



VILLAGE VOICE

Message from the Mayor

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Special points of interest:

- ILMB has been working towards solutions on an individual basis.
- Doctors and nurses work towards becoming a level II cancer treatment centre.
- Village looks at desalination as possible solution to water shortages.
- First person to find the humorous typo in this issue receives a free gift!

2009 started with some difficult news. The indefinite closure of **Western Forest Products** affects our families, friends and neighbours and, in reality, impacts all of us. The question now is what opportunities are there for the islands within the changing economic structure? The island communities through Misty Isles Economic Development Society (MIEDS) are meeting with the Council of the Haida Nation to explore ways in which we may be able to work together. We need to identify areas of common business interests such as the acquisition of a timber license or the joint development of community forests, energy production and/or tourism. MIEDS is also scheduled to hold a board strategic planning session and then take that information to the public at its AGM in March. I believe that we need to think “outside the box”, consider new possibilities for our economy and our community and be prepared to take chances with new alliances, while we ensure the protec-

tion of the public purse. We will need to structure an arm’s length company and separate politics from business – not an easy task. Another issue I would like to speak to is **Hooterville/Frog Flats**. Though the area is within a recognized significant archaeological midden and its preservation is important to all of us, there are other pressing issues that impact the ability of those living there to remain: Misuse of license of occupation, unpaid school, hospital and regional taxes, concerns raised by Ministry of the Environment, Department of Fisheries and Oceans and Northern Health. Over the past 2 1/2 years Council and staff met with and listened to the needs and desires of the area residents. It acted as a mediator in discussions between the land owner, the Integrated Land Management Branch (ILMB) –in other words, the Province of British Columbia - and the people trespassing on that land. ILMB has been working

towards solutions on an individual basis. Some people are eligible for rental assistance or low income housing; others expressed an interest in owning or leasing property within the town, some have decided to leave, while others refuse to speak about any suggested change. It has not been easy and at times my council and staff have been exposed to threats and intimidation from those presently living on Crown land.

As a council we are charged to work within the boundaries of our system of government and to treat all our residents equally and fairly. Some decisions are difficult and hard to achieve. We have made a commitment to find solutions that will be available to all of our citizens. We are confident that, although this issue does have a number of challenges and controversies, we are slowly making progress towards an outcome that will end up being positive for all concerned.

Carol Kulesha, Mayor

Queen Charlotte General Hospital and Health Clinic

Northern Health has submitted our new building as a “shelf ready” plan to government for funding. We hope to hear this month where we are on the province’s list of capital projects. Our small hospital continues to do great work.

We are fully staffed for nurses and doctors and are working towards becoming a level II

cancer treatment centre, with the ability to mix and administer chemotherapy treatments locally. We have two (2) General Practitioners Oncology, a Chemotherapy trained pharmacist and a Chemotherapy certified nurse.

The new ultrasound funded by NHA, Hospital Days Foundation and the Gwaii Trust is in Masset and has become operational.

Final testing is expected to be completed by the end of February. Hopefully, many Islanders will be able to get their ultrasound done on Island instead of having to take the ferry to Prince Rupert.

Congratulations to Northern Health and our great hospital and clinic staff.

Canada Post Battle Continues

A letter regarding the sad state of affairs with Canada Post has been sent to the federal government representatives – Members of Parliament and Senate. It is difficult to do business on any level without reliable and efficient mail service. Let us know your mail problems as we continue to battle this bureaucratic giant.

Please submit your complaint in writing to the Village Office, either via email or by “snail mail”.



Island Solid Waste

Our recycling infrastructure cannot keep up with demand and we are also notified that provincial regulations will soon require an increase in recycling space. The Skeena Queen Charlotte Regional District (SQCRD) acknowledges the public’s desire for increased

recycling opportunities and a more efficient garbage collection and billing system. The island directors (the mayors and electoral area directors) are exploring combinations of contracts and facilities on island. Our duty is to the public; to be financially prudent while deliver-

ing the best service possible and to support our 3 island employees by ensuring that their jobs will not be lost no matter how we are finally structured. The Regional District remains responsible for the land fill and its environmental impact, even if the operation is under a contract.

Queen Charlotte presently has 13 low income homes, Heritage House (10 units), Martin Manor (4 units) and 3 houses for those in Danger of Homelessness. Our council is looking to increase the number of low income housing available.



Bearskin Bay Float Home (Frog Flats/Hooterville) History

In the 1980's float homes from the Queen Charlotte wharf illegally located on the foreshore of Bearskin Bay. A long history of trespass, tenure and planned phase out followed:

- **1989** - Licence of Occupation issued for temporary legal tenure. Terms were 5 year non assignable term with no further development, eventual phase out and occupational rent of \$200 per year
- **1992** - Letters were sent to all float home owners stating that current tenures to be honoured to expiry, non-assignment clause, no further development, eventual phase out expected; any future residential lots developed upland would be offered at market value.
- **1995** - Controversy regarding BC Lands allowing transfer of tenure on some licenses. Upland subdivision in west end of town (north side of Oceanview Drive) started
- **2004** - Site visit by BC Lands personnel find a mix of tenured, untenured cabins with some collecting renting, unauthorized development, trespasses into adjacent properties and timber cutting
- **June 2004** - Upland subdivision available for purchase but no responses received
- **June 2004** - Remaining tenures were given a common expiry date of June 30, 2006
- **2005** - Village of Queen Charlotte incorporates. Municipal portion of unpaid taxes owing is \$86,518.27 (not all of this amount is Bearskin Bay). Province agrees to write off "uncollectable" taxes and the Village is left to pay \$36,767.38
- All existing tenures given a common expiry date of **June 30, 2006** in order to facilitate implementation of phase out plan
- **2006** - As per First Nations Protocol a letter was obtained from CHN advising that the area be returned to its natural state; any land designation occur through discussion with Village of QC and CHN; and, on behalf of Chief Skidegate, Alexander MacDonald to be given one year to find alternate living arrangements.
- **2006/7** - Site inspection by Department of Fisheries and Oceans
- **June 21, 2007** - Trespass notices issued by ILMB
- **August 2007** - Multi agency meeting with Council and Float home residents at QC chambers to discuss concerns, phase out and options
- **November 2007** - Meeting with CHN to confirm their support, with the proviso that no one be forced out with nowhere to go
- **May 2008** - Two sites cleaned and public notice signs posted
- In the week of **October 13-17, 2008**, trespass notices once again were issued.

Today neither the original inhabitants nor the float homes remain. No one now living on the properties has adhered to the requirements of the License of Occupation. Presently 10 occupants, all of whom have been advised that they are in trespass, not to pay rent to illegal landlords and to cease building, remain. Meetings have been held with Integrated Land Branch Management officers and area residents as individuals and groups in order to understand their positions and needs. Assistance has been given for applications for rental subsidy and income assistance. Request by the Village for residential land in small and large lot sizes and discussion of tenure options is ongoing.

Village of Queen Charlotte

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We're on the web!

www.queencharlotte.ca



QCC Recycling Depot

903B Oceanview Drive
Wednesdays: 10:00am-2:00pm
Saturdays: 10:00am-2:00pm

Skidegate Transfer Station

Highway 16
Approximately 10km north of Skidegate
Wednesdays: 1:00pm-5:00pm
Saturdays: 11:00am-3:00pm

Garbage not getting picked up?
Call **Island Solid Waste Management**

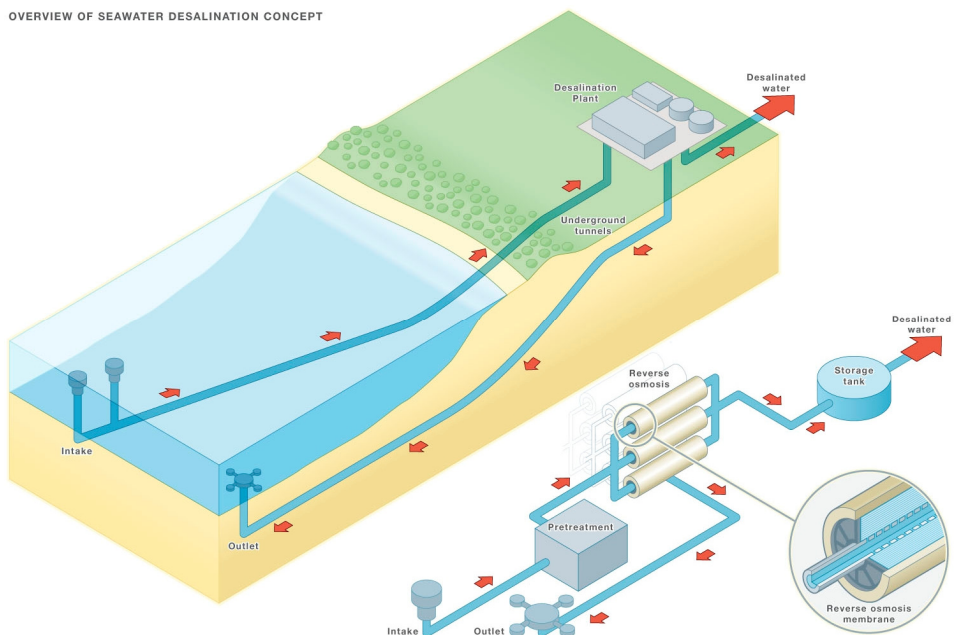
@ 1 888 557 9339
or **Regional District**
@ 1 888 301 2002



Water Update

Desalination, taking fresh water from sea water was discussed when first we looked at the need for another water supply. At that time the costs were prohibitive. Today we are excited about new technology and lowered costs. We have applied to the provincial government for financial assistance with a planning grant to see if desalination would be a viable option for us. Taking fresh water from seawater is an old technology but new techniques and increasing use in 120 countries around the world have lowered the cost.

OVERVIEW OF SEAWATER DESALINATION CONCEPT



This does not mean we have abandoned the Honna River project, not at all, but before the next large outflow of cash, we need to be sure that we have investigated all our options.