



Hello, WSCA members! Your community association is sending this newsletter to bring you up to date on WSCA activities.

News on Developments and Density

WSCA has been kept busy since the last Newsletter. BC Bill 44 mandates more density to “fill the missing middle” in other words, more affordable housing for middle income earners. WSCA agrees that there is insufficient affordable housing on the Coast due to years of government neglect and the current housing market is out of reach for most families. Planning for the future of the community is needed. Unfortunately, the District of Sechelt (DoS) Planning Department seeks to accomplish the higher density now mandated by the province by permitting three to six storey buildings on bare lots (special infill) in established neighbourhoods. Bylaw 492-35 has passed first reading even though there are questions about proper notice to all interested parties. WSCA board members met with the Planning Department and discussed the complexity of the proposed Bylaw 492-35 and the need to inform the community. It requested a public information meeting to inform citizens of the changes that may come to their neighbourhoods. DoS went ahead with a public hearing which effectively cut off any further inquiry or information, but had second thoughts due to the outcry and has scheduled a public information session for May 14, 1-7 pm at the Seaside Centre. This will be your opportunity to learn what effect this bylaw may have on your property and area. If there is a bare lot in front of you, be prepared!

The Tower Rd. development remains pending. WSCA expects that there may be a new plan because of the provincial legislation. We will keep you informed. The proposed Apple Orchard Rd. development is going nowhere now. The lot in dispute is for sale again. WSCA expects more density to be proposed. The eight small houses development on Mills Rd. was approved even though there is no provision for widening Mills Rd. to allow for parking. Unfortunately, the Mills Rd. developer will not be responsible for any improvements on Jasper Rd between Mills Rd. and Norwest Bay Rd. for example a walking path and lighting, so those improvements must wait. Yet another development out on Hwy 101, Sunshine Coast Trails, is being proposed. Eventually, 900 new residences are proposed in a planned community. A public information session was held on March 27th. WSCA board members attended and posed questions about water, water treatment transport, affordability, fire flow adequacy among other issues. No clear answers were available. Neither the SCR D nor the DoS Planning Dept. personnel attended. Finally, on April 26th, WSCA representatives attended a public information session for an 86 townhouse development on McCourt Rd. The developer described grey water catchment and recycling systems proposed for the development. In addition, McCourt Rd. will be restructured to eliminate some of the steepness. Unfortunately, the issue of sufficient potable water for this development remains unanswered as well as whether any of the homes will be affordable. Further, landscaping will not include preservation of any current native plants on the property.

Fire Flow

Fire protection and house insurance premiums were a topic of discussion at the May 31st 2023 Sechelt Council meeting involving the Sechelt Fire Chief and Regional District staff. At that time, the Regional District believed that there was sufficient water pressure for fire protection. Now, only a few months later, Sechelt staff are advising Council that there are active development applications that cannot proceed as the minimum fire flow demands cannot be met (March 20, 2024 Council meeting). The solution proposed is to reduce the minimum fire flow requirement via a Development Variance Permit (DVP) – not to delay developments until the water supply is sufficient to meet minimum fire flow thresholds. Staff presented an amendment to the Subdivision and Development Bylaw that would enable the Chief Building Inspector and the Approving Officer to grant variances to fire flows – without any public process, or the knowledge of Council itself.

Even if a reduction in minimum fire flow demands were acceptable (for whatever reasons), is such a delegation valid under the province's enabling legislation?

Section 498.1 of the Local Government Act enables the delegation of DVPs to staff. However, the variances must be minor in nature and are specified to relate to minor zoning issues that include the siting, size and dimensions of buildings and structure, parking, signs, landscaping and screening. Due to these limitations, there is no public notification process required. DVPs issued by Council require a public notification process as they can be much broader in scope with potentially larger impacts. Included in the list for Council are variances to a bylaw relating to Subdivision and Development Requirements. WSCA has sent a letter of concern to Council.

Traffic and Speeding

Speeding remains a concern. Sid DeVries, WSCA's traffic safety director, submitted a proposal for traffic calming on Baillie Rd. across from the post boxes and footpath to Burtnick Park. The District of Sechelt's counter earlier this year showed that over 40% of drivers were speeding, some at over 80 km per hour down Baillie! Even so, the DoS determined that this was not of sufficient concern to warrant any traffic calming!

Please let us know your concerns about your area of West Sechelt. Please keep the DOS informed of your concerns by emailing council, and let us know what you would like to see improved in your area to WSCA by email to contactwsca@gmail.com.

Meetings with other associations and DOS

The Sunshine Coast Association Forum (SCAF) met with the mayor, members of council and Patrick Weiler, MP to discuss Neighbourhood Emergency Preparedness (NEP) among other issues. Notes from that meeting are attached to this newsletter..

Short Term Rentals-Impact of new BC legislation on the Coast

According to the new provincial legislation prohibiting un-hosted short-term rentals, long term tenants may act on behalf of actual owners. The terms of the long-term rental must be provided upon request and the owner must provide contact details. Be aware that some short-term rental owners may attempt to circumvent this rule. Report all infractions to the Bylaw officer or short-term rental monitoring director Pat Rothenbush.

Neighbourhood Alert Pilot Project

Directors Judy Skogstad and Colleen Tucker, Candice Sayre, Pat Hoffman and Bev and Brian Coxford put together and organized a neighbourhood pilot project for Oracle, Mika, and Baillie Roads by gathering email/phone information and dividing the information into three sections. People in each section were to contact a section leader in the event of observed events and the RCMP. The section leader will contact the section members to alert them of a problem. All information is kept confidential. So far, section members have been alerted of half a dozen incidents and unusual or suspicious behavior. If you want to set up a similar program for your area, please email your board members at: contactwsca@gmail.com.

AGM

The AGM was held on May 7 at the Botanical Gardens. WSCA's constitution and Bylaws were amended to conform to 2023 BC Societies Act amendments. Councilmen Adam Shepherd and Darren Inkster were guests as was former councilman Chris Moore. David McIlwraith, Coordinator of "FireSmart was the speaker. Minutes of the AGM are attached to this newsletter. The FireSmart presentation was interesting, detailed and concerning. Members are encouraged to go to www.firesmartbc.ca for more information or to the SCRd website where there is a FireSmart tab. You can schedule an assessment of your home for free to find out how you can mitigate fire damage or destruction. You can also email David McIlwraith at: david.mcilwraith@scrd.ca.

Membership Drive – Why Join a Community Association?

WSCA needs a louder voice in order to be effective. WSCA needs members to enlist their neighbours who are not members to join. Only \$10/household/year! And as for current members, we still have some outstanding dues. Please do not let your membership lapse. Encourage your neighbours to get involved. There is a form online on our website and you can always email the Board for a hard copy if you prefer. The AGM is the ideal time to renew! Mark your calendars-**May is the month to pay!**

Executive Board Members and Directors Needed

WSCA needs members to step up to the Board to act as officers or directors or it will cease to function. If you consider WSCA's work important, you need to help out. Directors may choose areas of interest. Officers keep the Association running smoothly. Three officers will be completing their final year of their terms-president, secretary and treasurer. Please contact current board members for more information at contactwsca@gmail.com.

Have a great summer!

The Board
Catherine Hanson
Judy Skogstad
Gail Riddell
Carolyn Bedford
Arlene Stefani
Pat Rothenbush
Colleen Tucker
Sid DeVries
Candice Sayre