

Every Word Saanich Council Has Spoken Since 2017. Searchable in Under a Second.

The 938 Ambassador archive. A full-text, timestamped, cross-linked record of nine years of municipal government, built entirely from the District's own recordings and documents. 24 September 2026.

What it is

Saanich publishes its meetings as video and its decisions as PDFs, and offers the public a search box that reads agenda headings. This archive reads everything else. It holds 495 recorded council meetings, 1,380 hours of video, transcribed into 1.2 million timestamped utterances and 12.2 million spoken words, fused with every agenda, attachment, set of minutes, financial plan, annual report and Statement of Financial Information the District has published, and a full crawl of saanich.ca. One query resolves across all of it and returns the moment in the room, to the second, where the words were said, who the chair had just called on, and the document that was on the table.

Nothing said in open council since 2017 is lost, and nothing said is unattributable for long. Recordings are diarized into voice clusters with speaker embeddings that match a voice from one meeting to the same voice in any other. A statement made in February 2019 can be set beside its contradiction in January 2021 in the time it takes to type both dates.

How it is built

Layer	Processing
Video, 500 files, 0.54 TB	Enumerated by Granicus clip ID with placeholder detection; hashed; mapped to date and meeting
Speech	GPU-accelerated faster-whisper transcription, word-level timestamps, segment boundaries preserved
Speakers	pyannote speaker-diarization-3.1; per-meeting voice clusters with speaker embeddings for cross-meeting voice matching
Documents	Every agenda, attachment, minute, financial plan, annual report, SOFI and web page; text indexed per page and sentence
Index	SQLite with FTS5 full-text tables over transcripts, minutes and documents, keyed on date and clip; runs on a laptop, no server, no cloud

What it does

One search, every modality. *"notice on title" AND Plant* runs against recordings, minutes and attachments at once and returns, for each hit, the meeting, the clip, the second, and the exchange around it. Phrase, prefix and proximity operators.

The exchange, not the keyword. A hit expands to the utterances around it, so a councillor's question and the staff answer that followed come back as a unit.

Attribution that can be checked. Speakers are resolved from the chair's recognition cue, "Councillor Plant," "Mr. Reems," immediately before an utterance; 5,526 such anchors sit in the corpus. Diarization then carries names across a whole meeting by voice, and every mapping is stored with its vote count and similarity score so it can be audited against the recording.

Decision to source to moment. A resolution in the minutes links to the report it adopted, the attachment the report relied on, and the timestamp where it was debated and voted. A bylaw number resolves to every version in the corpus, so the text before and after an amendment can be diffed line by line.

Names, addresses, files. Street addresses, bylaw numbers, file numbers and staff titles are normalised, so a property, an officer or a file resolves to its complete history in one result set.

What it has already returned

Query	Result
"consequential changes" near Reems	3 May 2021, 1:19:14. Council told a bylaw changed nothing. It extended entry powers to a new class of officer.
"section 57" across all minutes	21 properties encumbered since 2020; mover and seconder for each; three owner requests to cancel, all refused.
Plant AND (liability OR exposure)	Six statements over four years, every one aimed at a homeowner, none at the administration.
"tickets" near Reems, 2019	The Director telling council ticket revenue was \$20,000 and would not fund an officer, two years before his report promised \$120,000.
"appeal" near Plant	A councillor saying appeals are "probably a good" thing, voting 9-0 against one, then naming the missing appeal as a defect and voting for the bylaw.
"pause" AND "clock", Plant in the chair	Two residents silenced inside a minute at open forum, 6 May 2024.
Barbour near Chambers	A councillor recalling her own expired permit and demolished tree house while seconding the first notice on title in the series.
"come in" near "served"	A homeowner describing being invited to the municipal hall for a meeting and handed court papers instead, 4 July 2022.

Scale

Fifty-seven days of continuous video. 12.2 million words. Queries return in under a second. Diarization runs at 0.083 of real time on one consumer GPU. The whole corpus fits on a drive and can be handed to a reporter, a lawyer or a tribunal, and any citation in any report built from it can be checked by anyone with a laptop against the District's own recording.

It grows with every meeting. The next one is already scheduled.

Christopher Caddell, saanichbylawreform@gmail.com