



## **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

### **Environmental Advisory Commission (EAC)**

**April 2000 – (Revised August 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2006)**

In the belief that local residents can and should contribute to the stewardship of our natural environment, the following are the Mission Statement, activities and principles of a Regional District Board appointed group of citizens called the Central Okanagan Environmental Advisory Commission (COEAC).

#### **1.0 Mission Statement and Mandate**

The Central Okanagan Environmental Advisory Commission's mission is to advise and assist the Board and the citizens of the Regional District of Central Okanagan in the protection, enhancement, restoration, management and appreciation of our common natural heritage and to ensure that our communities are planned to provide for environmental sustainability and community health for present generations and future generations.

COEAC is an advisory Commission established by the Regional District Board in accordance with these adopted Terms of Reference. Commission members are bound by these Terms of Reference, and are responsible to the Regional District Board.

#### **2.0 Activities**

The focus of Commission activities will primarily be on matters where the Regional District of Central Okanagan has jurisdiction or a direct involvement, e.g., Growth Management policies, Regional Park acquisition, and land development approvals. The Commission may also consider matters which are not within the jurisdiction of the Regional District, e.g., Provincial policies pertaining to resource management or parks management, but which have an impact on the region. Specific activities will include the following:

- 2.1 The review and comment on development proposals which have an impact on areas designated as environmentally sensitive in the electoral area land use by-laws, (including official community plans, rural land use by-laws, comprehensive development plans and zoning by-laws) in the Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESA) Management Plan or in any document which replaces the ESA Management Plan as a result of the Sensitive Ecosystems Inventory.
- 2.2 The review and comment on policy initiatives and directives associated with the Regional District's Growth Management Strategy which may impact the region's natural heritage.
- 2.3 The review and comment on environmental policy initiatives (e.g., OCP environmental policies, Environmental Assessment requirements etc.) and regulations of the Regional District's electoral areas.
- 2.4 The review and comment on Sensitive Ecosystems Inventory work and updates to this work. This includes any stream inventory work that is done in conjunction with the Provincial Fish Protection Act.

- 2.5 The promotion, support and involvement in Regional District and/or community-based educational and stewardship programs designed to protect and enhance the region's natural heritage. This includes monitoring and data management activities.
- 2.6 The provision of advice and comment to the Regional Board on environmental and resource management policies and programs of other government agencies that impact the region as a whole. This may include resource management activities undertaken by the Okanagan Shuswap Land and Resource Management (LRMP) Implementation and Monitoring Committee (when it is operational) or initiatives of the Okanagan Basin Water Board.
- 2.7 Comment on other significant environmental issues of regional concern, as they arise. This includes issues directed to the COEAC by the Board or a committee of the Board, by staff or by a member of the Commission (the latter at the discretion of the Chair). This may include the impacts of development on Crown land parcels in the LRMP community/Crown interface zone, the environmental impacts of major public infrastructure projects, and the implementation of Federal wildlife protection legislation.

### **3.0 Operation of the Commission**

- 3.1 The Chair and vice-Chair are to be selected by a vote of the Commission at the last meeting in the spring session (June). This vote requires the participation of no less than two thirds of the Commission membership. The Chair and vice-Chair are appointed to a term of one year. The Chair will be expected to make himself/herself available from time to time to make presentations to the Board or to a committee of the Board.
- 3.2 The Chair will establish meeting agendas in consultation with the vice-Chair, other members as necessary, and staff.
- 3.3 Sub-committees may be established under the direction of the Chair to evaluate and report on delegated issues as required.
- 3.4 All members will be expected to devote some time between meetings to work on matters before the Commission. Members are expected to be available to serve on sub-committees from time to time. The Chair and vice-Chair should be able to devote some time between meetings to work informally with Regional District staff.
- 3.5 On matters requiring votes, the Commission shall strive for consensus, and shall normally only communicate the consensus or majority decision to the Board or committee of the Board (by resolution). On matters where there is a significant lack of consensus, minority positions may also be reported to the Board (or committee of the Board). RDCO and municipal staff members do not have voting rights but are considered full members of the Commission in all other aspects.
- 3.6 On matters where a member has a conflict of interest on an issue, he/she will be excused from the vote and at the discretion of the Chair may be expected to remove himself/herself from the discussion.

- 3.7 Quorum for a full Commission meeting shall be 50 per cent of the current membership plus one.
- 3.8 The Regional District will provide on-going research and administrative support, including secretarial support to the Commission.
- 3.9 Regional District staff will administer any budget allocation for Commission expenses, e.g., travel expenses for site visits, special events, seminars, etc.

#### **4.0 Reporting**

- 4.1 COEAC shall generally report to the Regional District's Planning and Environment Committee. It may report to another committee of the Board or to the Board if deemed appropriate or if requested. For example, comments may be directed to the Parks Advisory Committee on matters pertaining to parks management or it may report to the Public Works Committee on a matter of impacts of infrastructure development. COEAC may also report directly to department heads if deemed appropriate. For example, if the Planning Department was soliciting comments on a policy matter.
- 4.2 COEAC shall report under the signature of the Chair or vice-Chair. COEAC reports and communications will normally be directed through the Planning Department. The Chair or vice-Chair, or another delegated representative of the Commission may make direct representation to the Board or a committee of the Board.

#### **5.0 Meetings**

- 5.1 The Commission shall normally meet once every month, or at the call of the Chair with adequate notice to be given to all members.
- 5.2 Commission meetings are open to the public and opportunity shall be provided for members of the public to speak to or submit material to the Commission.
- 5.3 Requests by any person(s) wishing to appear before the Commission as part of a delegation must be forwarded to the Planning Department advising staff of the topic or item to which they wish to speak. It is preferable that this be done at least two weeks prior to the meeting in order to accommodate the delegation on the agenda. Any person wishing to address the Commission as a delegation, who has not previously arranged to do so, may be granted permission to do so only by Commission resolution.
- 5.4 The Commission may from time to time invite resource people to attend and participate in a meeting. This may include making presentations.
- 5.5 The meeting schedule will be established twice per year. The schedule will be set in the late fall, for the winter and spring (January to June) and in the late spring, for the fall (September to December). A summer meeting may be called at the discretion of the Chair or vice-Chair.

- 5.6 Meetings will generally be held in the evenings, from 7 pm to 9:30, or as long as required. Meetings may be held at other times as agreed to by the Commission.

## **6.0 Membership**

- 6.1 COEAC shall consist of 10 to 18 voting members appointed by the Board and staff appointments from within the Regional District of Central Okanagan and its member municipalities. Staff recommendations will be submitted to the Board for review and approval. Staff will seek Commission input on filling of vacancies.
- 6.2 Members will be selected on the basis of their demonstrated interest and participation in environmental and community matters, academic or technical qualification, availability, work experience, knowledge and professional expertise. The Regional District will strive to achieve representation from all parts of the Region. Areas of expertise that will be sought include expert or professional knowledge in areas of natural history, fisheries biology, wildlife biology, ecology, water resource management, hydrogeology, soil science, forest science, land use planning, environmental education, etc. Participation in the Commission is voluntary. EAC members shall generally participate as independent members, not as a representative of another body of which they may be a member or an employee.
- 6.3 Members shall be appointed for three-year terms with a maximum continuous tenure of two full three-year terms. Upon expiry of a member's term of appointment, the member may be re-appointed for another term by the Board if eligible. If a member has served the maximum tenure permitted, the Board shall appoint a replacement. Members who have served the maximum tenure permitted are subject to a mandatory one-year absence from the Commission prior to seeking re-appointment for any subsequent term. Members may also be appointed for shorter or more flexible terms in consideration of special circumstances, e.g., student representatives, non-resident expert, or to fill a prematurely vacated term. Members shall be appointed in such a way that at least one third of the membership are re-appointed or replaced every year.
- 6.4 In the event that a Commission member misses three consecutive meetings the Commission may at its discretion, recommend replacement. Members requesting a temporary leave of absence or intending to resign from the Commission should provide adequate written notice prior to such action.
- 6.5 Members will generally be residents or employed in the Regional District, excepting staff liaison. Others may be considered where they have professional expertise or other required qualifications not represented on the Commission.