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District Quarterly

Newsletter #21 ■ April-June 2009

The District of Sooke's Council Newsletter

*District of Sooke, 2205 Otter Point Road,
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Council Highlights

Message from Mayor Janet Evans

It's almost summer!

I am pleased to report that for the last five months your new Council has been very busy. We have approved the Parks and Trails Master Plan, the new Transportation Plan, the five year Financial Plan, and will be reviewing the downtown plan this month. The Official Community Plan is now in draft form and I encourage all residents to review the plan and give your comments to the committee. It is important that the OCP sets the direction for our community for the next five years. All these plans are on our website www.sooke.ca.

Our new financial plan will provide funding for these and other projects:

- Sidewalks on Eustace, Shields, Anna Marie and Church Roads;
- Land purchase for a public boat launch;
- Street light improvements;
- Design work for a Galloping Goose connector to the town centre;
- Protective services fire equipment.

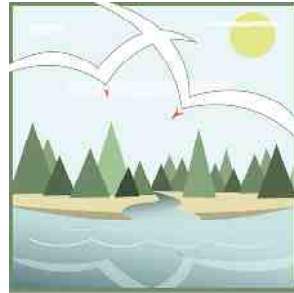
The new sidewalk on Murray Road is now complete; the parking lot for the Rotary Pier and the Boardwalk have been upgraded. I hope all residents and tourists have an opportunity to enjoy this new amenity.

I am writing this during volunteer week, so on behalf of Council we would like to thank all the volunteers who work so hard in our fire department, on all our committees, and all the non-profit groups that help make our community so great.

Thank you all!

p.s. Go Canucks Go!

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. The total project amount available is \$475,000. Ed Macgregor Park (EMP) anchors the BC Spirit Square that will encompass the existing waterfront park system of the boardwalk and the Rotary Pier. As a focal point, EMP will be a gathering venue where we celebrate the District of Sooke's unique history and charm. The Murray Road Park component of the project will be the eastern corner of the Spirit Square that will allow users to access the square and all of its components from the downtown core.

- All-seasons stage area;
- Installation of accessible washrooms;
- Lighting, improved landscaping, benches, tables;
- Water features using onsite stormwater management;
- Directional and interpretive signage.

UPCOMING COUNCIL MEETINGS

May to July 2009

Regular Council Meetings

**May 11 & 25
June 8 & 22
July 13 & 27**

Committee of the Whole

**May 4 & 19
June 15
July 6 & 20**

Unless otherwise noted, meetings take place at **7:00 pm** in the Council Chambers (upstairs at **2225 Otter Point Rd.**, Sooke). Agendas are available for pick up at the District of Sooke Municipal Hall or by download at www.sooke.ca.

Finance Department Report

Pre-authorized 2010 tax payment plan

Effective August 1, 2009, a pre-authorized tax payment plan is being offered by the District of Sooke as an alternative method of tax payment for the 2010 taxes. Application form and additional information may be obtained from the Municipal office or online at www.sooke.ca.

Electronic Home Owner Grant

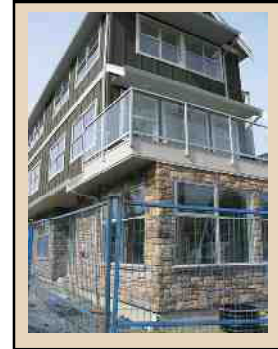
Property owners will be able to claim the Home Owner Grant online starting at the end of May. You will need your property folio number and access code (as on your 2009 Property Tax Notice). Property Tax Notices will be mailed out around the third week of May.

Growing the economy: seven targets

The Sooke Economic Development Commission will work aggressively in collaboration with the business community to grow the economy of Sooke and promote our exceptional natural areas within and surrounding Sooke. Understanding the advantages of Sooke with respect to its tourism potential, employee lifestyle, natural resources and locale, the Commission has seven key objectives that guide their commitment to work proactively, collaboratively and responsibly.

The Commission plans to target economic development activities to attract the following business sectors:

1. **Retirement residence facilities** (independent, supportive & assisted living).
2. **Tourism Industry:** hotels with meeting and conference facilities as well as eco-tourism operators and supporting businesses.
3. **High-tech / Internet technology** industry and the film industry.
4. **Post-secondary education facilities** such as schools for fine arts, music academies, sailing, outdoor operations.
5. **Light industrial** and marine-related manufacturing.
6. **Abattoir** facility.
7. **Increased retail** space capacity.



A new commercial building is under construction on West Coast Rd.

The Priorities, established to attain the goals of the Commission for 2009, meet with the District of Sooke Council's Strategic Plan for 2009-2013 and will be attained through research, education, communication and the marketing of Sooke. Our goals will be achieved through our updated commercial/industrial land base inventory, the SEDC web site, the Sooke Harbour Chamber of Commerce along with new marketing materials and initiatives.

Community in Bloom: dress up your property!

The District of Sooke invites all Sooke residents and businesses to join us in participating in our 2009 campaign for **COMMUNITIES IN BLOOM**. Put out a pot or planter, hang a flower basket, plant a garden or clean up your boulevard. You can make a difference!

Sooke has been a participant of Communities in Bloom since 2007. Each year we have improved our standing and this year we hope to win in our category. There are eight criteria for the judges to consider, only a few of which are about gardens.

- Tidiness Effort
- Environmental Awareness
- Community Involvement
- Natural & Cultural Heritage Conservation
- Tree/Urban Forest management
- Landscaped Areas
- Floral Displays
- Turf & Groundcovers



On judging day, we will proudly tour the judges past our tidy and colourful businesses and all the new Sooke highlights -- sidewalks and trails, community gardens, historic statues and tree plantings. We will tell them about our many dedicated volunteer groups and the cleanup campaigns such as the "Toxic Round Up" and "Pitch in Canada". We should make a great impression on the judges! Also, the Sooke Harbour Chamber of Commerce, District of Sooke and Communities in Bloom Committee have partnered again this year for the Communities in Bloom Recognition Program for businesses. For more information, please see www.bccommunitiesinbloom.ca.

Sooke Amenity Contribution Policy

Staff will propose an Amenity Contribution Policy to Council in June 2009 to bring more consistency and clarity to the amenity contributions expected from applicants during the rezoning process. The policy will apply to the rezoning of residential properties within the Town Centre and outside the Town Centre in the District of Sooke. It will be through density bonusing provisions and Phased Development Agreements (PDAs) where amenity contributions can be obtained. A property owner then has the choice to build to the base density of the zone and make no amenity contribution, or build to the bonus density and provide the specified amenity contribution to the municipality. The purpose of a Phased Development Agreement provision is to allow a developer to protect future phases (several years out) of a large comprehensive planned development. In return for "protection" or "immunity" against zoning change over the phasing period, the Developer can be made to provide amenities. Amenities add to the attractiveness of a community or neighbourhood. Amenities differ from the basic infrastructure that is required to service new development. Amenities typically include such things as: waterfront walkway; cash-in-lieu to a specified fund; public art; recreational buildings; youth centre; plaza; tree preservation; fishing pier; preservation of a heritage structure; child care facilities; medical facilities; theatre; underground parking; community centre. For more details about this project, contact Tara Johnson, Planner at 250-642-1628 or Dave Devana, Director of Finance at 250-642-1611.

Affordable Housing Contribution Policy

An Affordable Housing Contribution Policy that will cooperate with the proposed Sooke Amenity Contribution Policy, will be proposed to Council in June 2009. The District of Sooke has recognized that the availability and affordability of housing plays a critical role in creating opportunities for all community members with varying income levels and lifestyles, to establish themselves in the Sooke community.

Steps to achieving affordable housing in Sooke already include a Housing Reserve Fund Establishment Bylaw adopted by Council (June 2006) and an Affordable Housing & Social Housing Strategy (October 2007). Although Sooke's current Official Community Plan (OCP) has general statements relating to the provision of housing, the draft Sooke OCP will provide clearer and stronger goals, objectives and policies relating to the provision of housing.

An affordable housing policy is applied to new developments and will therefore take place at the time of rezoning. A local government may encourage a percentage of the developed units, or that a specific number and type of units in a given project should be affordable, to own and/or rent. There are also options to permit developers to require off-site construction of the affordable units, as well as to allow developers to pay cash-in-lieu into a housing fund. Stay tuned for further progress of this policy within a couple of months.

● What is Affordable Housing?

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) defines affordable housing as **adequate shelter that does not exceed 30% of household income**; housing-related costs that are less than this are considered affordable. For homeowners, CMHC uses a slightly higher gross debt service ratio of 32%, which includes the cost of servicing the mortgage, property taxes and heating costs. For tenants, housing costs include rent and the cost of utilities such as heating, electricity and water. For further information regarding this project, please contact Tara Johnson, Planner at (250) 642-1628.

Staff Appointments

In April 2009 the following municipal personnel were appointed to these staff positions:

FIRE CHIEF: Steve Sorensen
CORPORATE OFFICER: Bonnie Sprinkling
DIRECT OF PLANNING: Gerald Christie
DIRECTOR of ENGINEERING: Al Fontes

Your Council: 2009-2011

Mayor and Council: Mayor Janet Evans; Bev Berger, Herb Haldane, Sheila Beech, Maja Tait, Ron Dumont, & Dave Bennett.

BEV BERGER, born in Sooke, was elected to the District of Sooke Council in 2008. Bev is thrilled to be living back in her hometown. Bev moved to Victoria after graduation from Edward Milne Community School. She was hired as a studio manager, and quickly became the regional manager of eight businesses across Vancouver Island. Working in business taught Bev a true sense of leadership and teamwork. Bev then married, and moved to San Diego for a year, and then to Boston for five years, where she and her husband Kevin began raising their two children, Ky & Chloe. It was important to Bev to have her children grow up with the same sense of community that she did. So Bev and her family moved back to Sooke. Bev was elected to the District of Sooke Council in 2008.



Bev Berger

We will feature one Councillor in each upcoming Newsletter.

Website

The District of Sooke municipal website carries a wide range of notices and documents, including each year's Annual Report.

www.sooke.ca

Volunteer Firefighters Wanted

*Sooke Fire Rescue Service is currently **accepting applications for the September recruit class** for new volunteer firefighter positions for both Fire Station 1 in the Sooke Core and Fire Station 2 in Saseenos. Applicants must be at least 19 years of age and in good health. Applications can be picked up at Fire Station # 1 - 2225 Otter Point Road.*

Sooke RCMP Strategic Priorities for 2009-2010

In consultation with our community partners, the Sooke RCMP has initiated plans to reduce youth substance abuse, reduce property crime, ensure safe schools and tackle traffic issues amongst the policing priorities.

Property crime accounts for a significant number of offences that are reported to the Sooke RCMP. Factors contributing to property crime include drug addiction, insufficient local resources and inadequate treatment facilities. The Regional Crime Unit will continue to assist the local detachment with the worst offenders.

The detachment will continue in its specific prevention and education programs about substance abuse in our local schools. Additional assistance will be provided by the local school liaison officer.

The detachment will continue in its efforts to discuss traffic safety issues, traffic law enforcement priorities, awareness campaigns, and safety blitzes in Sooke. Every day, a member of the detachment is assigned a specific area to be on the lookout for prohibited drivers and drivers engaging in high risk behaviours like speeding and drinking and driving, as well as for vehicle equipment violations and mechanical deficiencies. This will also be accomplished in partnership with the Integrated Road Safety Unit (IRSU) and the South Island Traffic Services (SITS).

All community members must partner together to keep Sooke a safe place to live. Community policing involves partnerships and problem solving. We continue to build a mutually trustful and respectful relationship between our officers and community members.

Toxic Roundup

A number of communities have used programs like the **Toxic Round Up** as an informative way to increase awareness of proper and improper use of sewers and rainwater management systems. Many of Sooke's residents already have a good understanding of proper disposal of household waste due to their recent use of septic systems and environmental awareness. However, with the large influx of new people in the area who may not be familiar with proper system care, and the current homeowner's distance from septic use, there is potential for this awareness to be lost.

In partnership with EPCOR, District of Sooke is supporting a Toxic Round Up event on **Saturday, May 9**. This event will raise awareness of household hazardous waste and the damage it can cause to the biological process at the treatment plant and the health of the freshwater and marine ecosystems. Along with sanitary and rainwater source control education for the homeowner, the event will provide a central collection location for homeowners to drop off their unwanted chemicals, paint, cleaners, etc., which will be transported to the Hartland Landfill for proper disposal.

Keep household hazardous waste out of the system. Some household products contain chemicals that can harm the biological process at the treatment plant and the health of freshwater and marine ecosystems. These need to be disposed of in a proper manner.

Store it, Don't Pour it. Grease doesn't belong in the sewer system. It can cause problems with residential pumps, lift stations and the treatment plant, and can be a source of odours throughout the system. Store cooking grease in a recyclable tin can until it can be disposed of in the garbage.

The Store It, Don't Pour It campaign will include the availability of stickered plastic lids for metal cans to promote grease storage and proper disposal.

The Sooke Fire Department Cook Out will provide food and drinks by donation (as well as a contribution from EPCOR), with proceeds to the Fire Department outreach program.

At the Sooke fire hall:

**Drop off hazardous wastes:
on May 9th (10 am to 1 pm)**

SOOKE is the "Day 2" STOP on the 2010 OLYMPIC TORCH RELAY ROUTE



Sooke residents who seek the Olympic Spirit will be able to see the Olympic Flame in person on **October 31, 2009 (day 2 of the 106-day journey)** as it passes through Sooke on its way towards the Vancouver 2010 Olympic Winter Games by February 12, 2010. See the torch relay route at: vancouver2010.com

Volunteers Build Better Communities

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.

To register as a volunteer, contact: Bill Hadikin, Emergency Operations Centre Coordinator 250-642-1634 or bhadikin@sooke.ca

Kaltasin Sewer Expansion

The District of Sooke has applied for funding from the Canada-BC Building Canada Fund, provided in partnership with the provincial and federal governments, to secure funding for the Kaltasin Sewer Expansion Project for 66% of the project. Council's priorities for expansion of the sewer system, as set out in the 2008 Strategic Plan, reflect the input received through petitions for sewer service from property owners in the Kaltasin/Idlemore area.

The T'Sou-Ke First Nation fully supports the sewer expansion to Kaltasin as a "step in the right direction" and will provide a letter of support "for this important project". The Liquid Waste Management Plans are nearing completion and clearly demonstrate the need to address the protection of the Sooke Harbour and Basin in the Kaltasin/Billings Spit area.

The Kaltasin sewer expansion project is not envisioned as an expansion of the Sooke Core Sewer Area; a new Local Area Service is proposed. Council has the authority to establish a Local Area Service in accordance with section 210 of the Community Charter. Currently there are approximately 160 parcels with 350 individual property tax folios in the proposed Kaltasin sewer area. Some properties are strata, manufactured home, vacant or common properties.

Towns for Tomorrow

In March 2009 the BC Ministry of Community Development announced joint provincial and federal funding for four south island communities (Esquimalt, Langford, Metchosin and Sooke) to build location infrastructure, enhance community green spaces and address priority projects to stimulate the local economy.

Sooke's **Towns for Tomorrow** grant will provide much-needed funding for the construction of sidewalks in the Town Centre to encourage more walking activities, thus promoting a healthier town and complement the existing and proposed road corridors. Sidewalk projects include Eustace Road, Anna Marie Road, and Church Road.

Current Planning Initiatives: Update

Parks & Trails Master Plan

On February 26th, 2009, the District of Sooke Council, along with the media and representatives from local groups and organizations, celebrated the completion of several District of Sooke sidewalk and trail construction projects. The group toured recently completed projects throughout the community including:

- Ayre Road Sidewalk
- Ed Macgregor Park Accessible Trail
- Broomhill Park Playground
- Ella Beach Public Trail
- Phillips Road trail
- Church Road trail
- Townsend Road Sidewalk

"Since incorporation, the citizens of Sooke have placed the development of safe, well defined pedestrian and cyclist routes as the number one priority for their community," says Mayor Janet Evans. "Council has endeavoured to meet this request through the formation of sidewalk and trail linkages either at the time of development or with grant funding opportunities."

Development has provided funding or construction of many sidewalk and trail improvements, for example Ella Beach, Phillips Road, and Church Road. Provincial grant programs and other funding alternatives have supported many other walks and trails projects toward creating a walkable community.

To further create a walkable community, four new major planning documents have been developed through public participation: the Official Community Plan, Parks & Trails Master Plan, Transportation Master Plan and the Sooke Town Centre Plan. The new community planning documents were displayed for public input at the Community Planning Open House on February 26th, 2009.

The community plans encourage a safe and efficient network of transit, bicycle and pedestrian routes. The proposed Parks and Trails Master Plan prioritizes the short- and long-term needs for parks and trails and is intended to facilitate budget planning, acquisition strategy, funding application and park improvement planning over the next 20 years. The draft Sooke Town Centre Plan and Transportation Plan further supports preparation of more effective public transport and trails to encourage diverse opportunities that will enhance local ecotourism opportunities, while supporting new local green industries.

Official Community Plan (OCP)

The second draft of the OCP will be released shortly and made available at the public open house on May 6th. Thank you to our residents who have shown overwhelming support for the process and have provided significant feedback in regards to the OCP. The OCP Committee has also been working very hard with staff and the consultant in reviewing associated documents, policies and comments from the public which have been provided to the committee by letter and by presentations made from various individuals and community groups. Feedback thus far on the process and OCP draft has been mostly positive but the document will continue to be refined in an attempt to address the concerns/issues that have been expressed by our residents.

The remaining OCP process involves a review of the second draft by the OCP Committee, copies of the document to be made available to the public at the District office and on the District's website, gathering of feedback at the public open house on May 6th, a presentation to Council at the first reading of the OCP bylaw, and a public hearing to be scheduled by Council of the bylaw. After the public hearing final changes to the OCP can be made if necessary and Council will be asked to give 3rd reading to the bylaw. After a final legal review of the OCP, Council will be asked to give the District of Sooke Official Community Plan (2009) Bylaw final reading bringing into force an updated planning vision for our community.

Please direct your questions or comments to Gerald Christie, Director of Planning, District of Sooke, at 250-642-1608 or email to gchristie@sooke.ca.

Town Centre Plan

The final draft of the Town Centre Plan will be complete in May and presented to Council. Staff, Council and the consultant have heard many comments over the last several months with regard to the need for increasing the residential density of the town centre above what was originally envisioned in the first draft of the plan.

The updated plan will allow for taller townhouses and commercial buildings, a greater mix of residential uses including condominiums, an allowance for narrower streets, density bonusing, and incentives for developers to build in the town centre and to build it 'green'.

The plan will be presented to the Committee of the Whole in May for discussion and public comment. Please direct questions or comments to Gerald Christie, Director of Planning, District of Sooke, at 250-642-1608 or email to gchristie@sooke.ca.



The updated plan allows for taller townhouses and commercial buildings.

More info on the proposed community plans: www.sooke.ca

Going on around town

We pitched in

The District of Sooke hosted a community cleanup week in partnership with Pitch-In Canada during April 20-26, 2009 in an effort to keep our community clean, safe and beautiful.

Thank you to everyone who participated in the March 28, 2009 EARTH HOUR! Sooke reduced its power consumption by 4.8%, making us this year's provincial champ!



For more information visit:
www.earthhour.org

TOXIC ROUND UP

Drop off household hazardous wastes and keep the environment clean!
Residential waste only, please.
No commercial waste accepted.

Location: Fire Department
2225 Otter Point Road

Date: Saturday, May 9th, 2009
Time: 10 am to 1 pm

Contact: 250-642-6300 for more info.



Signs for our time

The Sign Committee is actively reviewing ideas for signage improvement within the District, both in the downtown core and along highway frontages. Sandwich board signs are of a particular issue with the Committee, respecting a need to balance requests for business identification, limit hazards to pedestrian traffic, and the need to coordinate and integrate any sign proposals with the downtown plan and the Official Community Plan.

VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTER HONOURED:

for 60 Years of Dedication



Ruby and Bill Stephenson with the Hon. Steven L. Point, Lieutenant Governor of BC. Bill said about the day: "It was perfect."

Members of the Sooke Fire Rescue Service celebrate one of their own on April 4, 2009, when volunteer firefighter **William (Bill) Stephenson** was honoured for dedicating 60 years to the volunteer fire service.

"This makes him the longest serving active firefighter in BC," Fire Chief Steve Sorensen said. "Joining the Sooke Fire Department in December 1948, Bill has a long and colourful history as a firefighter including two terms as the volunteer fire chief. His dedication to his community is something we can all learn from."

The community of Sooke, along with past and present members of the Sooke Fire Department, commemorated this historic event starting with a parade of antique and modern fire trucks. The parade began at the SEAPARC Arena on Phillips Road and travelled through Sooke to the Fire Station on Otter Point Road that is named in Bill's honour.



Several hundred people came to honour Bill including many retired firefighters.

The parade wound its way along Otter Point Road (Apr.4/09).

Sat. May 23, 2009

9 am to 4 pm

\$20 per person includes lunch

Community Builders Open Space Forum

For more info: www.emcsprograms.ca

Are you a member of a PAC, non-profit board, volunteer group, or local sports team? Trying to raise funds for your group? Please join us for a day of discussion. You set the topics.

To register call 250-642-6371 (by May 15) or email to: rsteale@sd62.bc.ca