

**DISTRICT OF NORTH VANCOUVER
COUNCIL WORKSHOP**

Minutes of the Council Workshop for the District of North Vancouver held at 6:07 p.m. on Monday June 20, 2016 in the Committee Room of the District Hall, 355 West Queens Road, North Vancouver, British Columbia.

Present: Mayor R. Walton
Councillor R. Bassam
Councillor M. Bond
Councillor J. Hanson
Councillor R. Hicks
Councillor D. MacKay-Dunn (via telephone)
Councillor L. Muri (6:08 pm)

Staff: Mr. D. Stuart, Chief Administrative Officer
Ms. C. Grant, General Manager – Corporate Services
Mr. V. Penman, Fire Chief
Ms. D. Mason, Director, North Shore Emergency Program
Mr. J. Gordon, Manager – Administrative Services
Mr. S. Ono, Manager – Engineering Services
Ms. F. Dercole, Section Manager – Public Safety
Mr. G. Exley, Community Forester
Ms. A. Reiher, Confidential Council Clerk

Also in

Attendance: Mr. B. Blackwell, Professional Forester and Biologist - B. A. Blackwell & Associates, Ltd.

1. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

1.1. June 20, 2016 Council Workshop Agenda

MOVED by Councillor HICKS

SECONDED by Councillor HANSON

THAT the agenda for the June 20, 2016 Council Workshop be adopted as circulated.

CARRIED

2. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

Nil

3. REPORTS FROM COUNCIL OR STAFF

3.1. Wildland-Urban Interface Fire Risk Management

File No. 13.6770/Climate Change Adaptation

Councillor MURI arrived at this point of the proceedings.

Mr. Steve Ono, Manager – Engineering Services, provided an introduction to the Wildland Interface Fire Risk Management for the District and reported that good progress has been made with the Community Wildfire Protection Plan.

Ms. Fiona Dercole, Section Manager – Public Safety, reported that aging infrastructure and climate change impacts have decreased forest health and climate models predict that by 2050 North Vancouver may expect four types of climatic changes:

- Hotter than average annual air temperatures;
- Changes in precipitation patterns;
- A significant rise in sea levels; and,
- More frequent and severe extreme weather events.

Ms. Dercole reviewed examples of climate change that have affected the District from the fall of 2014 to the summer of 2015:

- Record-setting summer temperatures;
- Temperatures that were higher earlier than usual;
- Severe windstorms; and,
- Drought conditions requiring a Level 3 water restriction.

It was also reported that large forest fires in nearby communities affected the District's air quality, heavy rainfall events caused flooding, and low snow packs contributed to low water reservoir levels and reduced winter recreation opportunities.

Ms. Dercole mentioned that some climate change impacts which affect residents include:

- Personal health and safety concerns due to injury, air quality, or damaged infrastructure and housing;
- Reduced water supply or poor water quality; and,
- Damaged recreation areas.

Ms. Dercole also commented that climate change impacts municipal staff and operations, noting that:

- Natural hazards are more challenging to manage;
- Spending to maintain public assets increases to prevent or fix damage; and,
- Staff priorities redirected to deal with emergency responses result in a reduced capacity to maintain current operations and services.

Ms. Dercole reported that climate change affects the natural environment by contributing to a loss of native biodiversity and that invasive species spread when the ecosystem balance is disrupted. It was also mentioned that some of the impacts associated with increased frequency and severity of wildfires due to warmer and drier weather are:

- Structural damage;
- Displaced residents;
- Reduced access to recreational areas; and,
- Psychosocial impacts on volunteers and staff emergency responders.

Ms. Dercole commented that 36 of the 38 recommendations in the Community Wildfire Protection Plan by Mr. Bruce Blackwell, Professional Forester and Biologist, have been implemented and that the pending two are underway. The recommendations include categories such as:

- Hazard and risk mapping;
- Communication and education;
- Policy and planning tools to improve structure protection;
- Training;
- Fuel management; and,
- Post-fire rehabilitation.

Ms. Dercole commented on the Guidelines for Landscaping and Building Design to be consistent with the wildfire protection standards published by the National Fire Protection Association. It was also noted that the wildfire hazard DPA objectives include:

- Manage development to reduce wildfire risk using Firesmart principles;
- Reduce the likelihood of a structural fire spreading to neighboring properties and the adjacent forests;
- Minimize associated post-fire landslides, debris flows, flooding and erosion; and,
- Protect people, property and environmental values.

Ms. Dercole reported on the success of the recent Operation Dry Lightning 2, led by the North Shore Emergency Management (NSEMO) and North Shore Municipalities and that:

- Evacuation methodologies and new technologies were field tested; and,
- A learning opportunity was provided for staff and volunteers.

Staff advised that the District is preparing a Community Wildfire Protection Plan, a Wildfire Development Permit Area, a Fuel Management Program, a North Shore Interface Fire Working Group and an Evacuation Planning Strategy. Ms. Dercole commented on the importance for residents and staff to be ready for all emergencies and to register with NSEMO to receive alerts.

Council discussion ensued and the following comments and concerns were noted:

- Questioned how long it takes for a forest to be made vulnerable by extreme heat;
- Queried if the District has the capability to act on fires requiring aerial attacks;
- Queried how many trees would need to be removed to create a defensible space between homes and the forest;
- Queried the amount put toward fuel treatment work and who does the work; and,
- Commented on the need to provide an incentive for residents to place protective roofing on their homes and to protect their properties from fire.

Mr. Blackwell commented that whether a fire becomes large or not depends on the location, vegetation and the winds at the time of the event and that the largest risk is a house fire in close proximity to the forest.

Mr. Blackwell noted that the closest aerial firefighting aircraft is based in Abbotsford, and helicopters with buckets are available as a resource.

Mr. Blackwell commented that homes should maintain a safe distance of 30 feet from the forest; however, hedging and other vegetation surrounding a home may cause a threat as well.

Ms. Dercole noted that fuel treatment work is done by outside contractors, that this work is funded by a Provincial grant of \$400,000, and that the District funds thirty percent.

4. PUBLIC INPUT

Nil

5. ADJOURNMENT

MOVED by Councillor MURI

SECONDED by Councillor HANSON

THAT the June 20, 2016 Council Workshop be adjourned.

CARRIED
(6:53 pm)

Mayor



D/ Linda Bruck
Municipal Clerk