

VILLAGE VOICE

OCTOBER

2007

Let's do Lunch!

**YOU ARE INVITED TO A BROWN BAG LUNCH
WITH THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL
FIRST FRIDAY OF EVERY MONTH
12 NOON
AT THE VILLAGE OFFICE**

BRING YOUR LUNCH, YOUR ISSUES AND CONCERNS FOR DISCUSSION

Second Water Supply – Stanley Lake Project

The Piteau Report, a study of the landfill and Honna River intake, is ready for you to read. It has been reviewed by our engineers and by drinking water experts from Northern Health. Pick up your copy off the web at www.queencharlotte.ca or pick up a printed copy from the office. Come to the information meeting to hear the report and discuss the results, options, and their costs. Representatives from Northern Health, Piteau, and our engineers will be there to answer your questions.

COMMUNITY HALL OCTOBER 23 @ 7 PM



Float Home Area

There are approximately a dozen people living along the water in what is commonly known as the float homes in Bearskin Bay and Frog Flats. When evicted from the harbour in 1983, 9 barges moved to the area and by 1989 10 were issued licenses of occupation (LOC). These were to be non-assignable, 5 year terms. Since then people have moved, float homes turned into more permanent structures and the restrictions of the license of occupation ignored by both the residents and the landlord (the province). It is noted that this a registered archaeological site and the restrictions written on the LOC state that the land is to be undisturbed, no trees cut down without permission from the province, and the foot print of the barges not be increased. As well there is a history of non payment of license fees and taxes, rentals instead of owner occupation, absentee landlords, new buildings, new occupants and a lack of water and sewer service. There have been complaints from townspeople regarding the inequity of water front land

Water is always a precious commodity in the Village. Please do your best to conserve throughout the year!

available only to a few individuals, new residents from other communities taking up abandoned structures, and the lack of respect for the cultural artefacts. Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Ministry of Environment, Northern Health and Ministry of Agriculture and Lands have all expressed concerns ranging from degradation of the environment to health issues.

Like many other concerns Council needs to help resolve, this is not a black and white problem. No matter what decisions are made people's lives will be impacted and so we have agreed to work with the Integrated Land Management Branch (ILMB) to research solutions. ILMB will be returning to Queen Charlotte in November for further discussions with the Council of the Haida Nation and the area residents. In the meantime ILMB has supplied funding to remove **unoccupied** buildings and begin the clean up of unsanitary and environmentally contaminated areas. We will begin that clean-up process over the next few weeks. We will also continue to facilitate meetings with area residents and ILMB and report back as to their progress.

? Question ?

How would you feel about a no parking area from City Centre to Meegan's on the water side of the road? Write or email us your thoughts on improving pedestrian safety in the downtown core.

\$ Taxes and Tax Sales \$

We are pleased that this year the Village of Queen Charlotte did not have to hold a tax sale.

Property tax collection is a mandated responsibility of the Village under Provincial legislation. In June of every year, all property owners in the Village receive a tax notice detailing what they have been assessed to pay. The Village of Queen Charlotte acts as the collector of taxes not only for the municipality but also for the Province, the regional district, the hospital, the RCMP and the school district. Under Provincial legislation, whether the property owner makes a payment to the Village tax collector or not, the Village is required to submit full payment to all these other bodies on behalf of our residents.

Though the municipal tax is only a fraction of your total tax bill (approximately 20%), the Village must pay all the other bodies first. *When someone does not pay the rest of the community pays on their behalf.*

Not paying your taxes is a serious matter. It gets very serious when we reach the point of sending your property to a tax sale. It means that your taxes have not been paid for the past 3 years.

Village staff do all they can to avoid a tax sale from happening. Those who have three years of taxes outstanding are sent a notice like everyone else in June of the current year. If you fail to pay we send you a reminder letter. If you still fail to contact the Village we send you another letter to detail the steps that will soon have to be taken. If you still fail to respond we send you a registered letter. If you still fail to respond we begin to telephone you to detail the severity of the situation and the tax sale process that is about to take place. If you still fail to respond we advertise your name, address and taxes owing in the local paper for two weeks prior to your property being offered for a tax sale. If you fail to pay and your property is sold you have one year in which to redeem your property. At this point you can no longer just pay the three year old taxes, you must pay **all** outstanding taxes which, for some, can be very difficult and the loss of the property may be the result.

Staff at the Village does all it can to prevent this from happening and hopes the process we have chosen both demonstrates the seriousness of the situation and our desire to help.

If you are having difficulties meeting your tax obligation Village staff can help. Instalment payments, post dated cheques, member link payments, and automatic fund transfers are all available. Drop by the office or call 559-4765 to discuss your situation. Please keep in mind that delinquent taxes become taxes in arrears as of January 1st, placing you in a serious situation again next September.



Oceanview Drive

Oceanview Drive is now the official name for our main road. If you want to change your address on any documents, you may be asked for a copy of the name change in the gazette. Copies of the gazette are available from the office.

Ditching and Brush Removal

Highways and their contractor have been working on drainage issues throughout our town. We need as much as possible completed before 2010 when the municipality takes over the secondary roads. Drainage includes the ditches and the highway right of way that runs past your property. It is not possible for the contractor to determine what is a favourite plant when moving down the road with his machinery, or even know in advance when he will be working in your area. Please take this time to move any bushes, flowers or berries you want to keep.

Free Tipping Day: Saturday, October 27th

What Do We Do With Dead Cars, Garden Wastes, and Old Fridges?

The Village is starting the process to apply for a free crown grant for land in our industrial area that will be a collection place for metals, recycling, and composting. We also need an area for maintenance yards as we will be responsible for our secondary roads in 2010. In the meantime you need to use the Skidegate Transfer Station. Hours are:

Wednesdays 1:00-5:00 pm
Saturdays 11:00 am-3:00 pm

Water Use

With the installation of meters we are now able to monitor water use. Though the Village is not yet charging by consumption, we are letting residents and businesses know when their water meter shows excessive use. If you receive a letter regarding excessive consumption call the office and our staff can help you determine if there is a leak or how you may operate more conservatively.

One toilet running constantly for one month used 100,000 gallons of water! That is the size of one of our reservoirs and was fixed with a \$5.00 part.

Boat Launch Dock



We heard from several sports fishermen that launching a boat by themselves at the airplane ramp is inconvenient and in fact dangerous. Weather and tide can ruin a day of fun. If you are interested in being involved in the planning of a boat launch dock put your name on the committee list at the office- call, fax, or write us.

Cell Phone Service



Nothing yet, but progress is being made. The Council of the Haida Nation, Integrated Land Branch Management, and Ministry of Forests have expedited their processes to work with Telus on design and permits for cell tower on Mt. Poole. The cooperation of all these partners is very encouraging.

Annual Union of BC Municipalities Meeting

This year's Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) was called Climates of Change and it emphasized not only the question of dealing with climate change but *local government in a climate of change*. Mayor Kulesha and Councilors Noddin and Martin attended. There were forums and workshops dealing with the everyday business of local government such as funding opportunities, highway maintenance, water and air quality and discussions with a more global outlook such as how we can manage the effects of our changing climate. There were resolutions sessions in which issues brought forth by the member municipalities and regional districts are voted on and if passed become the mandate of UBCM for which to lobby government. Queen Charlotte sent 3 resolutions, first to our local body the North Central Municipal Association (NCMA) in May, where they were endorsed and then sent onto UBCM.

1-Local Emergency Infrastructure –*that UBCM request that the Province review its emergency program funding to supply the necessary funds for small rural communities to purchase emergency preparedness infrastructure.*

2-Cellular Service in Remote communities – *that UBCM request that the province broaden the provincial mandate on communications and connectivity to include mobile services in order to ensure that much needed cellular, and other communications infrastructure, is accessible by small and remote communities (and their transportation corridors).*

3-Crown Leases within Local Government Boundaries - *that UBCM request that the Province review its holdings within local governments, determine its responsibilities as a landlord and duly enforce lease agreements with its tenants.*

Councillor Martin represented us on a panel discussion of Measuring Up Accessibility and Inclusion. Our community received \$15,000 from 2010 Legacy Now for our application Reducing Barriers to Access in Queen Charlotte. Our grant covers a community accessibility inventory and needs survey for the physically disabled, constructing two public, wheelchair accessible washrooms – one in our public library and one by the community hall and the purchase of two computer stations, broadband access and tutoring for the Mental Health and Addictions Life Skills program.

The rest of our days were taken up with meetings with Ministers and senior staff. Meetings to discuss Skidegate Landing ferry site development, tourism, RCMP taxation, landfill regulations, alternative energy funding, development of an industrial park, maintenance yard and recycling space, Spirit Square application, roads upgrade and more. Evenings were networking events where we compared notes with the council of Lantzville who incorporated a short time ahead of us, touched base with potential alternative energy providers and met other local government leaders and senior provincial staff putting faces to the telephone voices and finding new contacts for common issues.

E-mail Distribution List

Contact our office if you wish be on our mailing list. You will receive email information, reports, agendas, and minutes automatically!