

Working Together to Strengthen PAAC

A Delegation Presentation from Robin Tunnicliffe, PAAC Chair

For the Sept. 9, 2024, Central Saanich Council Meeting

Background:

The Peninsula and Area Agricultural Commission (PAAC) has served its member municipalities for 27 years. The current member municipalities include North Saanich, Central Saanich, Saanich and Metchosin.

PAAC has a proud history of diving deep into the issues affecting agriculture. We have pulled together actors to solve persistent problems that cross municipal borders, we have advocated for farmers' livelihoods, and we have educated municipalities on salient agriculture issues. We're always promoting the good work of our regional farmers. PAAC is a Commission, which according to Encyclopedia Britannica is [count] : a group of people who have been given the official job of finding information about something or controlling something. We take our work seriously and we have made a positive impact on the viability of farming in our region through our participation in the CRD Water Board, through drawing attention to drainage issues, and sounding the alarm about Canada Geese way back in 1998. We are planning a workshop this fall for municipalities of the CRD on soil dumping regulations and best practices which we hope you'll attend.

We're inclusive of the public with our open meetings, we seek advice from across sectors and we share our findings widely. We set our agendas with the aim of bringing in other farm organizations so that we can broaden our reach and our relevance. The minutes of our meetings from the past two and a half decades provide a valuable historical record of farming in our region.

In October of 2023 Central Saanich Council asked for a governance review of PAAC. In May of 2024 Saanich Council asked that the PAAC Terms of Reference be amended to formalize the rotating role of providing a recording clerk and a meeting space amongst the member municipalities.

To assist with the governance updating process, PAAC would like to offer a several suggestions. We used as our guide the Terms of Reference for the Saanich Peninsula Accessibility Advisory Committee (SPAAC) which has three member municipalities – Sidney, North Saanich and Central Saanich. SPAAC appears to be working well, and to be supported by Central Saanich Council, so we thought it would be an appropriate role model.

(Note: The PAAC Terms of Reference is located at:

<https://www.saanich.ca/assets/Local~Government/Documents/Committees~and~Board/PAAC%20ToR%20Mar%202016.pdf> and the SPAAC Terms of Reference is located at <https://northsaanich.ca/wp-content/uploads/SPAAC-Terms-of-Reference.pdf>.)

Comparison of the Two Terms of Reference:

Criteria	SPAAC TOR	PAAC TOR
1) Membership Application for Members of the Public	Each municipality appoints two members of the public from their own municipality, using a common application form.	Annual public notice of vacancies issued. A nominating committee recommends proposed new members, and each municipality appoints the new members.
2) Meetings Open to the Public	Yes (subject to section 90 of the Community Charter).	Yes.
3) Non-Voting Members May be Invited to Share Expertise	Yes	Not mentioned.
4) Conflict of Interest Provisions	Not mentioned.	Four bullets, including abiding by the Conflict of Interest provisions of the Community Charter.
5) Rotating Role for Supplying Recording Clerk and Meeting Space	Each member provides a Recording Clerk and Meeting Space on a rotating one-year term.	Not mentioned.

Recommendations:

There appear to be several easy amendments to the PAAC Terms of Reference that would satisfy the issues raised by both Central Saanich and Saanich Councils:

- 1) Add members of Council to the PAAC Nominating Committee. Add references to the application form? (Note: The SPAAC application form does not ask for references.)
- 2) Add the reference to section 90 of the Community Charter to meetings open to the public.
- 3) Add that non-voting members of the public may be invited to meetings to share their expertise (as per wording in SPAAC TOR).

- 4) The existing conflict of interest provisions in the PAAC TOR are comprehensive.
- 5) Add the rotating role of each member municipality to supply the recording clerk and meeting space. Two-year terms may offer greater continuity?