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News Release

District of Sooke releases draft Zoning Bylaw for public review

Sooke, BC – March 22, 2011

One of the key implementation tools for Sooke's Official Community Plan (OCP) is the Zoning Bylaw, which is now available for the public to review. The public review process will be made up of an online survey (www.sooke.ca), which will run for 2 weeks only, launching on March 28th, 2011 and closing on April 11th, 2011, and a number of open houses, which are scheduled as follows:

- April 4th at 11 am - 2 pm, a poster board session specifically for seniors with a presentation of the new Zoning Bylaw at 1:00 pm (Location: Sooke Municipal Hall in the Seniors Centre);
- April 4th at 4 – 7 pm, a poster board session at SEAPARC, to catch parents as they drop off and pick up their children for recreation events;
- April 14th at 4 – 8 pm, a poster board session as part of a larger District of Sooke Open House, showcasing various initiatives by the District.

Don't be surprised if you are asked to fill out a questionnaire on the draft Zoning Bylaw when you go to the District of Sooke and make a counter inquiry!

The consulting team has worked extensively with District of Sooke staff and the Council-appointed Technical Review Committee made up of community representatives to identify those features of the existing Sooke Zoning Bylaw that are effective and should carry over into the new Zoning Bylaw, and those areas which need improvement. At its March 8 meeting, the Technical Review Committee recommended to Council that the draft Sooke Zoning Bylaw be presented to the public for review and consultation. Council has had a chance to review the draft bylaw, and they like what they see.

"The consultants have worked really hard to listen to what the staff and community representatives had to say about the Zoning Bylaw." said Mayor Evans, "So far, it is looking good. The test will be in how the community responds to it. I hope that community members take the opportunity to comment."

The proposed Zoning Bylaw has reduced the number of zones, while making the differences between them plain. There is a user guide, and the bylaw has been reorganized to make it easier to use. During the public consultation process, all the changes will be highlighted, so members of the public can clearly identify what is different in the new bylaw.

The new Sooke Zoning Bylaw has been drafted to implement Sooke's vision, as captured in the OCP and the Town Centre Plan. The new Zoning Bylaw:

- Concentrates density in the Town Centre, and within sewerage areas;
- Introduces minimum frontages into all zones;
- Updates the Neighbourhood Commercial zone to meet the OCP requirements for commercial nodes;
- Upgrades the Manufactured Home Park zone to reflect community needs;
- Integrates food security, rainwater management, and green technologies into the zones in an appropriate way;
- Provides for a range of agricultural zones, allowing for young farmers to access land;
- Contains a new zone for Technical Industrial Business Parks;
- Provides for a range of residential zones with differing lot sizes to permit a variety of housing types in Sooke.

The consultants, Sooke planning staff, and members of the Technical Review Committee will be on-hand at the Open Houses to answer any questions.

For more information, contact:

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