

COW – Feb. 14, 2012

Council met as Committee of the Whole Tuesday evening. All members of Council were present. Staff in attendance were Waycheshen, Poole, Epp, Newman and Ms Larsen. Media was represented by Mr Eckford. The gallery was full to overflowing.

Before the meeting started, a number of lady barbershoppers faced the Mayor, and rendered renditions of “Love Me Tender” and “Only You”, much to the delight of the crowd and the enjoyable embarrassment of the Mayor. He thanked the ladies and noted that this was indeed a day to attend to our loved ones. Everyone applauded as the ladies left. *(It has become a tradition that both lady and gentlemen barbershoppers deliver singing messages on Valentine’s Day. I’ve done it. It’s fun!)*

The meeting began at 6:05.

AGENDA

<http://www.gibsons.ca/images/stories/2012committee/2012.02.14%20COW%20Agenda%20Final.pdf>

DELEGATIONS

Terry McIntosh, PhD (UBC) – Environmental studies at Gospel Rock

- Dr McIntosh’s listed some of his credentials including work done with Paul Van Poppelen on Gospel Rock in 2007, noting that his appearance as a delegation was in support of Friends of Gospel Rock.
- Essentially, he disagreed with the findings of the environmental reports which inform the latest version of the Gospel Rock Neighbourhood Plan. In his view the waterfront has high conservation value, the portion below Gower Point Road is as valuable as the portion above, particularly on the eastern end of the waterfront.
- Councillor Bouman stated that it is important to have the best available scientific information, and “read back” Dr McIntosh’s comments to confirm that he had heard them correctly. He ended by saying that the waterfront has high conservation value throughout and that’s what the public wants.
- Mayor Rowe accepted Dr McIntosh’s offer to provide Council with a written summary of his remarks.
- At the conclusion of this item about 11 people in the gallery left the meeting.
- *It’s clear that Councillor Bouman is trying to set up a “our scientists are better than your scientists” scenario. This approach makes no effort to balance social and economic considerations in the Gospel Rock discussion.*

Blane Hagedorn & Jane Hopkins – Parkland Affordable Housing

- Mr Hagedorn has been in business on the Coast for 38 years and is the developer of the Parkland Subdivision in upper Gibsons. Ms Hopkins is Special Projects Coordinator for the Coast Community Builders Association
- Mr Hagedorn noted that the buildout of the Parkland subdivision has been slower than anticipated, largely as a result of the economic downturn since 2008 and its impact on the housing market. This is not good for the community, for the Town (which is heavily invested in the geo-thermal utility built into Parkland), or for his company. Hagedorn said that the draft

agreement with the Town requires that affordable housing be built after 17 lots have been sold and added that it could take 5 years to get to that threshold. He said that if the timeline to build affordable housing is accelerated, it could be good for all concerned.

- Hagedorn has been working on the Parkland plan since 2002. The 2005 OCP anticipated the Upper Gibsons Neighbourhood Plan, which was incorporated into the OCP in December 2006. In that same year the Province legislated “tools” to be given to local governments, effectively downloading affordable housing to the local level.
- BC Housing <http://www.bchousig.org/> is a provincial Crown agency established to assist in the provision of affordable housing to British Columbians. Hagedorn has asked BC Housing to help in bringing affordable housing to market in Parkland, and BC Housing has questions which need to be answered by Hagedorn and the Town together.
- Hagedorn, with the support of the Coast Community Builders Association, outlined a proposal to build 6 affordable units aimed at buyers making a household income of between \$40 and \$65 thousand, and also asked the Town to waive DCCs on these units. This agreement could then go to BC Housing, which would help with financing.
- It was agreed that Council will hold an information workshop with Mr Hagedorn this week.

Laurie Bloom & Ross Muirhead – Proposal to expand Mt Elphinstone Park

- Laurie Bloom and Ross Muirhead of the Elphinstone Logging Focus (ELF), a Roberts Creek based organization, presented a proposal to expand Mt Elphinstone Park to 1,500 hectares, and asked the Town to provide a letter in support. They are concerned that BC Timber Sales has said that it will not halt the sale of cutblock A87124, which infringes on part of the area for the proposed expansion of the park.
- Councillor Tretick asked the delegation if they had considered the economic impact of their request on the people who are trying to earn a living in the forestry business. Muir replied that ELF is not against logging, the organization wants economic diversity and just wants the Chief Forester to define the cut outside the proposed park expansion area.
- Councillor Bouman opined that the decline in forest employment has been caused by poor forest management. He added that ecological integrity of the forest is of prime importance. He said to the delegation, “Don’t go away. The day will come when we’ll get a new government.” *(Pretty clear bias, both ideologically and politically, I would say.)*

Robert Rodvik – Water rights from aquifer

- Mr Rodvik, who lives just outside the Town boundary in Area F, asked that the Town rectify its ill-considered decision to take water rights away from people like him.
- Mayor Rowe responded that the decision had been carefully taken by the previous Council, and that the infrastructure to provide water from the aquifer is expensive.
- Councillor Bouman added that the Town’s legal accountability for water quality comes with a cost.
- Mayor Rowe noted that no reason is likely to persuade Mr Rodvik, and thanked him for his delegation.

REPORTS

Update on Well #1 Water Vending Machine

- Poole reported that credit card sales from the vending machine at Well #1 will begin March 30.

- Councillor Tretick asked what is the communication plan. Poole responded that a sign will be placed at the wellhead, media releases will be issued and the Town's "News & Views" will be utilized.
- Councillor Johnson asked that staff keeps track of changes in usage as a result of charging for the water.
- Councillor Bouman asked if there will be restrictions on the use of the revenue from the sale of the water. Poole said that there are no restrictions. Councillor Bouman expressed his concern at the attitude of some that people have been "freeloading" at the Town's expense and that the Town should consider a way to spend the revenue from water sales at the wellhead that counters negative community response to the change to charging for the water. Councillor SanJenko agreed, adding that a communications plan needs to get "buy in" from the community.
- *Most of the complaints about the Town's decision to charge for water at the wellhead come from people who live outside the Town. Frankly, I see no reason why the ratepayers of Gibsons should provide free water to people in adjoining jurisdictions. If we are going to make water available at the wellhead (and personally I don't think we should), people must buy it. "Buy in" is nice, but not necessary.*
- The Committee received the report
- At this point, there were only 6 people remaining in a gallery that had initially been more than 30.

Accessible and Adaptable Housing Guidelines

- Epp presented a report on the "Sunshine Coast Accessible and Adaptable Guidelines" that have been developed by the District of Sechelt, along with a recommendation that the guidelines routinely be provided to parties wishing to develop in the Town.
- Councillor Tretick noted that the guidelines have the support of the Coast Community Builders Association. Councillor Johnson added that the guidelines are necessary for consistency on the Coast.
- The Committee approved the recommendation, with thanks to Sechelt for allowing the use of the guidelines.

Hillcrest Outfall Remedial Work

- Newman presented a report on the Hillcrest Road storm water outfall into Gibsons Creek. The area was identified as a concern in a report in February 2006 (Charman & Gibsons Creek Ravine Study) and remedial work was undertaken in 2007. Now erosion has taken place that requires more remedial action.
- The recommendation is to contract BA Blacktop to do this work estimated at \$12,200, plus a \$2,000 allowance for environmental monitoring, plus a 25% contingency = project budget of \$18,000, to be funded from the Stormwater DCC Fund which currently has a balance of \$520,000.
- In addition, the Town will seek the assistance of an environmental consultant to ensure that the appropriate environmental measures are undertaken.
- The Committee approved the recommendation.

INQUIRIES

Regarding Delegations, I noted that the Hagedorn/Hopkins request to appear was dated December 8, 2011, had originally been scheduled for December 20 and then rescheduled to February 14, 2012. I asked two questions:

- How is the timing of delegations decided?
- Why did it take so long for the Hagedorn/Hopkins request to get on a COW agenda?

No answer was available at the meeting. I commented that the Town's response to delegation requests appears to favour issues regarding the environment as they make it to an agenda in two weeks or less. I suggested that the Town should strive for better balance between issues related to the environment and those dealing with equally important social and economic matters.

CORRESPONDENCE

SCRD regarding Sunshine Coast Agricultural Area Plan Budget

- The SCRD has obtained a \$14,000 grant (50% of the total project budget) to develop an agricultural land use inventory for the Coast. The balance of the funds for the project are to come from SCRD planning function surplus (\$9,655) and taxation (\$4,345), of which Gibsons share will be \$486.
- Councillor Tretick explained that participation in this first stage of the project does not commit the Town to participate in future stages.

RCMP regarding telecommunications tower

- The RCMP intends to install a 120 foot telecommunications tower at the new RCMP facility and seeks the Town's approval, which the Committee recommended.

INQUIRIES

Regarding the SCRD Agricultural Area Plan, through the Chair I asked Councillor Tretick if there had been any discussion at the SCRD about raising part of the cost of the study from the private sector farmers who will benefit from it. Councillor Tretick replied that they had not been. I suggested that going forward, the SCRD should look to this source of funds in developing the agricultural plan on the Sunshine Coast, and pointed to the Coast Community Builders Association as an example of how private enterprise can work together to achieve objectives. I concluded by saying that I hoped never to see an SCRD function for agriculture, which sentiment Councillor Tretick heartily agreed with.

The meeting concluded just before 8:00 pm. The next meeting of Committee of the Whole will be at 6:00 pm on Tuesday, February 21, 2012.

Cheers,
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