

April 25, 2024 Meeting , 7 p.m.

Patrick Weiler, SCAF and District of Sechelt Mayor and Council

In attendance:

Jill Helming, Village	Councilman Adam Shepherd	Patrick Weiler. MP
Pat Dagliesh, Village	Councilwoman Brenda Rowe	
Gail Riddell, West Sechelt	Councilwoman Donna Bell	
Lynn Forrest, Tillicum Bay	Councilwoman Diane McLauchlan	
Diana Mumford, Sandy Hook	Mayor John Henderson	
John Carsley, Tuwanek		
Warren Allan, Davis Bay		
Candice Sayre, West Sechelt, scribe		

Chair Gail Riddell greeted attendees and read the four questions previously submitted to Patrick Weiler for discussion. See attached list of questions.

Discussion

Question 1: Housing/Water

The federal government has just finalized its housing plan which will support municipalities financially to create more housing. In addition, the plan will provide funds to facilitate enforcement of bylaws, e.g., short term rentals. Tax code provisions will include restrictions on house flipping, 1% tax on un-used, empty or vacant houses (more than 28 days) and a ban on foreign purchases. A “housing accelerator” fund of \$400 million will assist municipalities to speed up permitting in order to fill the “missing middle” and affordable housing construction. DoS can still apply for these funds.

A fund for housing related infrastructure is available with conditions, e.g., housing design and national codes will apply. Apartment construction loans for low-cost housing are also available. Protection of affordable rentals, for example, BC Rentals. The Rapid Housing Initiative and Affordable Housing Fund for land were also mentioned as avenues for funding for below market housing. Other programs include \$80K for secondary suite build-out, Coop housing investment, Use of federal land for housing, e.g., national defense property. An example is behind the Sechelt post office which would support a 3-4 storey building. Other programs: First Home Savings Acc’t gives \$40K tax free, increased amortization period, use of RSP funds for first homebuyers, multi-generational home suite funding (seniors only to date), reduction of GST on apartment building from 4% to 10%.

Increased building resulting increased water usage amidst a water shortage and what can the federal government assist with this ongoing problem was also discussed in connection with Housing. There is dedicated funding for water and sewer. The federal government is currently working with SIB in connection with the two reservoirs in planning.

Landlord/Tenant problems were discussed. The current Tenancy Act must be re-worded extensively. People do not want to be landlords, especially in connection with secondary suites when it is almost impossible to evict bad tenants under the current law. Big insurance companies do not want to take the risk of insuring homes with secondary suites and as a result, insurance rates have escalated for landlords.

Another issue discussed is the existence of “transportation deserts” on in the DoS, for example East Porpoise Bay. Land eligible for development cannot be developed for low-cost housing due to lack of transit. Electric buses have been authorized for the Sunshine Coast-more details to follow.

Finally gray water use requirements for new development and retrofitting homes for gray water use was also discussed. Weiler will check into the federal regulations regarding these issues and report back.

Question 2: Sechelt Inlet

Derelict and sunken boats present a problem in Porpoise Bay. The Dept of Fisheries and Oceans is updating its list of vessel owners and is supposed to be “watch-dogging” vessels. Transport Canada can do sweeps to determine risks. The cost of removal and disposal was also discussed and it was suggested that boat and fishing licenses include funds for such removals. The problem is no action can be taken under current regulations until a vessel sinks which creates more risk of environmental harm.

It was suggested that DoS look to the State of Washington’s approach to having a single funded agency to handle the problem of multi-jurisdictional quagmire. Bowen Is. restricts where boats can be moored. Funds are available under the small craft harbour funds. There was mention of a Sechelt Inlet impact study that may be in the SCRD archives that could be helpful. Councilwoman Donna Bell will investigate and get back with more details.

Question 3: Emergency Planning

The federal government has funds available for provinces for reimbursement for infrastructure, preventative and disaster mitigation costs, for example firebreaks. Fire training, equipment, adaptation, flood insurance programs do exist. These programs are province-directed. It was suggested that the BC Ministry should take to the DoS.

The SCAF Town Hall so emergency preparedness scheduled for May 11 was discussed. Weiler has offered to include information on emergency preparedness in his newsletter to reach non-members of community associations.

Question 4: RCMP

The federal government does not control or fund the RCMP for local battalions; this is under provincial jurisdiction.

Open Discussion:

Discussion of the limitations on small municipal resources for them to comply with housing density regulations and investment in funding for small communities.

2 billion tree program discussed. Weiler to look into this program's availability for DoS.

Meeting adjourned: 8:30 p.m.