

November 30, 2009

DISTRICT QUARTERLY



The District of Sooke's Council Newsletter

Newsletter #22



District of Sooke

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Excluding statutory holidays

Mayor's Message:

Welcome to the District of Sooke's Town Hall meeting. Today you will find information on the new Official Community Plan, the 2010 Five Year Financial Plan, the top priorities from our Strategic Plan, and the Park Acquisition/ Disposal Plan, just to name a few. Council, staff and committee members have been working hard on the OCP and it is now ready for your approval.

We are very excited about our projects and initiatives that are coming forward next year and we need to hear what you have to say. Thank you for taking the time to get involved in the community, we value your input.

On December the 7th the District of Sooke will officially be 10 years old, we invite you to attend a small celebration on Monday evening December 7th at 7:00 in Council Chambers to help us celebrate our 10 year anniversary.



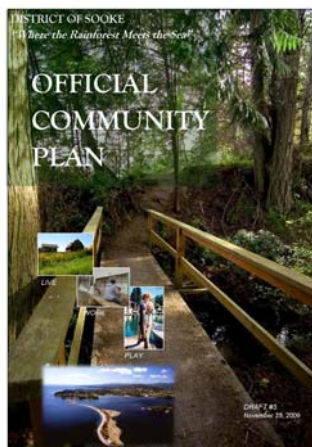
The holiday season is fast approaching, so on behalf of Council and staff I wish everyone a safe and happy holiday season. We are all looking forward to a great 2010 and wish everyone a very Happy New Year.

Mayor Janet Evans

Official Community Plan 2010

Inside this issue:

Help Plan Sooke's Future	2
Sooke Spirit Square	3
Public Boat Launch	3
Pre-Application Meeting	3
Brown Bag Lunch	3
Park Disposition	4
Emergency Social Services	4
Santa Run	4



During the summer of 2009, the residents of the District had an opportunity to comment on the fourth draft of the Sooke Official Community Plan. In late August the Official Community Plan

Review Committee presented Council with their final draft of the OCP for Council's consideration. In September a joint meeting was held with District of Sooke Council, the Official Community Plan Review Committee and District staff to further discuss the draft which resulted in several suggested changes to the document.

Since that time, Staff have continued to refine the OCP document led by the comments received from Council and the public, via both writ-

ten submissions and those received and discussed during subsequent Council meetings. District staff have also met and reviewed the document, provided comment, and helped in the format and creation of the mapping for the OCP. Council will consider first reading at the December 14th, 2009 Council Meeting.

The Official Community Plan Draft #5 is a culmination of these efforts and is now provided for public comment and external referral agency review.

Help Plan Sooke's Future!

Over the next few months, the District of Sooke will be developing its 2010 to 2014 Financial Plan with a view to build on the vision included in the approved Sooke Town Centre Plan and the draft Official Community Plan (OCP) that is nearing completion. Notwithstanding all the great accomplishments of the past 10 years since incorporation, this financial plan may be the most important as we develop financial strategies to implement the overall vision moving forward.

In 2006, Sooke constructed the wastewater treatment facility and sewer distribution system in the Sewer Specified Area with the help of an \$8.8 million grant. This was a turning point in that Sooke was the first municipality in the Capital Regional District to have a wastewater treatment facility enabling us to clean up the Sooke Basin (priority one) and facilitate growth in targeted areas like the Sooke Town Centre. The wastewater system was the catalyst that made the vision of the Sooke Town Centre Plan and OCP possible.

In the planning process for the 2010 to 2014 Financial Plan, Council will be deciding on a number of key issues that will move Sooke forward towards a financially sustainable future. Key issues include:

- What level of property taxes are the citizens prepared to pay recognizing that services levels directly impact taxation levels?
- How will targeted higher density growth in the Sooke Town Centre (and other growth nodes) reduce the overall tax burden on the residential tax base?
- Given the anticipated growth in the Sooke Town Centre, what road projects identified in the Transportation Master Plan must be completed in the next 5 years to reduce traffic congestion, and most importantly how will these projects be financed and by whom?
- Given the Sooke Town Centre Plan for a new main street linking Sooke Road and the Sooke Basin, how and when will this road be constructed, and by whom?
- In accordance with the Parks and Trails Master Plan, what parks and trails projects should be completed (e.g. Galloping Goose connection to Sooke Town Centre, boardwalk expansion, etc.)?
- How will Sooke's municipal operations meet its obligation to be carbon neutral by 2012, and more importantly how will the Sooke community become carbon neutral by 2020?

These are just a sample of the types of questions that must be answered as Sooke moves towards achieving its vision.

There is no question that transportation issues will be highlighted in the 2010 – 2014 Financial Plan. Council will be debating how to complete the segments (e.g. Phillips Road to

Thrup Road and Church Road to Otter Point Rd) of the alternative connector to enable the residents of Sooke to travel between Grant Road and Phillips Rd without the use of Sooke Road (Highway #14). Council will be deliberating on how (and when) to allocate Road Development Costs Charges (collected from the development community) to this key transportation link recognizing that the development community contributes 60 percent of the costs of this link to service new developments while the Sooke taxpayers must pay the other 40 percent to service our existing residents under provincial legislation.



Notwithstanding these future plans, Sooke is going to experience some exciting change over the next year with the construction of the Prestige Hotel a 122 room five star hotel with a conference centre that can accommodate 400 delegates. It is also expected that Mariners Village will commence Phase One of its development in the Spring of 2010 – kicking off our new Sooke Town Centre. Mariners Village is a 12 acre waterfront mixed use development in the Sooke Town Centre with up to 475 residential dwelling units (condos and townhouses), 10,000 square meters of commercial space and a 170 slip marina.

While continuing to support our diverse local businesses, the District of Sooke will continue to encourage commercial and industrial businesses to locate their operations in Sooke through incentive programs and innovative ventures. Development and

increases in the commercial tax base will provide funding for improved road networks, acquiring trails and open spaces – including further waterfront trail connections, revitalizing the downtown, providing affordable housing and implementing sustainability policies.

COME OUT AND GET INVOLVED!

The District of Sooke is encouraging its residents to get out and participate in the development of the 2010 to 2014 Financial Plan by providing your input. The next opportunity is to attend the November 30, 2009 open house being held at the Sooke Community Hall at 4:00-8:00 pm, Shields/Eustace Road.

December/January Upcoming Council Meetings

Regular Council
December 14, 2009
January 11, 2009
**Committee of the
Whole**
January 18, 2009

Unless otherwise noted, meetings are at 7:00 pm in the Council Chambers. Agendas are available at the Municipal office or online www.sooke.ca.



Sooke Spirit Square

Sooke Spirit Square

The District of Sooke was granted funds to improve an outdoor public meeting/celebration space to be a BC Spirit Square. Ed Macgregor Park is to become a focal point that people will identify with as a gathering place in the town and to provide a venue to celebrate the District of Sooke's unique history and charm. The Sooke Spirit Square is progressing nicely with the construction portion of the project at Ed Macgregor Park beginning November 4, 2009 until completion, which is expected to be December 18, 2009. The contractor for construction is Agius Builders Inc. The following are specific design elements that will be added to Ed Macgregor Park under this project to make it our Spirit Square:

- Stage area for performances and ceremonies in all seasons;
- Installation of one accessible washroom facility;
- Use of onsite rainwater management techniques to control and decrease runoff, erosion control;
- Lighting and electrical upgrades;

The Murray Road Park component of the project, which is the eastern corner of the Spirit Square will allow users to access the square at Ed Macgregor Park and all of its components from the downtown core. The Murray Road portion of the Sooke Spirit Square is complete with sidewalks upgrades, public art work, and interpretive signage.

Public Boat Launch

Under the Building Canada Fund – Communities Component, the District of Sooke was granted \$605,768.00 to build a public boat launch. The boat launch will provide a safe launching place for kayakers, sailing/long boat groups and boat owners (motorized and non-motorized) as well as parking for vehicles. The innovative rainwater management in the parking area and marine head vacuum system being included will protect the Sooke Harbour and Basin. The District of Sooke will be issuing a request for quotes for the design and construction of the boat launch in January, 2010. Thank you to all those who submitted their petition for a public boat launch — it made a difference!

Galloping Goose Sooke Connector Trail

The District of Sooke is investigating options for routing pedestrians and cyclists across the Sooke River providing a connection to the Galloping Goose. The District of Sooke will be issuing a request for quotes for the design of crossings at three potential sites along the Sooke River in December, 2009.

So You Think You Want to Develop? Schedule a Pre-Application Meeting First

Do you have a piece of property and are interested in developing? Does the idea of meeting with the various District departments seem daunting?

Why not meet with members of each of these departments in one convenient setting. Each Thursday members of the Planning, Engineering, Building and Fire Departments make themselves available for Pre-Application Meetings. These meetings provide potential applicants with the opportunity to receive preliminary information from all departments at the same time. This convenient format saves potential applicants time by getting their preliminary questions



Brown Bag Lunch Series to Return in 2010

District of Sooke Development Services staff will be re-instituting the previously-successful developer's "Brown Bag Lunch" series in 2010. The idea is simple, meetings are held over the lunch hour with developers, trades people and other interested parties to hear presentations on a variety of development-related topics while also providing an opportunity for informal dialogue between the development community and staff. It is called a "Brown Bag Lunch" because we encourage participants to bring their own lunch as there will be no lunch provided. Staff are currently working on a schedule and welcome any topic ideas. If there is a topic you would like to see covered, please email it and any other suggestions to Nikki Lewers at nlewers@sooke.ca.

Staff Appointments: In November 2009, Elisabeth Nelson joined the staff of the District of Sooke as the Municipal Engineer and Approving Officer for the District.

District to Consider Disposition and Sale of Surplus Park

On November 9, 2009, District of Sooke Council voted unanimously to direct staff to proceed with the disposal of five District parks under the provisions of the *Community Charter*. These parks include:

- Charval Place Park
- Cinnabar Place Park
- Opal Place Park
- Talc Place Park
- Pineridge Place Park (public process currently underway)

The Parks and Trails Master Plan, approved by Council in March of 2009, supports the decommissioning of 10 District parks. The rationale for this recommendation is that the current park funding does not have the capacity to develop and maintain all of the existing parks to a consistently high standard. Many small, passive park spaces have been created that are devoid of public amenities and consistently under-utilized and detract from the overall parks and trails vision for Sooke. Of the 10 parks listed in the Parks & Trails Master Plan, five are located within the Sewer Specified Area. In order to generate funds for the purchase of strategic park lands for the community, to carry out the vision of the Parks and Trails Master Plan, Council has directed staff to proceed with the decommissioning and sale of the five parks located within the Sewer Specified Area.

Disposition of parkland is regulated by the *Community Charter*. All money received for park land must be deposited in the Park Land Reserve Fund for the purpose of acquiring park land. Before Council may adopt a bylaw to dispose of a park it must obtain approval of the electors. To meet this requirement, an *Alternative Approval Process* will be used. This process allows Council to proceed with an action unless at least 10 percent of the electors submit their opposition by way of the formalized Elector Response Form. Should Council receive a 10 percent formal opposition to the action, Council would require a vote of the electors to proceed.

In the coming weeks staff will be inviting neighbours of these parks to an informal meeting to discuss the proposed disposition and to answer any questions they may have.

Sooke Fire and Emergency Services

Sooke's newly formed ESS (Emergency Social Services) program is looking for volunteers. ESS members are trained to support local emergency services in times of disaster. This could be anything from finding clothes and lodging for a family burnt out of their home to registering hundreds of residents facing evacuation due to a major forest fire. Training is provided to all new members. If this sounds like something you might be interested in doing, contact the ESS Coordinator - Assistant Fire Chief Richard McLeod at 250-642-5422 or rmcleod@sooke.ca.

Santa Run December 19th To assist those in need this holiday season, volunteer



firefighters from the Sooke Fire Rescue Service, along with District of Sooke staff, are asking for your support to "Help Fill a Firetruck". Crews will be out in force in front of Western Foods and Village Foods on **Saturday, December 12th from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm** where they will accept cash donations and non-perishable food items in the hopes of collecting enough food to fill a fire truck. Everything collected will be donated to the Sooke Food Bank for distribution.

If you are not able to make it to either of these locations, you can still make a donation. On **Saturday, December 19th** volunteer firefighters from Sooke and Otter Point Fire Departments will be taking Santa Claus on designated routes around their communities. He will be riding atop a brightly decorated fire truck where he will hear the wishes of all the good boys and girls while collecting non-perishable foods. This year we have made it even easier to donate. Watch for a special donation bag in an upcoming Sooke News Mirror. The Western Foods sponsored grocery bag will have full details of the route Santa will take this year. Simply fill the bag and bring it to the curb as Santa and his fire truck go by. Help spread the Christmas cheer to everyone this year and thank you for your support.



Get Involved! Become a Sooke Lifeline Volunteer



- * Join today and be an active part of your Community
- * Work with Community Volunteer Agencies
- * Organize Neighbourhood Response Teams

In times of Emergency:

- > Help set up an Emergency Reception Centre
- > Coordinate other volunteers
- > Organize and help with distribution of food, clothing, and other necessary supplies
- > Assist with family re-unification
- > Provide emotional support

Volunteers Build Better Communities