



# Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District

## MINUTES OF THE COMMITTEE-OF-THE-WHOLE MEETING

HELD ON WEDNESDAY, MARCH 3, 2021, 1:30 PM

Due to COVID-19 pandemic, meeting conducted via Zoom video/phone conferencing

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### DIRECTORS

John Jack, Chairperson, Huu-ay-aht First Nation

### PRESENT:

John McNabb, Vice-Chairperson, Director, Electoral Area "E" (Beaver Creek)

Bob Beckett, Director, Electoral Area "A" (Bamfield)

Tanya Shannon, Director, Electoral Area "B" (Beaufort)

Kel Roberts, Director, Electoral Area "C" (Long Beach)

Penny Cote, Director, Electoral Area "D" (Sproat Lake)

Dianne Bodnar, Director, Electoral Area "F" (Cherry Creek)

Sharie Minions, Mayor, City of Port Alberni

Ron Paulson, Councillor, City of Port Alberni

Rachelle Cole, Councillor, District of Ucluelet

Tom Stere, Councillor, District of Tofino

Wilfred Cootes, Councillor, Uchucklesaht Tribe Government

Kirsten Johnsen, Member of Council, Toquaht Nation

### REGRETS:

Alan McCarthy, Member of Legislature, Yuułuꞵiꞵꞵath Government

### GUESTS:

Andrea McDonald, MLA Office of Josie Osborne

Andrew Riddell, Ministry of Environment

Brent Baker, District of Tofino

Colin Koszman, Mosaic Forest Management

Steve Mjaaland, Mosaic Forest Management

Donna Monteith, District of Ucluelet

Eric Rochette, RCMP, Port Alberni Detachment

Peter Dionne, RCMP, Port Alberni Detachment

Gaylene Thorogood, City of Port Alberni

Jennifer Gallic, Tseshah FN

Jim Norlock, Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resources

Jon Hopkins, Parks Canada

Karen Haugen, Parks Canada

Michael Grandbois, BC Parks

Ryan Anaka, Uchucklesaht Tribe

Samantha Turner, Weyerhaeuser Company

Stefan Yancey, Ministry of Transportation and Highways

Steve Mancini, RCMP Ucluelet Detachment

### STAFF PRESENT:

Douglas Holmes, Chief Administrative Officer

Mike Irg, General Manager of Planning and Development

Jenny Brunn, General Manager of Community Services

Janice Hill, Executive Assistant  
Julia Martin, Administrative Assistant

The meeting can be viewed on the Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District website at <https://www.acrd.bc.ca/events/3-3-2021/>

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The Chairperson called the meeting to order at 1:30 pm.

The Chairperson recognized the meeting this afternoon is being held throughout the Nuu-chah-nulth territories.

The Chairperson reported this meeting is being recorded and livestreamed to YouTube on the Regional District website.

**2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

*MOVED: Director Roberts*

*SECONDED: Director Cole*

*THAT the agenda be approved as circulated.*

**CARRIED**

**3. CORRESPONDENCE FOR INFORMATION**

**a. Minister of Municipal Affairs - Josie Osborne**  
BC Parks plans for 2021 Camping Season

**b. AVICC Resolution Submission**  
Unauthorized Camping Crisis

*MOVED: Director McNabb*

*SECONDED: Director Cole*

*THAT the Committee of the Whole receive reports a-b for information.*

**CARRIED**

**4. ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSIONS**

**Stakeholders:**

**a) Toquaht First Nation – Member of Council (and ACRD Director) Kirsten Johnsen**

- Some issues on Toquaht land but not at Macoah
- Had campers last spring/summer but no issues or push-back

- Have been in a State of Emergency since March with Executive Orders in place
  - Having outsiders leave our land
  - Contemplating opening the marina
  - Have the ability to issue tickets, but have not issued any yet
- b) District of Tofino – Fire Chief Brent Baker**
- Illegal campers kept Tofino busy, had to increase staff
  - Vehicle campers would try and move on before getting caught in the morning when staff would start around 6-7 am
  - Issued over 600 tickets for vehicles being used as accommodation
  - Usual year pre-COVID is 50-60 per year
  - Issued 40 tickets, year-to-date
  - Currently a \$160 fine, but want to bump it up
  - Don't see opening campsites will create a difference as people are choosing their vehicles
  - Continuing morning patrols every day
- c) District of Ucluelet – Director of Finance, Acting CAO Donna Monteith**
- Mirror what Chief Baker said regarding vehicle camping
  - People are choosing vehicles over campgrounds
  - Bylaw patrolled am and pm
  - Getting complaints from residents regarding campers using yards as public toilets
  - Currently trying to fill the Bylaw vacancy
- d) District of Ucluelet – Councilor (and ACRD Director) Rachelle Cole (medical perspective)**
- Responded to calls on West Main for backwoods campers: saw no social distancing
  - High anxiety for responders due to time delay to get to patient as well as health and safety issues
  - These people are not arriving as tourists to support our businesses
  - The backroad clean-up was devastating this year
  - Based on license plates, seeing people from Quebec and Ontario
  - When BCAS is responding out of town for these incidents, it leaves a gap in town which elevates the risk
  - Seeing more drug-induced illnesses rather than injuries
- e) District of Tofino – Councilor (and ACRD Director) Tom Stere**
- Bylaw officers are seeing a different clientele than they are used to
  - Echo Chief Baker's comments as well as Director Cole's regarding West Main
  - Tla-o-qui-aht territory is an important part of our jurisdiction
- f) Ucluelet RCMP – Sgt. Steve Mancini**
- Large increase in vehicle traffic
  - West Main is the hot spot
  - Ran roadblocks and saw 80-100 vehicles per day

- No large up-tic in calls for service
- Assisted BCAS with overdoses, no significant person-crimes
- Seeing conflicts between local people and out-of-towners
- Limited resources are being pulled out of town which affects communities
- Bylaw officer was engaged last summer
- No resources to monitor how long people are staying
- Not sure if gating is the answer?

**g) Parks Canada – Park Superintendent Karen Haugen**

- Significant garbage being dumped in and around park bins
- Used washrooms to shower, do laundry, dump garbage
- Destroyed the water system: clogs, backlogs, failure
- Janitors were trying to move people out at 6 am
- Law enforcement was involved
- People were hanging out in the park reserve and bunching up
- People not paying park fees and having confrontations with visitors
- Human/wildlife conflicts
- Good news was the Guardian Programs were enhanced
- Back country people were respectful but were still entering an area that was closed

**h) BC Parks – Area Supervisor Michael Grandbois**

- Has been a difficult time
- Confrontations at Kennedy Lake and Kennedy Lake access
- Only have 2 full-time and 1 seasonal staff
- Kennedy Lake boat launch is day-use only
- Seeing 10-15 per day from Alberta and Quebec
- Had one firearm issue last year
- More tickets issued than ever before
- Seeing internet sites with blogs listing these places as safe sites to visit
- Hard to deal with people who do not know if they are in a protected area or not
- Mob rules out there
- BC Parks has no actual campsites on the peninsula
- A benefit was to get the work closer with the Tla-o-qui-aht Park Guardians
- Resources are depleted
- Some vehicles are still there since October and have not moved
- Causing conflicts with locals

**i) Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resources – Natural Resource Officer Supervisor Jim Norlock**

- Increase in complaints/referrals
- This is occurring province wide, however the temperate climate on the coast makes it preferable

- Camping is a conditional privilege and people can camp for 14 days lawfully
  - Living on crown land is not lawful
  - Deployed people to work at the Canadian borders last year
  - Can work with officers to enforce the *Land Act*
  - This is not a quick fix, but can work to make a difference
  - Seeing an impact on industrial traffic/garbage/debris
  - Would like to coordinate a working group outside of this group to strategize
- j) Tseshaht FN – Jennifer Gallic on behalf of Elected Chief Councillor Ken Watts**
- Just here as an observer, no issues so far
- k) Uchucklesaht Tribe – Director of Lands and Resources Ryan Anaka**
- It is a 1.5 – 2 hour drive down a rough gravel road to the Henderson Lake area
  - Seeing an increase in traffic
  - Over 30 campers in the area
  - Old growth cedar tree was poached
  - Lots of garbage
  - Installed a gate that was torn out within 3 days
  - Other heavier gates have had locks cut
  - Due to COVID restrictions, have had to buy more vehicles to allow people to respond safely, then sending two vehicles out to attend
  - Impacts to wildlife – are monitoring the local elk
  - We have increased our patrols
- l) City of Port Alberni – Mayor (and ACRD Director) Sharie Minions**
- Seeing more homelessness rather than camping
  - Problem with open urination and defecation
  - Businesses are struggling with safety issues
  - People are camping as there is nowhere else to be
  - Stems from mental health issues and a lack of resources
- m) City of Port Alberni – Councilor (and ACRD Director) Ron Paulson**
- There is an encampment behind Walmart
  - When bylaw moves in, they just move to a different area
  - There is a group that don't want to be housed
  - People are moving out of the city and into the regional district
  - Would like to see a legal opinion on the rights of the campers
  - Understaffed to deal with this problem
- n) Port Alberni RCMP – Sgt. Dionne**
- Doing a good job with bylaws
  - Community knows what to expect
  - Different issues than at Kennedy Lake area
  - Will partner with other enforcing agencies in provincial parks

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- PRIME system is a province-wide system to track incidents and interactions so each area can access and track movements of individuals
- o) Port Alberni RCMP – Insp. Rochette**
- Worked with other stakeholders for enforcement in rural areas
  - Increase officers available
  - In the city, report to RCMP when any illegal camping is noticed to allow early intervention before issues escalate
  - Don't want to just push these people from one area to another
- p) City of Port Alberni – Manager of Community Safety Gaylene Thorogood**
- Chasing campers and RVs around
  - Up-tic in calls
  - Have not noticed snowbirds
- q) Mosaic – Land Use Forester Colin Koszman**
- 12 campgrounds on Private Managed Forest Lands (PMFL) will be opening soon
  - Have gates and security to help manage/reduce liabilities and garbage
  - Resources are critical
  - Forest protection and wildfire risk are important to us
- r) Mosaic – Manager, Forest Protection Steve Mjaaland**
- Multiple sites and issues
- s) Weyerhaeuser – Senior Real Estate Manager Samantha Turner**
- Calling in from Seattle as there are no local resources
  - Regarding Boot Lagoon and the challenges with the encampment, will partner with Mosaic off-line to address
  - No operations on Vancouver Island right now
- t) Ministry of Transportation – Operation Manager Stefan Yancey**
- Not too much on the West coast as most of the camping we see is off highway in our rest areas and gravel pits
  - Provisions under the *Transportation Act* and *Motor Vehicle Act* that can be used to evict or move them along
  - No real issues last year – were able to move people along
- u) Ministry of Environment – Conservation Officer Andrew Riddell**
- Have five full time officers
  - Issues with garbage
  - By the time they attend, there is no one around to hold accountable for the garbage
  - Issues with RVs discharging their grey and black water anywhere
  - These people know the 14 days law and are keeping records
  - Difficult to proactively patrol
  - Wildlife encounters are not being reported – this is concerning
- v) MLA Office – Constituency Assistant Andrea McDonald**
- Just here to listen today
- w) Parks Canada – Park Warden Jon Hopkins**

- Seeing an increase in illegal camping
- By gating areas, it will just push these people to other areas
- Would be interested in joining the working group

**x) Electoral Area “E” Beaver Creek – Director (& Vice Chair) John McNabb**

- In Beaver Creek, illegal camping has not been an issue yet
- Need to strategize the problem, not just push it around
- Look at the effect of enforcement

**y) Electoral Area “A” Bamfield – Director Bob Beckett**

- Not aware of specific challenges in Bamfield
- Entire mental health and substance abuse resources are challenged
- Need to raise the issue with MLA Osborne

**z) Anacala – Councilor (and ACRD Director & Chair) John Jack**

- Huu-ay-aht has had a few campers but no issues
- This is an issue for MLA Malcolmson as well

**aa) Electoral Area “B” Beaufort – Director Tanya Shannon**

- Minimal issues
- Seeing recreational campers not homelessness
- Don’t want to just push it around
- Seeing more in the north end of Beaufort rather than the Cherry Creek end
- People are being blocked by gates to prevent them from moving along
- When out-of-town campers arrive at Stamp Falls and the campground is full, they will just park at the Beaver Creek Community Hall or at the end of our property overnight
- Seeing garbage dumping, but not necessarily just from campers

**bb) Electoral Area “C” Long Beach – Director Kel Roberts**

- Seeing a lot on Toquaht lands
- Environmental concerns from the mess
- Watch and report to RCMP and Conservation Officers
- Echo the statements from other West Coast participants

**cc) Electoral Area “D” Sproat Lake – Director Penny Cote**

- Lots of call from constituents
- Boot Lagoon at Great Central Lake is a concern
- No facilities and garbage is piling up
- The homeless need a place to live
- Want ACRD, City of Port Alberni, Tofino and Ucluelet to work together to provide supports to the homeless
- Want assistance from our MLA

**dd) Electoral Area “F” Cherry Creek – Director Dianne Bodnar**

- No issues in Cherry Creek
- Log Train Trail has been busy and seeing discarded garbage
- Regarding West Main and Kennedy Lake, is it possible to put in a park with legal camping?
- Need to work together to advertise fines as a deterrent.

## **Summary**

### **a) Chair John Jack**

- Common concerns around health, safety, and the environment
- Measuring the problem and what that will take
- Create solutions
- What policies may need to change?
- Can we get more resources?
- There is a high level of interest in coming to Vancouver Island
- Don't currently have the resources to address
- Will consider participants for the working group and consider technical vs political
- Will look to contact the owner of the apps that advertise our local areas and ask them to correct the wrong information

### **b) Douglas Holmes – ACRD CAO**

- The Committee of the Whole will meet with MLA Osborne on Friday, March 5, 2021
- Need to differentiate between those with mental health issues or those experiencing homelessness from those just hanging out
- Working group is a positive idea
- Don't want to just chase these groups around
- Will ask MLA about new resources for these people needing assistance

*MOVED: Director McNabb*

*SECONDED: Director Beckett*

*THAT the Committee of the Whole recommend to the ACRD Board of Directors to create a strategic management group to look for solutions to the issue of illegal camping in the region.*

**CARRIED**

## **Comments from Staff**

General Manager of Planning & Development – Mike Irg

- His department is already involved and has been ordinating with agencies
- Look forward to supporting the working group

## **5. LATE BUSINESS**

## **6. QUESTION PERIOD**

Questions/Comments from the public attending the meeting via Zoom webinar. The Executive Assistant advised there were no questions from the public.

In order to provide the public with an opportunity to ask questions or provide input to the Board of Directors respecting a topic on the agenda, the Regional District set up an email address [responses@acrd.bc.ca](mailto:responses@acrd.bc.ca). The Executive Assistant reported there were no questions or comments received from the public with respect to the meeting today.

## 7. **ADJOURN**

*MOVED: Director McNabb*

*SECONDED: Director Beckett*

*THAT this meeting be adjourned at 3:25 pm.*

**CARRIED**

Certified Correct:



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John Jack,  
Chairperson



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Douglas Holmes,  
CAO