



Elders Council for Parks In British Columbia

**16TH Annual General Meeting
December 8, 2020
Held virtually by Zoom**

Minutes

The President called the Annual General Meeting to order at 9:15 am

Present: 13 members. It was later understood that there were others trying to join, but, being Elders, they struggled with the technology.

President Colin Campbell welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted that we were meeting on the unceded territory of several First Nations

1. Approval of the Agenda

Motion: to approve the Agenda as previously circulated. **Moved:** Jim Anderson,
Seconded: Tory Steven. **Carried**

2. Approval of the 2019 Annual General Meeting minutes

Bob Peart updated the information on the book about Yorke Edwards which should be available next June.

Motion: to approve the 2019 minutes as circulated. **Moved:** Bev Ramey, **Seconded:** Bill Henwood. **Carried**

3. Reports

President – Colin Campbell

The President reviewed the past year, highlighting the accomplishments and frustrations of this unusual year. His full report is attached.

Motion: to accept the President's report. **Moved:** Bob Peart, **Seconded:** Nancy Wilkin
Carried

Jim Anderson suggested that CoVid gave an added argument for park support by government based on increased use. He also noted the need to expand marine protection.

Jim also queried the status of archival material at UVic. Tory Steven, Bob Peart and Gail Ross updated the state of discussions with UVic.

Treasurer – Bill Henwood

The Treasurer reviewed the 2020 financial report for the Society's General account and the

Gaming account. The General account has a cash balance of \$6744 and a \$15,316 term deposit. Of the total amount in the General account, \$17994 is restricted for improving disabled access to the Heritage Centre, for improvements to the inside of the Heritage Centre and for support for the library. The remaining \$ 4044 is unrestricted. The Gaming account has a balance of \$6623 due to the delay in the delivery of the outreach program. It is expected that these funds will be expended in the winter/spring as we modify the outreach program to a more virtual platform until the in-person delivery can return.

The Treasurer's report is attached.

Motion: to accept the 2020 financial report. **Moved:** Bev Ramey, **Seconded:** Nancy Wilkin. **Carried**

The President then noted that Invictus has offered to continue to provide auditor services on a pro bono basis to the Elders Council as required by our CRA charitable status.

Motion: to appoint Invictus as auditor. **Moved:** Bill Henwood, **Seconded:** Bob Peart. **Carried**

4. Election of Directors

The following members have indicated that they are prepared to act as directors for 2020. Bob Peart, Colin Campbell, Tory Steven, Bev Ramey, Bill Henwood, Gail Ross, Rick Searle, Mel Turner, Kim St. Claire and Nancy Wilkin.

The President asked if any of the other members present wished to stand but none indicated.

Motion: that the identified directors be elected. **Moved:** Jim Anderson, **Seconded:** Jon O'Riordan. **Carried**

5. Officers

Colin indicated that the following people have expressed serving as officers for 2019.

President: Colin Campbell Vice President: Nancy Wilkin

Secretary: Mel Turner Treasurer: Bill Henwood

The officers were approved by the directors at a subsequent meeting later that day.

6. Other Business:

Bob Peart suggested that the Elders Council engage the Minister of Environment and Climate Change Strategy to move our initiative on park funding and climate change.

Tory Steven presented an approach on parks and climate change as this is an Elders Council priority and invited members to assist in the initiative.

7. Adjournment:

Motion: to adjourn. **Moved:** Bill Henwood, **Seconded:** Kim St. Claire, **Carried**

The meeting adjourned at 10:35 pm.

President's Report 2020

Eighteen months ago, at Nancy's suggestion, we decided to work with others to organise a conference that would provide a focus for our projects and would continue our tradition of stimulating dialogue about BC's Parks.

We made good progress and, in partnership with the BC Parks Foundation, CPAWS, BC Parks and the BC Park Facility Operators, we spent much of the spring of 2020 organising this, 250 or more, participant conference for October. Unfortunately, like many other good things, it had to be cancelled because of the Covid virus.

Challenged by this cancellation, we went back to a core theme that we highlighted at our 2019 AGM. - "Parks and Climate Change". We created a working group chaired by Tory Stevens and supported by four other Elders. The more we explored parks and climate change the more we were impressed by the possible contribution that parks can play in restoring biodiversity, building climate change resilience and enhancing public health. It also can be a powerful vehicle for government to advance its objectives and invest in parks. Importantly it offers a vehicle to attract Elders to contribute to the future of parks through participating in initiatives that inspire their engagement. More of this later in our agenda.

Heritage Centre

Back home on beautiful Mount Seymour Park, Mel has been working hard to keep our Heritage Centre functioning as it has been battered by the elements. Working with Elyse, we have developed a series of puppet shows designed to introduce kids to the joy of parks. Betty, our manager, has been a trouper coping as she has with many changes over the year thanks to the weather and Covid.

Archives

We have yet to find the support that Gail needs to address the challenges of maintaining our archival program. Archives are important and I am hoping that we can recruit more support for this area

Park Oversight

Thanks to the excellent work of Bev and the support of the Minister. Bev was able to work out an improved permitting process to facilitate scientific research in parks. This is really important for the growing family of citizen scientists.

Land Acquisition

Combining the deep skills of Ian Atherton and the negotiating excellent of Mel Turner, we continued to work with the BC Parks Foundation to acquire additions to our protected areas system. The highlight was the purchase of West Ballenas Islands - a long-sought after property.

Political Conversations and parks funding

We continued our dialogue so with each of the three political parties in the lead up to the election.

The Liberal Party was keen to build on the Futures Strategy that they developed four years ago and strongly felt that parks deserved more funding. Their platform did offer some promise in providing more recreation opportunities.

The Greens had difficulty incorporating much about parks into their platform and were difficult to influence. They don't refer much to parks and have a dense policy structure that is hard to penetrate.

The NDP Minister for Environment and Climate Change clearly stated that they were not much interested in new park investments at this time and we should wait until the next term to see what they might come up with. The mandate letters for Ministers indicated that they do have many land and water based initiatives in mind.

We gave our usual presentation to the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services, and they made a recommendation as usual for more funding for parks. We are hopeful that this for once, translates into more funding for parks as the Government implements its Ministry mandates. There is certainly a hint of increased funding for, at least, more recreation facilities. and hints of an interest in improved land management.

We have much work ahead to figure out how we want to engage with the Government to shape their investment priorities and strategies.

Membership

Kim has come on the Board as Director of Membership and has done a good job of chatting to members about what they want of the Elders Council and how would they like to be engaged. We have also been pleased to have Alison and Jon join the Elders and we look forward to new additions. Retirement time for Elders is very precious and we are so grateful for your contributions. It is time I believe though to review our membership framework again and I am hopeful that we can attract a number of new members as we move out of Covid.

Lost Friends

Sadly, this year, we lost a great leader from the parks movement. Bill Spriggs was a much beloved leader. As a planner and naturalist, he educated everyone he came in contact, in the most gentle and truly loving fashion. At his amazing funeral attended by packed audience of park stalwarts, every person who spoke described his many attributes but the word that was used my all was "kind. He was a kind, fine man.

Plaudits

On a more positive note, we were delighted that Nancy, our Vice President was appointed as co-chair of the governments new Wildlife Advisory Committee - Together for Wildlife.

Thanks

Finally, may I thank Nancy for her guidance, Mel for his succinctness, Bill for his money- management and Betty for her administrative support. In addition, we really appreciate the pro bono contributions of Invictus, as our accountant.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I didn't really mean "finally," may I just say this.

The Elders Council is unique and characterful and far from perfect. We are, though, a very special source of knowledge and expertise that is precious. We are a dedicated voice for voiceless parks and, if appreciated and publicly supported, they can help us nurture and thus save this beautiful planet and our truly unique and quirky species. Working together with you to do this is truly a privilege.