

VILLAGE VOICE

Looking Back to 2010 & Forward to 2011

Coming Events

Council Meeting
Monday, Jan 17th
@ 7:30pm

Community Dialogue
Thursday, Jan 27th
@ 7:00pm

All Island Protocol Meeting
Friday, Jan 28th
@ 1:30pm-
Kaay Centre

2010 was a very interesting and challenging year for the Village Council and staff. Not only did they have to contend with a new Chief Administrative Officer who could not seem to remember in which community he was working but there were lots of projects to be started and completed and meetings to attend.

You may recall that in my first newsletter submission I made the following comments:
"As public employees, our priority is to provide a high level of service to the council and to each member of the community. However, that does not mean that we can readily solve every problem or take actions that will make every member of the community happy all of the time. We will do our best for you and, as we do, we will endeavour to learn from each other."

In looking back over the past 11 months I believe that as a staff we have managed to achieve a good number of the objectives and directions provided by Council and that in 2011 we will build on the work that has been started. Some highlights of 2010 include:

- development of policies for purchasing and contracting services;
- preparing a *Works and Services Bylaw* to ensure that municipal infrastructure is built to a high standard prior to assuming ownership and responsibility for maintenance of it;
- working with Masset and Port Clements to undertake a joint and coordinated *Climate Action Plan* that meets our obligations to the Province of BC;
- initiating a monthly *Community Dialogue Program* to meet and share information with the community;
- participate in a review with Council of the *Draft Official Community Plan* which is nearing completion and readiness for consultation with the community;
- preparing policies and operational procedures required to assume full operational control of local roads in December, 2010;

- preparing the *2009 Annual Report to the Community* as required under the *BC Community Charter*;
- monitoring activities in the community including: BC Hydro's initiative to inspect and develop a plan to deal with the Sturdie Creek Dam: BC Highway's work on First Ave. at Charlie Hardie Creek; and, the projects undertaken by BC Highway's to prepare for the community to take on road maintenance;
- continuation of the work on Spirit Square by working with the architect and Council to complete the site and building plans and initiating work on the site; commencing work on the site and finalizing building plans;
- working with Council and the community to develop a policy and procedure to respond to requests from the community for regulatory bylaws, like a noise bylaw which was also drafted for consideration;
- and, in November, meeting with Council to undertake *Strategic Planning* that will guide work of the council and Staff for the next three to five years.

Looking forward to 2011, we are now working with Council to develop the 2011 budget and financial plan. To do this we need to have

some idea as to what kinds of projects we will be undertaking in addition to the routine operations of the municipality. Often it is not difficult to find things to do. In practice I have found that if we plan 75-80% of our time, the remaining 20-25% or more will be filled responding to requests for services and local emergencies that we had never anticipated. That being said, we do know that we will be finishing what we started in 2010, as well as initiating new projects which include:

- completing the Spirit Square project by March 31st;
- discussing the draft noise bylaw and policies



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Looking Back to 2010 & Forward to 2011

with the community and council and if warranted, proceeding to adoption;

- completing work on the draft Official Community Plan and moving forward with consultation, adoption and implementation of the bylaw;
- commencing work on a zoning bylaw which is the logical next step upon completion of the OCP;
- completing work on the benches and trails project that is being undertaken by the Queen Charlotte Seniors Association;
- assuming ownership and responsibility for the Queen Charlotte Cemetery;
- working on the community park and on the new public works yard projects;
- working to ensure that we have a successful municipal election and election process;
- upgrading our website and information systems;
- continuing to develop in-house knowledge and expertise of staff and capacity for operating and maintaining municipal infrastructure and for the efficient administration of the municipality;
- working with Council and with outer community or-

ganizations to improve the economic health of Queen Charlotte and Haida Gwaii;

- working with our Volunteer Fire Department and with neighboring community of Skidegate to improve local fire fighting services and emergency response times;
- meeting regularly with the Skidegate Band Council and the All Island Protocol Table to discuss issues and work together on projects and solutions to issues; and,
- being prepared to respond to the next issue or request for service that we receive.

2011 will be another busy year for the municipality. But we are never too busy that we can't stop to listen to your concerns and we encourage you to continue to contact us for information or to bring attention to an issue that we need to deal with.

We are five members of Council and eight employees, and we benefit daily from the ideas, observations and suggestions that we receive from community members. Thank you and have a very Happy, Successful and Safe 2011.

-Bill Beamish, CAO

Spirit Square

You may have noticed that work has commenced on excavating for and building the new stage at Spirit Square. This work will be either done or coordinated by local resident Sean O'Neil who moved to Queen Charlotte in 2008, from Whistler, BC. Sean has over 28 years experience in specialty design and construction projects in the Whistler area and has worked on major hotel projects, government buildings, private residences and public spaces. He especially enjoys timber frame and log construction as well as working with decorative bricks and paving stones which will be used on this project.

We anticipate that this project will be completed by the end of March and that it will include walkways, a circular gathering area between the stage and the concrete seating and hill structure, two large picnic tables that were built and purchased locally; landscaping, two entry features and, possibly some additional benches and public art.

We have partnered with Parks Canada to landscape the area next to the Visitor Information centre to ensure continuity with the Spirit Square.

One of the challenges to completing this project will be to find the best way to establish the parking stalls adjacent to the Spirit Square and to improve the flow of traffic on Causeway Road. We anticipate that a turn-around will be provided at the south end of the Causeway and we will be experimenting with angle parking as was recommended in a report prepared in 2005 for ICBC by Hamilton Associates. We also anticipate that paving of the Causeway will be undertaken once the project is completed and when the paving crews are on Haida Gwaii.

Spirit Square will be a vibrant and active public space that you will proudly bring your visitors to and attend concerts, craft fairs and other community activities. We look forward to celebrating its completion and the opportunity to thank the many volunteers who have contributed to its design or have participated in its development.

-Bill Beamish, CAO

Home Owners Grants – 2011

There have been some changes to the BC Home Owners Grant Program for 2011 which has been expanded to now include 95.5 per cent of homeowners in the province. The home owners grant provides a maximum reduction in residential property taxes of \$570, plus, if you are over 65, permanently

disabled or eligible to receive certain war-veteran allowances, an additional grant of \$275 – for a total of \$845.

Beginning this year, the province has implemented a new **Northern and Rural Area Homeowner Benefit** that will provide up to \$200 for homeowners living outside of the Capital,

Greater Vancouver and Fraser Valley regional district. To be eligible, homeowners must meet the requirements to receive the basic or additional home owners grants. Information about this new benefit will be included with your municipal property tax notices in the spring,

and eligible homeowners will not need to apply separately. For more information on the Home Owner Grant program and the Northern and Rural Homeowner Benefit, please visit: www.sbr.gov.bc.ca/individuals/Property_Taxes/Home_Owner_Grant/hog.htm.

-Debra Uliana, CFO

How to make Tax and Utility Payments Online

Like many of your monthly bills Property Taxes and Utilities can be paid online through Northern Savings Credit Unions website. If you don't already have an online account with them one can be easily set up at our local branch. To add the Village of Queen Charlotte as a payee you must first log into your online account. Towards the top of the page you

will see four tabs, it automatically opens to the tab titled "My Accounts". Click on the tab "Pay Bills." Beneath the title "Pay Bills" click on the blue underlined link "[Add Payee.](#)" The screen will now say Add Payee— Step 1. Under the Search by Payee Name Tab type in Queen Charlotte and press search. You will see two options for Queen Charlotte—

Property Tax and Utilities. If you click on the Property Tax link you will be prompted to enter your account number— use your seven digit Roll Number that appears on your Property Tax form and click submit. Now click on the Pay Bills tab and you will see it in the list of bills to pay. You can repeat the process and add Queen Charlotte— Utilities to your list.

For the account number use the last four numbers that appear on your utility bill, and leave out the dash zero. For example, if your bill shows account # 00001234-0, use 1234 as the account number. By paying online you can decide how much to pay and when throughout the year— if you have any questions please don't hesitate to call the office.



-Jen Bulbrook

ShakeOut BC— Earthquake Drill

Village staff will be participating in the province wide ShakeOut BC drill that has been planned and sponsored by the BC Earthquake Alliance Society. The purpose of the drill is to enhance public awareness of the earthquake hazard and encourage personal preparedness. During the drill, participants are asked to

"Drop, Cover and Hold On" for up to two minutes, in response to a simulated earthquake event. In preparation for the drill our staff have identified four in-house projects to make the municipal offices and other facilities safe in the event of an earthquake and to ensure that municipal infrastructure is inspected and re-

paired in a timely manner. The ShakeOut BC Organizing Committee is encouraging individuals and organizations to register at www.shakeoutbc.ca to be counted in the drill, promote the drill within their community and have staff participate on drill day. The drill, which is intended to be an annual event, is modeled after

the highly successful "Great California ShakeOut", which is now in its third year. The January 26th date has been selected to mark the 311th anniversary of the last magnitude 9 earthquake in British Columbia (January 26, 1700).

-Bill Beamish, CAO

King Tides Photo Initiative

Victoria, December 20, 2010: "The king tide project at http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/cas/adaptation/king_tide.html invites the public to photograph the high water levels along their coastline to help build a photo library of these futuristic conditions."

The province of BC has requested community assistance to document the impact of 'King Tides' that will occur in Queen Charlotte this year on January 20th and 21st. These tides are not the highest for 2011 (7.2 meters) but they conveniently occur during the day to assist observation and documentation of their levels. While not caused by global warming, king tides raise water levels to levels predicted to be normal in BC in 30 to 50 years which means that future king tides could significantly impact local infrastructure and development, especially if they are accompanied by a storm surge.

The king tide dates and times for Queen Charlotte are:

January 20th at 1:34 pm
January 21st at 2:19 pm.

-Bill Beamish, CAO

2011 General Municipal Election – November 19th

Mark your calendars and get ready to mark your ballots, it is election year in BC for the 157 Municipal Councils, the 27 Regional Districts and the Islands Trust. In addition, local school board elections are held in concert with the local government elections.

The election calendar begins officially near the end of August when nomination packages will be prepared and available for distribution to candidates. After that the election will officially get underway and our election staff and Chief Election officer will become very focused in their activities.

For anyone not completely familiar with the election process or what it means to be a municipal councillor, we will be hosting an evening workshop in June at the municipal office that will provide an overview of our operations and activities. This workshop will be presented by staff and anyone who is interested in running for local government office is invited and encouraged to attend and participate. The date for this workshop will be announced in May.

-Bill Beamish, CAO

Public Works 2010 & 2011



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2010 was a busy year for the Village of Queen Charlotte public works department. The Honna Water Treatment Plant construction was completed in July and start-up of the plant followed right after. After the three month testing period for the plant it has been producing high quality water consistently.

The Village was also preparing for the takeover of road maintenance which was handed over in December 2010. We have purchased two vehicles (one in 2009) with snow removal equipment installed on both trucks.

We constructed a sand and salt storage shed and filled it with material. We created a policy for road maintenance which outlines everything from snow removal operations to when potholes need to be repaired. We started our snow and ice removal operations this year in November, under contract from O'Briens, and have been on our own since December.

In 2011 we will be completing the final stage of the Stanley Lake project; the weir structure in the lake. We will be looking at tendering out this project in the spring, with construction in the summer.

The public works department will be carrying out its road maintenance policy throughout the year. We will be sweeping the roads, keeping the brush cut back, grading our gravel roads and keeping the shoulders maintained.

We have been constructing a ball hockey rink inside the tennis courts, and some upgrades for the tennis court such as new nets, a practice board and a small storage shed to keep equipment out of the weather. This project will be completed (80% completed already) by spring time when the weather will be good to use them. If you have any questions or concerns please don't hesitate to call 250-559-4757 or for emergencies 250-637-1781.

-Ben Greenough, Superintendent of Public Works



2011 Property Assessments

If you own property you should soon be receiving your assessment notices for your 2011 property values. This will reflect the valuation of your property as at July 1, 2010. "Most homes in Haida Gwaii are worth more on this year's assessment roll than they were on the 2010 assessment roll," said Colleen McCombe, Deputy Assessor. "Most home owners in

Haida Gwaii will see either no change or modest increases ranging up to 10% . . . Some waterfront properties, however, will see increases up to 20%." Overall, the total of Haida Gwaii's assessment rolls increased from \$230 million last year to \$253 million this year.

Property owners who feel that their property assessment does not reflect market value as of July 1, 2010 or see incorrect information on their notice should contact the BC Assessment office indicated on their notice as soon as possible in January.

There is a **deadline of**

January 31, 2011 to file a formal appeal for an independent review by the Property Assessment Review Panel. One of the ways you can look into the assessment of your property is to go online and use the BC Assessment tool called **e-valueBC**. This site allows you to compare your assessment to similar properties and to properties that have sold in your neighborhood. To check your assessment, compare assessments or view property sales:

Step 1: Go to www.bcassessment.ca
Step 2: Click on "e-valueBC – compare

assessments online" on the home page.

Step 3: Select your property, and view other property values in your neighborhood, or anywhere in B.C.

If you do not have access to a computer, you can also call our local BC Assessment Northwest Area Office at 1-800-990-1116 or fax 250-638-0156. You can also email your question to northwest@bcassessment.ca. During the month of January, office hours are 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday to Friday. The staff in that office will be able to answer your questions.

-Debra Uliana, CFO

