ALSO PRESENT: Lou Varela, Chief Administrative Officer
Luke Sales, Director of Planning & Community Development
Trudy Coates, Corporate Services Support
Frankie Iwachow, Guest, The Land Conservancy of BC
Brandy MacMillan, Office Assistant

The Chair called the meeting to order at 9:05 am.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The Town of Qualicum Beach Heritage Forest Commission adopted, by unanimous consent, the March 6, 2025 meeting agenda, as amended with provision of additional information regarding items (4)(c) and (4)(d).

ELECTION OF THE CHAIR

T. Whitfield MOVED THAT the Town of Qualicum Beach Heritage Forest Commission elect Councillor Anne Skipsey as Chair for 2025.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

The Town of Qualicum Beach Heritage Forest Commission approved, by unanimous consent, the November 7, 2024 meeting minutes.

COUNCIL INTERFACE

1) Heritage Forest Commission Orientation Handbook

Staff distributed the updated Orientation Handbook to all Commission members for review. The purpose of the Handbook is to provide existing resources as a reference for Commission members. A workshop to review the Handbook will be scheduled at a future date. Members are to submit comments for discussion at the workshop.

2) Status of Heritage Forest Commission Recommendations to Council

a) November 20, 2024, Council Resolutions

i. Beach Creek Erosion Due to Foot Traffic

The Council resolution listed as agenda item 4(2)(a)(i) was considered. Committee members agreed that continued foot traffic until installation of the fence in 2026 could be disastrous as attempts to inhibit foot traffic with temporary fixes (ie. piling brush in the way) have been ineffective. Councillor A. Skipsey will bring this item back to Council to determine if the \$15,000 can be advanced to 2025.

C. Gates MOVED, THAT the Heritage Forest Commission recommends to Council THAT, further to the November 20, 2024 Council resolution instructing staff to include a \$15K capital budget provision in the 2025-2029 Financial Plan for a project to construct approximately 220 feet of split cedar rail fencing, there be consideration for constructing the split cedar rail fence in the fall of 2025.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

ii. **Beach Creek Restoration Monitoring**

Uncertainty remains regarding whether Mount Arrowsmith Biosphere Region (MABR), Pacific Salmon Foundation, or Streamkeepers are leading this initiative. T. Whitfield and staff will continue to work towards identifying the lead organization. In future, organizations should provide written correspondence to the Town for project suggestions, as staff will need to be in contact with the organization to identify any challenges that could arise. Discussion occurred around insurance requirements and staff will follow up.

S. Gauthier MOVED, THAT staff report back on the status of the November 20, 2024, Council motion listed as Item 4(2)(ii) in the Heritage Forest Commission March 6, 2025 agenda at the next Heritage Forest Commission meeting.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

iii. **Heritage Forest Housekeeping | Maintenance Update**

The wreath hung in the Heritage Forest to celebrate the Mount Arrowsmith Biosphere Region Research Institute's Amazing Places initiative was created by MABRRI. Holly, which is a non-native/invasive species, was injected into the wreath. The Town will ensure invasive species are not brought/introduced into the Heritage Forest by the Town.

3) **Referrals to the Heritage Forest Commission from Council - Nil**

4) **Council Resolutions - For Information**

(a) **November 20, 2024 Regular Council Meeting Resolution**

CAO, L. Varela, introduced Policy 3000-22 Requests for New or Increased Service. This policy was supported in the last round of Strategic Planning and allows Council and staff to address new or increased service requests through the budget.

(b) **November 27, 2024 Special Council Meeting Resolution**

S. Gauthier was appointed to the Heritage Forest Commission as a member representing the Brown Property Preservation Society, for a term ending December 31, 2025.

(c) **March 5, 2025 Special Council Meeting Resolution**

CAO, L. Varela, introduced the following resolution from the March 5, 2025 Special Council Meeting:

THAT Council authorizes the request from the Brown Property Preservation Society and The Land Conservancy of British Columbia (TLC) to move forward in March 2025 to replant the south slope of the recently hydroseeded area of the Crescent Road East Beach Creek culvert

project using Brown Property Preservation Society volunteers supervised by Town staff; AND FURTHER THAT staff be directed to seek concurrence in writing for the project from the Brown Property Preservation Society and TLC as per the Covenant; AND FURTHER THAT if any large woody debris is anchored to the south slope below the overflow intake, that it be restricted to wood that is less than 100mm in diameter; AND FURTHER THAT the project cost of \$2,250 be funded from within the Town's operating budget, with plants to be purchased and provided by the Mount Arrowsmith Biosphere Region Society.

AND FURTHER, THAT Council authorize the release of the report entitled "Beach Creek Culvert Hydroseeded Area of South Slope Replanting" dated for reference, March 5, 2025 to the Heritage Forest Commission with sections protected under Section 90(1)(d) removed.

T. Whitfield MOVED, THAT the Heritage Forest Commission amends the agenda by adding additional information regarding the Beach Creek Culvert Hydroseeded Area of South Slope Replanting.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

T. Whitfield will provide staff with a consolidated package outlining the planting plan and work details, along with written concurrence from the Brown Property Preservation Society and TLC confirming approval of the replanting plan. The project is time-sensitive due to spring planting conditions.

(d) March 5, 2025 Special Council Meeting Resolution

F. Iwachow spoke to the following resolution from the March 5, 2025 Special Council Meeting:

WHEREAS The Land Conservancy of British Columbia holds Passport to Nature (P2N) Programs (free events with financial support from Province of British Columbia) throughout the year around BC to engage the community in nature appreciation;

WHEREAS these events are typically 1 to 3 hours in duration for groups up to 20 people to provide educational opportunities on different nature topics with TLC conducting advance and on-site registration and liability;

AND WHEREAS the deadline to identify a P2N location in 2025 is March 10, 2025;

BE IT RESOLVED, THAT Council supports in principle The Land Conservancy of British Columbia (TLC)'s request to hold a TLC Passport to Nature program event in the Heritage Forest in 2025;

AND FURTHER THAT staff be authorized to finalize arrangements subject to seeking concurrence in writing for the project from the Grantees named in the Conservation Covenant, Brown Property Preservation Society and the TLC as per the Covenant.

HERITAGE FOREST COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL FOR PUBLIC ACCESS TO OBSERVE & APPRECIATE NATURE

Staff will investigate whether Council approval is required for small events/activities, such as educational tours, and report back to the Commission.

T. Whitfield MOVED, THAT the Heritage Forest Commission recommends to Council that permission be granted for T. Whitfield to provide guided tours of the Heritage Forest on April 4th and 5th as part of the Brant Festival.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

HERITAGE FOREST COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL FOR MANAGEMENT & DEVELOPMENT OF HERITAGE FOREST CONSISTENT WITH THE COVENANT

1. Heritage Forest Management Plan Update

The Commission and staff discussed the Fire Chief's recommendation to replace wood chip trails with gravel trails. Suggestions were made to update the current draft of the Management Plan provided by T. Whitfield.

T. Whitfield MOVED, THAT WHEREAS Schedule C of the 2008 Heritage Forest Conservation Covenant item 1.1(a)(ii) states "surfacing material shall be wood chips or similar material and no impervious surfacing material may be used.";

THAT the Heritage Forest Commission recommends to Council THAT staff finalize the updated draft Heritage Forest Management Plan, excluding the use of gravel as a surface treatment on trails, excluding the use for covering roots, and including the following recommended edits to the draft Heritage Forest Management Plan as follows:

- Strike "18.8 hectares (46.5 acres)" and insert "about 20 hectares (50 acres)"
- Under Management Activities
 - (d), strike "crush (non-combustible trail base)" and insert "mulch"
 - (j)(iv), strike "Felled Danger Trees shall" and insert "Felled Danger Trees and branches shall" and strike "(no deeper than 2 inches)" and insert "(no more than a thin layer)"
- Appendix 'B', item 5, strike "cut felled tree stem into sections" and insert "cut felled tree stem into long sections"

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

2. BPPS Representative Verbal Update - Covenant Grantor & Grantees January 31, 2025 Meeting

The Commission and staff discussed the survey of the Beach Creek soil slump located near the 4th fairway of the golf course. Staff have confirmed there is no movement of the slump. L. Varela will send an email explaining the survey to Commission members.

HERITAGE FOREST COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL ON RULES & LIMITATIONS ON THE USE OF THE HERITAGE FOREST

Nil

HERITAGE FOREST COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL ON EXPENDICTURES FOR DEVELOPMENT, OPERATION & MAINTENANCE OF THE HERITAGE FOREST

The Commission and staff discussed and agreed upon changes to be made to the draft Annual Work Plan. A notation stating that the Commission has recommendations contrary to the use of gravel on trails will be added to the Work Plan.

Staff will investigate whether volunteers are covered under insurance while performing work alone and will also investigate if public education activities require Council approval.

S. Gauthier MOVED, THAT the Heritage Forest Commission recommends to Council THAT Council directs staff to investigate the matter of individual volunteers working alone in the forest with regards to individual safety and the Town’s liability; AND FURTHER THAT staff be directed to report back on the ability to accommodate the proposed Heritage Forest Annual Work Plan for 2025 as amended.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

HERITAGE FOREST COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL FOR FUNDING APPLICATIONS AND GRANTS

Nil

ADJOURNMENT

S. Gauthier MOVED, THAT the Heritage Forest Commission adjourns the March 6, 2025 meeting.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

MEETING ADJOURNED: 12:30 pm

Certified Correct:

Heather Svensen,
Director of Corporate Services

Confirmed this ____ day of _____, 2025.

Anne Skipsey, Chair