

Central Saanich Community Association

MINUTES

October 8, 2024

CS Fire Hall #1 meeting room

Welcome – The eleven individuals present introduced themselves and the topic they wished to discuss.

Finance – Jackie Lee reported that we have a balance of \$519 in the bank. We received \$500 for providing volunteers for the Half Marathon, and we received a \$1,000 grant from the District. Jackie distributed a fundraising letter which asks businesses to sponsor the CSCA, asking us to take it to the businesses we deal with.

Repair Café – Pieta VanDyke reminded the group that at a previous meeting we agreed to use our \$1,000 grant to cover the costs of sponsoring a Repair Café. She contacted the folks who run the Repair Café in North Saanich and it turns out they are interested in co-sponsoring a session on October 19. They hold a café on the third Saturday of the month but will not be able to do so in October, as their venue will be used as a polling station. So it will be held in the lower hall (bingo hall) of the Central Saanich Seniors' Centre on October 19 from 10 am to 1pm. Several of our members agreed to help with set up and to be “fixers”.

Peninsula and Area Agricultural Commission (PAAC) – Kathleen Zimmerman reported on recent developments relating to the District of Central Saanich and PAAC. PAAC is an advisory committee to the municipalities of Saanich, Central Saanich, North Saanich and Metchosin. Members of the public may apply to sit as representatives, and each municipality must approve the appointments. This past year Central Saanich did not approve the appointments, asking instead for a governance review. In September the Mayor and one of the Councillors introduced a motion to withdraw from PAAC and started a survey of farmers. This resulted in 47 responses, 95% of which favoured keeping PAAC. Subsequently the Council voted on a motion to make the PAAC a CRD committee. Kathleen noted that the CRD does not have a mandate for agriculture, and that this model adds several bureaucratic layers between the farmer and their local municipality. She also noted that the PAAC secretary (who is paid jointly by the 4 municipalities), will be retiring at the end of December, adding an urgency for making a decision on this matter. PAAC will be holding a workshop on November 13 on Illegal fill dumping on agricultural land, which is getting to be a serious problem. There will be presentations by the ALC soil resource supervisor and the ALC director of operations as well as the soil bylaw officer for the city of Richmond BC. The workshop will take place at the Saanich Fairgrounds from 10 am – 2 pm.

Civic Redevelopment – Everyone at the meeting had attended at least one of the open houses held to get feedback on redevelopment on the 1903 Mt Newton (town hall) site. They noted that the presentation seemed superficial and that there seemed to be a “done deal”. There was no plan and no budget. All of the comments from those attending the open houses were negative. It was noted that only 2 councillors attended the open houses, and each decided not to engage in discussions with the

public regarding details related to costs, planning and even the rationale for the need for the new municipal buildings. Several of those in attendance live on Scohon Dr., immediately next to the site, and are concerned about how the height and traffic issues will impact them. A further step in the redevelopment will be for the District to hold either a referendum or an “alternate approval process” to approve the spending required. Dave Lawson talked about his concern about using the Hovey road property which has historically been used for agriculture and using it for municipal buildings. After the purchase of the property was confirmed, he initiated an FOI request for the District’s condition report on the building stock – this report was the impetus for the decision to replace the town hall and other buildings. What he received was 144 pages, all completely redacted – completely blacked out. Dave also expressed concern about the alternate decision process and indicated that he has been in touch with an individual up island who has had experience in collecting response from 10 percent of the population in her community (as required). Once we know what the District’s plan will be, the CSCA will determine its response. Dave Lawson is taking the lead on this and we will establish a new Task Force on Civic Redevelopment.

Aryze Development – a couple of impacted neighbours were in attendance. Comments were raised about the impact on traffic, given the poor sight lines on E. Saanich and the number of vehicles exiting the development.

Traffic – a number of parents attended a recent Council meeting about safety issues for their children crossing Mt. Newton at Central Saanich, to catch the school bus. Council agreed to install a pedestrian activated lit crosswalk. They’ll purchase the equipment at the same time as the equipment for the Lochside crosswalk, and have it installed in 3 – 4 months.

Next meeting – Tuesday November 12, 7 pm, Firehall #1