
Update from Teale: Saanich's first Town Hall!

1 message

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Saanich's First Town Hall!

Friends,

It's been a wet couple of days, and wild time in BC politics. As the dust continues to settle on the provincial election, I wanted to provide a quick update on a few important upcoming Saanich engagement opportunities, some local news, and campaign and project updates. Let's dive in!

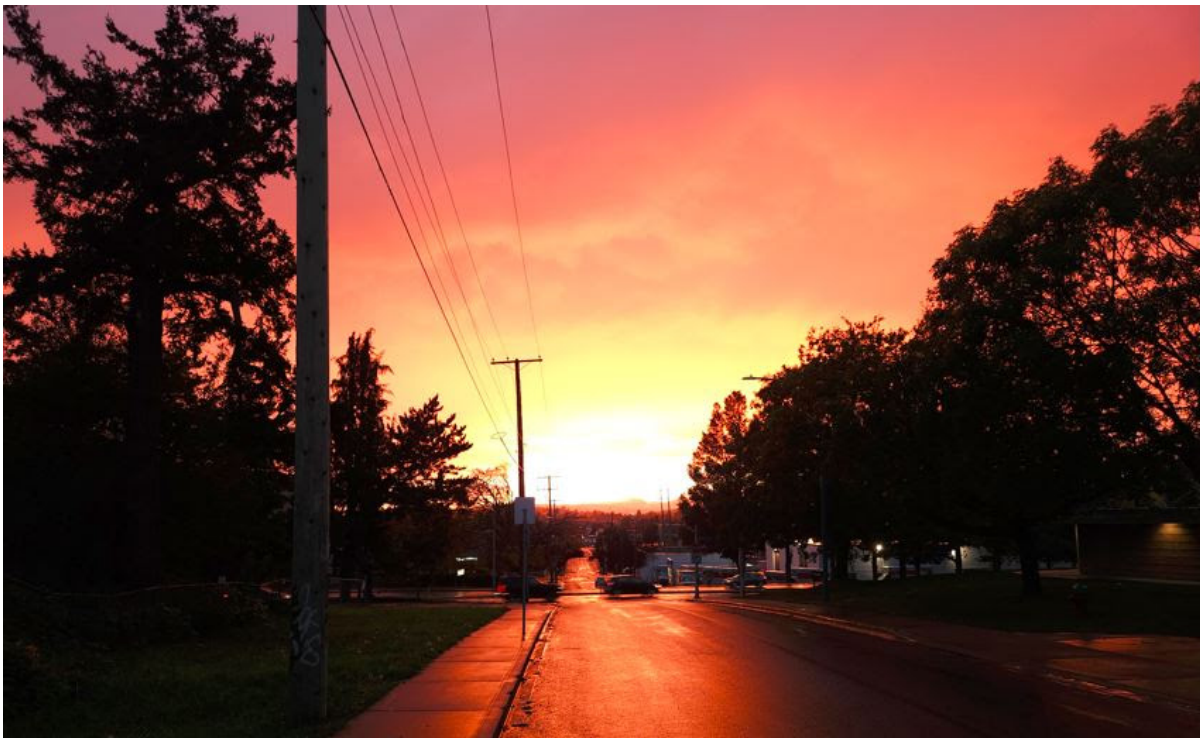
Our First Town Hall! First and foremost, I wanted to remind folks that Saanich will be holding our first community town hall this **Tuesday, October 22, from 6 to 8 pm**, at the Cedar Hill Golf Course Clubhouse (1400 Derby Road). This is an opportunity for community members to voice their opinions, suggest new ideas and hear from fellow residents. It's our first time trying out this format, and I'm excited to see how it goes. [You can learn more here.](#)

Here's how it's going to work: From 6 to 7 pm the session has no set agenda, allowing residents to speak on topics they care about for up to three minutes each, as guided by the [Council Procedure Bylaw](#). Then, from 7 to 8 pm residents and Council will have the opportunity to engage in informal, one-on-one conversations, with the goal of fostering a community atmosphere without formalities. I'm looking forward to seeing neighbours out at the event, and please come over and say hello during the second half. You can also learn more about town halls from [this Times Colonist article](#).

You can of course always reach council by writing us at Council@Saanich.ca, and if you ever want to connect in person, I typically arrange coffee meet ups on Thursday, get in touch to arrange a time (teale.phelps.bondaroff@saanich.ca).

Advisory Committee Applications Due! The deadline to apply to serve on one of Saanich's community advisory committees is **4:30 p.m. on October 25, 2024**. You can [find the application form here](#). These applications are only open to residents of Saanich. the District has a number of advisory committees, and you can [learn more about them here](#). Volunteering to serve on a committee is a fantastic way to give back to the community and help us improve the District.

For the past two years, I have had the honour of chairing the Transportation Advisory Committee, and as you can see from my last update, this committee gets a lot done and its work has helped shape policy in Saanich and further afield. I wanted to encourage everyone to check out the various committees and to apply. I know it's short notice, but I also wanted to ask you to ask a young person in their lives to apply. We never have enough youth applicants and I would love to have their perspective on committees, and committees have special positions earmarked for youth representatives. Please ask a young person in your life (aged 16 to 24) if they might be interested.



Some Saanich updates, in no particular order:

- **Gorge Tillicum infrastructure updates:** The District of Saanich continues to advance neighbourhood road safety with an upcoming focus on the Gorge Tillicum area with Phase 1 beginning in 2025. Phase 1 of the project will include the replacement of underground utilities and the sanitary lift station. [Learn more here](#).
- **New Open Data Portal:** The District has just launched a new Open Data Portal, an innovative platform designed to enhance accessibility to a rich collection of geo-spatial datasets. It will provide the resources necessary to explore, analyze and obtain data about our community in various formats. [Learn more here](#).

- **Monster Homes on Farm Land:** Council adopted a bylaw to limit the size of homes built on agricultural land. Read more from this [Times Colonist article](#).
- **Saanich Operations Centre Redevelopment Update:** Council has directed staff to start work to identify a private-sector partner who will develop a master plan for the future re-development of our Operations Centre. This will significantly reduce the the project and create opportunities for housing and mixed-use to be incorporated on the site. [Read more here](#).
- **New Housing in Gordon Head:** We approved a 93-unit housing project in Gordon Head. Read more in the [Times Colonist](#) or [Saanich News](#).
- **Noise Pollution:** The Martlet recently had a great articles about noise cameras and some of my efforts to tackle noise pollution in the District. [Check it out here](#).
- **HelloSaanich:** If you haven't had a chance to check out the District's new engagement platform, please take a look and sign up for [Hello Saanich](#).

Finally, a big thank you to everyone who wrote in and/or spoke to Council about the communications issues concerning Mann Ave. bike lane project. I very much appreciate the stress and anxiety the poor communications around this project caused residents. As was mentioned at our recent meeting, but it bears re-iterating, Council and the District are sorry for the short notice that was provided to neighbours about this project and for any upset this may have caused. We are working to develop policy to ensure that folks received better notice about future engineering projects. Read more from the [Times Colonist](#) or the [Oak Bay News](#).

Transportation Advocacy



The [Victoria Transit Riders Union](#) is a grassroots, membership-based organization representing people who use public transit in the Greater Victoria Area. They were part of the amazing group

of civil society actors that helped support the UBCM resolutions calling for free transit for young people and seniors.

The VTRU is currently gathering input from transit riders about what is most important to them about public transit, and how Victoria's transit system could be improved.

If you are a transit rider -- whether daily, monthly, or even once a year -- they want to hear from you! Please take a few moments to [complete their survey](#). This will help support future transit advocacy.

Reproductive Justice Advocacy



It was another big month for reproductive justice. I am very proud to say that on October 10th, Bill C-64 cleared the Senate and received royal assent. The passage of Bill C-64 represents a groundbreaking moment for healthcare in Canada. The national pharmacare plan it creates will make diabetes medication and prescription contraception free across Canada. The next step in its implementation requires provincial and territorial governments to sign agreements with the federal government.

You can learn more from this [AccessBC Campaign press release](#), or from any of these news stories: [Radio Canada](#), [Global News](#), [CBC News](#), [The Globe and Mail](#), [Daily Hive Canada](#), [CBC News](#), or these official government releases [Senate GRO](#), [Government of Canada Press Release](#).

We will be working hard to push BC to formally adopt this important legislation, and supporting our [sister campaigns](#) as they fight to do the same in their respective provinces. Once the dust

from the provincial election settles, we will also be rolling out fresh a fresh advocacy campaign pushing to see further improvements made to BC's excellent free prescription contraception program.

If ever there was a time to [donate](#) to support our efforts, it would be now, as we gear up for what looks like a lot of advocacy work, both here in BC and across Canada.

Little Free Libraries



This month, the City of Victoria honoured my friend Bruce More with a Community Impact Award. Bruce the volunteer LFL builder extraordinary with the Greater Victoria Placemaking Network's Pocket Places Project. He has hand-build over 75 LFLs from upcycled materials and help foster community across the region! You can learn more about Bruce's amazing work from this [Greater Victoria Placemaking Network blog post](#).

Incidentally, the GVPN is holding their AGM on Monday, November 18, from 6-8 pm, in the Paul Phillips Hall at [1923 Fernwood Rd](#). [Learn more here](#), and come on out if you are interested in placemaking.

BC Humanist Research Team



This month, the BC Humanist Research Team, which I coordinate, released a new report. [An Impossible Task](#) is a continuation of the ongoing work of the Saguenay Project, which looks into unconstitutional prayer in municipal council meetings. The report identified Prince Albert and Pinehouse as including prayers at the start of every regular council meeting. Additionally, at least three — Moose Jaw, North Battleford and Pinehouse — included prayers in their most recent inaugural meetings in 2020. All of these practices violate the state's duty of religious neutrality established by the 2015 Saguenay decision by the Supreme Court.

You can learn more from our [press release](#), or from news stories in the [Prince Albert Daily Herald](#) or [SaskNow](#). For those who are more into listening, here's a [CBC radio interview](#) my colleague Ian Bushfield gave, and [a podcast episode](#) we put together using a nifty new AI voice generator tool.

The work of the research team continues, and in addition to continuing to survey municipalities across the country as part of the Saguenay Project, we are also working on a number of other projects relating to the separation of religion and government. If you are interested in helping out, our team is always looking for volunteers to do everything from data collection and analysis, research, writing, and communications. Drop me a line to learn more about our drop-in research projects.

I hope everyone got out to vote in the provincial election, and I hope to see many of you at our upcoming Town Hall.

Warm regards,



Dr. Teale Phelps Bondaroff

P.S. - If you have Saanich friends and neighbours who might like to receive these newsletter, do please share [this link](#) with them.



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