

## Queen Charlotte Community Dialogue

Thursday July 30, 2010

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The Queen Charlotte Community Dialogue was held at the Village Office on July 30<sup>th</sup> with ten (10) people in attendance. Although the focus of the meeting was intended to be “Community Participation”, several other topics were introduced to fill the 2 hours spent together.

It was questioned if the lighter turnout was due to the weather, the summer period, the day of the week, confusion over the 2 dates published for the dialogue, or all of the above. However, it was agreed that we need to settle on a day of the week, Wednesday seems best, and stick to it.

### NOTES:

#### 1. Community Participation:

This subject was introduced with reference to the following quote:

*“Sustainable community development increases the adaptability of a community by creating and maintaining a diversified social and economic base with shared ownership and access to basic human services. Community adaptability, and therefore stability, is based on the ability to meet the majority of its own needs within itself instead of being dependent on outside resources. ...A vitally important component of sustainable community development is local citizen participation in planning, implementing and monitoring programs, policies and projects. The goal is to improve the quality of popular participation instead of merely its quantity.” (Chris Maser, “Resolving Environmental Conflict Towards Sustainable Community Development”, 1996, St. Lucie Press, p180)*

The discussion of this issue focused on the need for community members to actively participate on and support local initiatives or community boards and associations. Experience has shown that new people help organizations to move forward with new ideas and also to enable others to take a break from years of local volunteering. This is often referred to as ‘board renewal’.

The group identified several different ways to interest newcomers in local activities including:

- Developing a ‘newcomers’ package that could be made available at the Village office, the library and the Visitor Information Centre; local residents could also obtain copies of this welcome package and deliver it to a new neighbor;
- Informing newcomers of opportunities by using local bulletin boards, the Village Voice Newsletter; the newspaper and the Village website;
- A Volunteer Centre where volunteers could be matched with opportunities;
- A club or Not For Profit Organization information Day of ‘Volunteer Fair’ at the community hall or other area where residents can learn about the kinds of opportunities there are in the community to volunteer and where groups can recruit new members;

- Providing access to the Village Website for clubs and not for profit groups to advertize meetings and activities.

Another suggestion for increasing participation in community development is to hold referendums on community issues so that everyone has an opportunity to express their opinion by voting for or against a governance issue. A less costly option would be the use of community surveys to determine the view of residents on some issues.

It was mentioned that the Community Charter enables both referenda and the alternate approval process (AAP) to be used to obtain voter assent on issues. In some cases, like borrowing money, voter assent is required. Unfortunately these processes are costly (\$6000 - \$10,000) unless held in concert with a local government election.

2. Other issues discussed:
  - a. Soil deposits: Community Charter section 9 (1)(e);
  - b. Use of 'roundup' to deal with invasive plants like knotweed vs mechanical methods of controlling the spread of the plant;
  - c. Sustainable community agriculture and food self sufficiency for Haida Gwaii.

Next dialogue:

The next Community Dialogue will be held in September with the date to be confirmed. Council will be away to the Union of Be Municipalities Conference from Sept. 27 – Oct.1.

Thanks everyone for participating.

Bill Beamish