



# Sewer Treatment Property Purchase Referendum Questions from the Council Q&A Session

Held November 23, 2017

On November 23, 2017, the Village of Queen Charlotte Council hosted a Question and Answer session at the Eric Ross Room of the Queen Charlotte Community Hall. Approximately 60-70 residents attended. The following is a list of questions and answers, some of which were asked and answered at the meeting, and some of which were provided to the Village for response.

The goal of the Village's public outreach for the Sewer Treatment Property Purchase Referendum is to have a high voter turnout where residents will make an informed decision based on accurate, unbiased information.

## **Q1 Why this property?**

- A. On April 3, 2017, Ben Greenough, Superintendent of Public Works gave an In Camera presentation to Council providing an overview of the engineering studies that were done by Opus Dayton and Knight in 2010 and 2013. The 2010 study looked at 5 general areas for sewer treatment. At the April 29, 2017 public consultation on the Official Community Plan, we heard from residents that they would like us to focus on sewer treatment for the municipality.

Around this time Sheila Karrow approached the Village regarding subdividing 2.4 acres of District Lot 18 which would include the House and one of the foreshore parcels. Sheila was unable to identify the exact location of the septic system for the house and as a result the parcel could not be subdivided.

As the Village had recently been reviewing the 2010 and 2013 studies, the idea of looking at this property for sewer treatment was considered with fresh eyes. At the same time, it was identified that the adjacent property, Lot 1, Plan 9735 was also for sale. Therefore on June 5, 2017, staff submitted a report to Council on the two properties seeking a decision on whether to investigate the properties further to determine feasibility and initiate negotiations. Council requested that the property beside the Helipad also be considered.

The three properties were considered in more detail through the July 17, 2017 Sewer Treatment Property Update staff report to Council. The first was the Helipad/Boat Launch Facility, the second was District Lot 18 (the subject of the Referendum) and the third was a Lot 1, Plan 9735, a 47.78 acre lot immediately to the East of District Lot 18. The 47.78 acre parcel is situated on the upland side of Oceanview Drive and does not have any foreshore that could be used for an outfall.

District Lot 18 was preferred by Council as the asking price set by each property owner was similar for both properties, however, District Lot 18 provided more options for the type/size of sewer treatment that could be built, had three foreshore parcels to accommodate an outfall, and could be subdivided and sold off to help offset the purchase cost to the community.

As this is a significant decision for the municipality, Council decided to seek electoral approval through a Referendum (i.e. electors vote to decide if Council can proceed with the matter) rather than using an Alternative Approval Process (i.e. Council can proceed with the matter unless at least 10% of the electors indicate that Council must go to referendum before proceeding). All of the reports quoted can be found on the Village website at [www.QueenCharlotte.ca](http://www.QueenCharlotte.ca).

**Q2 What happened to the property on 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue – Forestry Hill? (Note: It is our understanding that this question relates to a claim that there was a ‘sewer treatment map reserve’ behind 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue on Forestry Hill)**

- A. We have contacted the Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resources Operations and Rural Development (MFLNRORD) regarding this question. They have confirmed that there is no indication in their records of a crown land reserve placed behind the Village of Queen Charlotte for the purposes of sewer treatment.

**Q3 I understand that a property was already purchased by the helipad with the intention of sewer treatment. Why was it purchased?**

- A. The primary reason for the purchase of the property beside the Helipad was to secure the transfer of the Helipad right-of-way from the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MoTI). Council requested that MoTI close the right-of-way and transfer it to the municipality. Acquiring the property facilitated this transfer consistent with MoTI policy which states: “The closed road area must initially be joined to and become part of the adjoining parcels.” This means that the municipality had to own or lease property on either side before the transfer could be completed. The Village obtained a long term lease from the Province over the license of occupation area that is used for the Boat Launch and helipad facilities.

The purchase was finalized on November 1, 2011 and the Village consolidated the parcel and the Helipad on September 12, 2012.

A secondary consideration was whether the property could be used for sewer treatment if a new technology became available in the future that would be suitable for the location as it would require a significantly smaller footprint than a typical sewer treatment facility.

On December 4, 2017, Council released the following resolutions from In Camera meetings that related to this purchase:

*From May 16, 2011 In Camera*

R2011/25/05 MOVED by Councillor Martin, seconded by Councillor Olsen that the CAO investigate and negotiate for the purchase of Derrick Van Heek property at 4116 Oceanview Drive, roll # 3047000, PID 012-729-850.

CARRIED

*From May 20, 2011 In Camera*

R2011/26/02 MOVED by Councillor Olsen, seconded by Councillor Noddin that the CAO’s report of May 19, 2011, Offer to Purchase a Portion of Lot 1 (Plan 1796) District Lot 15A Queen Charlotte District Except Plan 6937 be received.

CARRIED

R2011/26/03 MOVED by Councillor Olsen, seconded by Councilor Martin that  
Recommendations:

1. That Council purchase approximately .24 acre of Lot 1 (Plan 1796) District Lot 15A Queen Charlotte District Except Plan 6937 lying south of Oceanview Drive, from Derrick van Heek for \$150,000.00 plus costs as specified in the Agreement of Purchase and Sale dated May 18, 2011; and,
2. That the Mayor and Chief Administrative Officer be authorized to sign the Agreement of Purchase and Sale.

CARRIED

*From June 20, 2011 In Camera*

R2011/30/04 MOVED by Councillor Olsen, seconded by Councillor Martin to receive and file the signed agreement on the land purchase, proposed SD Part of Lot 1, Plan 1796, DL 15A, Queen Charlotte, owner Derrick Van Heek and the Survey from David Hardwicke Plan number EPP13260.

CARRIED

**Q4 *Why were feasibility studies done for properties in the past, but can't be done for this property? Why doesn't a feasibility study come first?***

- A. The 2010 Feasibility Study was completed to identify possible locations for sewer treatment in terms of general areas. The study did not go into depth to evaluate any particular property. The 2013 Study looked specifically at the Skidegate Band Council Sewer Treatment Plant which would need to be upgraded to allow for the addition of the Village of Queen Charlotte sewage.

District Lot 18 is in the general area of the 2010 Opus Dayton and Knight Study which identified the Skidegate West Area as one of the options for the Village to consider for sewer treatment.

**Q5 *How much energy is required to pump uphill? What would the operating costs be to pump the sewage uphill at this property?***

- A. To answer this question, the Village contacted Opus Dayton and Knight to review the LiDAR (topographical) data, and preliminary road sketches for District Lot 18 and provide comments on the site location and road alignment. They provided a letter dated January 9, 2018, which has been posted on the Village website under the Sewer Treatment Referendum Project. The following is taken from the letter:

“Sewage Pumping: The proposed site would require pumping sewage approximately 120 m up the slope (elevation-wise). Due to the solids handling capability of sewage pumps they are not the most efficient. It is likely that 2 pump stations in series will be required to lift the sewage to the site. Each pump station would include a duty/stand by pump system operating at approximately 60 to 80 hp. The annual estimated power consumption would likely cost between \$15,000 and \$20,000 per year for the two lift stations.”

In a follow up question the Village asked for a comparison between the costs of pumping 120 m uphill at this location compared to the cost of pumping sewage 11 km to the Skidegate Sewer Treatment site. They referred back to Appendix B of the 2013 feasibility study where the estimated power to pump to the Skidegate STP was 110 hp of pumping. The operating period and cost of power were considered to be the same (flows and power costs would be identical). Therefore, it would cost approximately 10% more to go up the hill vs. pumping to Skidegate.

**Q6 *Why are we building a treatment facility for 3,000 people?***

- A. For most municipal infrastructure you need to plan for growth to ensure that you aren't faced with costly upgrades in the future. The population projection of 3,000 was based off of recommendations from the engineers as per the 2013 study that proposed connecting to the Skidegate STP and was quoted in error on the original FAQs which have now been updated.

The 2010 study actually recommended a projected population growth to between 1,250 and 2,000 by the year 2033. The actual design population will be determined prior to completing the design of the plant if the referendum is approved.

**Q7 Why are we looking at a 78 acre parcel?**

- A. Council was not specifically looking for a 78 acre parcel, District Lot 18 just happened to be a property of sufficient size that was for sale in one of the general areas that was identified in the 2010 Study (see the answer to Q1 above). The minimum lot size requirement for sewer treatment was identified as 2.13 acres with a minimum of buffer area. The largest was 14 acres for a long detention treatment such as an aerated lagoon.

**Q8 Can we look for a property near sea level?**

- A. Given our topography, a sewer treatment facility within our municipal boundaries would either need to be located at sea level or up a hill. There are no available sea level properties that meet the siting criteria and have sufficient size for the facility. We would also want to be cautious with putting a sewer treatment plant in an ocean side location given the current concerns with climate change, sea level rise, and resulting extreme weather events. There are also new Provincial Flood Hazard Area Land Use Management Guidelines that came into effect January 1, 2018 which affect coastal communities only that need to be considered.

The amendment recommends coastal communities allow for a 1.0m sea level Rise (SLR) to the year 2100 and 2.0m to the year 2200 (both relative to the year 2000 and to consider regional uplift and subsidence). The amendment provides updated definitions and approaches for determining flood construction levels and setbacks that local governments are to consider when creating relevant bylaws in designated SLR planning areas per the *Local Government Act*. Provincial agencies responsible for development in rural areas or on Crown land are also to consider the guidelines in subdivision approvals or in the sale and lease of Crown land.

**Q9 Why has the property price changed? Is the beach property for sale too? What is the appraised value of the property?**

- A. District Lot 18 has been posted for sale off and on for a number of years at different prices. The property was originally listed for \$550,000, and then dropped to \$525,000 where it sat for three years. It was then taken off the market in 2016 as the property owner wanted to liquidate part of the property to develop the waterfront portion and purchase the road right-of-way from the Province. At the beginning of 2017 she decided to advertise just the portion that she was hoping to subdivide, which included the house, art studio, and 2.4 acres, at \$370,000 in the Haida Gwaii Trader. When it was determined that the property could not be subdivided (due to being unable to locate the septic system), the owner stopped the road right-of-way application and took the property off the market. She then had a new appraisal completed by Rick Berry, GHW Appraisals Northwest Ltd on June 27, 2017 with the intention to list again as a full property.

The appraisal estimated the market value of the fee simple interest in the property, with the full +/- 76 acres (with all three water front portions south of the highway and with the existing covenant and gazetted road right of way in place but excluding the cabin situated on the gazetted road right of way), the subject dwelling and the adjacent detached studio at \$489,000. If the gazetted road right-of-way was closed and incorporated into the subject property, it would raise the value to \$590,000.

It was noted in the 2017 appraisal that the subject property is located in a very small market with limited activity and all properties in the market area tend to be unique with substantial differences in quality and character. The subject property is also unique in terms of its location, parcel size, configuration, intersection of roads, topography, buildings, and encumbrances registered against the title. The adjusted market value of the comparable sales ranged from a low of \$464,085 to a high of \$494,100 with an average adjusted market value of \$486,000 (rounded) and a median adjusted market value of \$491,000 (rounded). No other comparable property came close to the land acreage size.

The owner also had a Timber Cruise conducted in 2012 that estimated the total value of the timber at \$242,992.53 which has now been updated to reflect 2017 values which are estimated at \$384,042.65. Once logging costs, dryland sort, barging and other fees are factored in, the estimated return would be a profit of \$183,522.65. The appraiser verbally recommended that the value of the cabin and the value of the timber would increase the overall property value up to \$700,000. The property owner set the price at \$650,000 which was then negotiated down to the agreed upon \$625,000.

There was an accepted offer to purchase District Lot 18 earlier in the year, but the offer collapsed. The accepted offer included an initial payment of \$450,000, and if the property were able to be subdivided then an additional \$100,000 payment and either one water front lot or an additional \$50,000 payment would be made to the seller. Therefore, if the purchase had been completed and the property subdivided, the total purchase price was estimated to have a value of \$600,000.

To provide additional perspective, properties sold within the municipality in 2017 have sold for (i.e. declared value):

Property	Assessed Value	Declared Value
3401 Oceanview Drive	\$111,000	\$150,000
3114 2 <sup>nd</sup> Avenue	\$287,000	\$205,000
3415 3 <sup>rd</sup> Avenue	\$75,300	\$95,000
501 2 <sup>nd</sup> Avenue	\$151,600	\$255,000
215 2 <sup>nd</sup> Avenue	\$65,000	\$85,000
314 2 <sup>nd</sup> Avenue	\$125,800	\$150,000
218 Bay Street	\$242,000	\$410,000
3506 Oceanview Drive	\$81,400	\$200,111
3417 Oceanview Drive	\$157,600	\$170,000
1021 2 <sup>nd</sup> Avenue	\$185,700	\$250,000
401 2 <sup>nd</sup> Avenue	\$156,900	\$200,000
3201 Oceanview Drive	\$190,400	\$145,050

**Q10 *Is due diligence being done regarding the price of the property?***

- A. At the time that the Village was negotiating the purchase price of the property, there were two other interested parties that were also submitting offers. The Village believes that we have done our due diligence and negotiated an appropriate price for the property. In the 2010 study, the engineers anticipated that it would cost the Village approximately \$500,000 to purchase a property for the purpose of sewer treatment.

**Q11 *How can a municipality subdivide cheaper than a private individual?***

- A. It is not specifically the cost of subdivision that would be cheaper for the municipality than for a private individual. The Village would save on the subdivision application fees, but would still need to pay the cost of the surveyor, servicing, engineering and geotechnical work. However, as the property would be purchased with the intention of building a Sewer Treatment Plant, the Village would be able to apply for Federal, Provincial and other grants that would not be accessible to a private individual to cover some or all of those costs.

There would also be rezoning costs associated with this development for the new Public Facility and if Council wanted to establish a Conservation (cluster) Style Subdivision or Tiny Home Residential zone. A private individual seeking similar rezoning would cost up to \$2,200 per application.

**Q12 Is it true that only 1 of 12 sewer treatment siting criteria have been met?**

A. The table below compares the ideal treatment plan siting criteria to District Lot 18:

2010 Study – Ideal Plant Siting Criteria	District Lot 18
Isolated from residential development and public use areas, ideally within industrial or agricultural zoned land	✓ On this property a sewer treatment plant could be isolated from any residential development with a significant buffer zone. Once the property is subdivided, Council would have the option of rezoning the sewer treatment portion as industrial, agricultural or public facility
A minimum of 0.11 ha (0.27 acres) and up to 0.86 ha (2.13 acres) for a ‘small footprint’ type of treatment plant	✓ This property would accommodate either a ‘small footprint’ or a long detention type of treatment plant
A minimum of 6.0 ha (14 acres) for a long detention treatment such as aerated lagoons	✓ This property would accommodate either a ‘small footprint’ or a long detention type of treatment plant
Near sea level to minimize pumping	✗ This property does have oceanfront areas, however, pumping would be required to reach the treatment facility
Located in an area that provides good integration of the effluent into the seawater mass	✓ This property would allow the treated effluent to be discharged as near as possible to the ferry terminal. This part of the inlet is already used for industrial purposes
Location of outfall must minimize impacts on fisheries resources and recreational use of water	✓ This property has three different options for an outfall location and would be able to minimize the impacts on fisheries resources and recreational use of water
Location of treatment plant should consider the potential for odor and noise nuisance	✓ On this property a sewer treatment plant could be isolated from any residential development with a minimum of a 50 m treed buffer
Must not impact archaeological sites	This is unknown at this point as there has not been an archaeological review completed.

**Q13 Is there a chance that we buy this property and that it won’t work for Sewer Treatment?**

A. To answer this question, the Village contacted Opus Dayton and Knight to review the LiDAR (topographical) data, and preliminary road sketches for District Lot 18 and provide comments on the site location and road alignment. They provided a letter dated January 9, 2018, which has been posted on the Village website under the Sewer Treatment Referendum Project. The following is taken from the letter:

“Proposed Treatment Plant Site: To comply with current Federal/Provincial regulations it is likely that the proposed STP will require, as a minimum, secondary treatment prior to effluent discharge into Skidegate inlet. This will need to be confirmed by an Environmental Impact Study (EIS) for the upgraded discharge as required by the BC Municipal Wastewater Regulations (MWR). The proposed STP site is large enough for long term needs.

Site elevation, however, is a disadvantage in that energy costs, for pumping and maintenance of pump stations, will be high over the long term. This is discussed further in item 4.

Zoning and the OCP designation for the proposed STP site are unknown. The Village has identified that future residential development is proposed within the southern portion of DL 18. Odour mitigation will be essential in the process selection and design for the treatment plant works. A minimum of 50 m treed buffer should be secured between the STP site and the remainder of DL 18 where residential development may occur.

The proposed site for the STP is the north portion of DL 18 above Oceanview Drive at Eagle Hill Drive. The elevation gain is approximately 120 m above the existing sewer collection system. The proposed site has varying topography with areas in excess of 25% grades. The area likely has bedrock at a shallow depth which is normal for this terrain. As treatment plants require level ground for treatment works, a significant blasting and grading effort would be required to clear and level the site. The topography at the proposed site would likely impact the type and design of the treatment system.

As the site is considered a greenfield, environmental and archaeological studies would need to be completed to properly plan and design the work. We are unable to comment on any environmental or archaeological aspects of the site.

Treatment plants (excluding large aerated lagoons) can be built with odour control; however, it is not technically practical to achieve 100% odour removal, under all operational conditions. Generally, odour remains local to the plant site; however, as the proposed property is elevated it is possible that foul odour would migrate downhill. Typically, in areas with steep mountains, winds will regularly sweep down the mountain face in the evening (particularly in the summer) which would carry odour to lower lying areas (katabatic winds).

Access to the site would be challenging, as the proposed road could have slopes up to 20%, based on preliminary sketches provided. For this type of road, we would typically recommend paving the sections with grades in excess of 15% to facilitate access, especially during winter months when there are heavy rains and possible freezing or snow. Steep gravel roads are subject to rutting and wash boarding, another reason why paving would be recommended. This access would also add additional costs for material delivery, namely concrete, due to potential reduced truck delivery volumes.

Linear Infrastructure: At a minimum, linear infrastructure to the plant would include: an access road, a forcemain, drainage piping, outfall piping, power poles or conduits, and control conduits. Typically, linear infrastructure is built within the roadway to reduce the amount of cleaning required within the right-of-way (ROW); the feasibility of locating infrastructure under the road would be determined during design once a geotechnical investigation has been done.

Closure: Based on the information provided, there are no technical issues which would prevent the use of the proposed site; however, it would not typically be a preferred site should other options exist due to the added operational costs and complexities directly resulting from the site elevation, grades and distance from the collection system. During detailed design, the above technical issues will require consideration by the design and operations teams.”

**Q14 *How many property tax payers are there, and how many are part time residents? How many people are on the voters list?***

- A. The number of property tax payers in the community is a challenging number to determine as it changes frequently as people move into and away from the community and purchase or sell property. The Village sends out approximately 750 tax notices each year which is likely our closest approximation of the number of property tax payers. However, if a property has more than one person on the title, and those individuals live at different addresses, they each get a separate tax notice. The Village sends out 450 Utility Bills each quarter, however, not all properties are billed as some are not connected to sewer and water services.

The 2016 census recorded 852 residents for the Village of Queen Charlotte, however, not all of those would be property owners. The Village does not keep statistics on whether tax payers are part time residents and there is no requirement for people to report this information.

Regarding how many people are on the Voters list, the Village Voters list is separate from those used for Federal or Provincial elections. We currently have 594 individuals registered to vote, however of those, approximately 90 were added at the recent By-Election, and there may be names on the list of individuals that no longer reside in Queen Charlotte. This is because, prior to the 2017 By-Election, the last time our Voters list was used was in 2011 for the general election.

In 2014 the Mayor and Council were appointed by acclamation (i.e. just enough individuals were interested in running) and as a result the list was not updated at that time. Additionally, if new residents move to town 30 days prior to the referendum, and they meet all the other criteria, they can also register and vote in the referendum as per the *Local Government Act* Section 65 Resident Electors. Ultimately, what really matters is the number of eligible voters who turn out to vote, as those are the only votes that are counted. For this process, a simple majority will determine the result of the referendum.

**Q15 *With this plan will Skidegate Landing be serviced with sewer and water?***

- A. The intention would be to connect Skidegate Landing to the sewer treatment facility. Water connection would be considered separately. Under our current Sewer Bylaw, all properties that can hook up to sewer would be required to do so within 6 months. The cost of connecting to the sewer lines will be the responsibility of the individual property owners.

**Q16 *What would it cost to reverse the sewer piping gravity feed and go to the west end of town?***

- A. Though no cost estimate was ever developed to reverse the gravity feed and run the sewer towards the west end of the Village, our engineers did consider it while they were conducting the 2010 sewer treatment feasibility study. At the time they indicated that it would be too expensive to consider as to change the current direction of flow new forcemains would need to be installed, ripping up a lot of asphalt throughout the community which is very expensive to replace. Also as there is no suitable outfall location on the west side of town, the treated sewer effluent would have to be pumped back east to the existing outfall or some other new location.

**Q17 *Will the property beside the helipad be sold?***

- A. Subdividing and selling the property beside the Helipad is one of the options being considered by Council to help offset the cost of the purchase of District Lot 18. Before that could happen, there is work that would need to be done to complete the subdivision and have the property's market value appraised before it could be listed for sale. If the community decides to purchase District Lot 18, Council will make this decision.

**Q18 *How will the new subdivision be accessed – will it go through someone's yard?***

- A. Preliminary road sketches were developed using the LiDAR data and Roadeng program. The Roadeng program provides a good idea of the road profiles (how steep) and cross sections (cut depth). A true evaluation cannot be made without going into the field as a municipal road must be built on hard pan. Additional field work would also be required for culvert location, bridges, etc as required. The main constraint considered when coming up with the sketch was to keep the road grades no steeper than 20%. The resulting sketch did not have the road passing through any yards and there is a pre-existing road right-of-way which should make that unnecessary. For comparison, the grades of other roads in the community include:

<p>Alder Street: 21.26% Grade</p>  <p>A photograph of a residential street in winter, covered in snow. The road is a dark, narrow path through the snow. Houses and trees are visible in the background. A timestamp '01-09-2017 15:55' is visible in the bottom right corner.</p>	<p>Forestry Hill (3<sup>rd</sup> Ave): 19.44% Grade</p>  <p>A photograph of a residential street in winter, covered in snow. The road is a dark, narrow path through the snow. Houses and trees are visible in the background. A timestamp '01-09-2017 15:20' is visible in the bottom right corner.</p>	<p>Eagle Hill Road: 14 - 17.63% Grade</p>  <p>A photograph of a gravel road winding through a forest. The road is dark and appears to be a gravel surface. The surrounding area is lush green with trees and vegetation.</p>
<p>Boat Launch: 13.5% Grade</p>  <p>A photograph of a boat launch area. A concrete ramp leads down to a body of water. A yellow boat is visible on the ramp. The background shows mountains and a cloudy sky.</p>	<p>Kwuna Ramp: 16% Grade</p>  <p>A photograph of a ramp at night. The ramp is illuminated by streetlights. A boat is visible on the ramp. The background is dark.</p>	<p>Roadeng Design: 20% or &lt; Grade</p>  <p>A photograph of a road design plan. The plan shows a road layout with a yellow line indicating a specific path or design. The background is a dark, textured surface.</p>

**Q19 Can you provide information/options for types of sewer treatment?**

- A. There are many different types of wastewater treatment plants from open aerated lagoon style to enclosed mechanical type treatment. The Opus Dayton and Knight engineers recommended that we find a location first, then determine which of the different options would be suitable/cost effective. The size of land, proximity to residential properties, type of electrical service to the property, and maintenance costs are some of the factors we will need to consider when selecting the type of treatment to proceed with and there will have to be public input when making this decision.

**Q20 Why are we not tying in with Skidegate? Where does the 8" pipe begin? Can we tie in with the new Coop?**

- A. Tying into the Skidegate Sewer Treatment Plant (STP) is an option, however, according to our 2013 study, it was the most expensive option. This is because we would need to connect our sewer to the lift station on the east side of Front Street in Skidegate. The lift stations on the west side of Skidegate are too small to handle the flow from both communities. Also major upgrades to the Skidegate STP would be required to handle the extra flow from Queen Charlotte, including a new lagoon and upgrades to the outfall. This is outlined in detail in the 2013 Village/Skidegate Band Joint Sewage Treatment Concept Design Study.

Though we cannot say for certain, the new Haida Gwaii Co-op will most likely not affect where we would connect to the Skidegate system. The reason for this is that we need to get our flow to the Lift Station on the East Side which pumps into an 8" forcemain to the Skidegate STP. The connection to the new Co-op will most likely be a gravity fed main that won't tie into the lift station that we require. However we will be looking into this further and will update this answer when more information is available.

**Q21 Why can't the referendum be cancelled?**

- A. A referendum (aka assent voting) is a democratic process outlined in the *Local Government Act* under Part 4 Assent Voting, and the *Community Charter* under Part 4 Division 2 – Approval of the Electors. Electoral assent is required for certain types of decisions.

In this case, the purchase and sale agreement includes a condition that "the Municipality receiving all approvals and authorizations from its electors, the Province of British Columbia or the federal government under the *Community Charter* (British Columbia) or other applicable enactment or as may otherwise be necessary in connection with its acquisition of the Property."

What this means is that the municipality has a legal contract in place with the property owner that is dependent upon the outcome of the referendum. If the referendum were to be cancelled before it is completed than the Village would be in default on the contract.

Additionally, if the referendum was cancelled then the democratic process would essentially be overturned and Council would be arbitrarily making the decision for the community, instead of the residents of the community making the decision for themselves.

**Q22 What was the procedure involved with establishing the referendum? Was it In Camera?**

- A. Under the *Community Charter* Section 90, a part of a council meeting may be closed to the public if the subject matter being considered relates to one or more of the following (please see the applicable section of the *Community Charter* for the complete list which is partially summarized below – emphasis added):
- Land:
    - i. Security of property of the municipality;
    - ii. Acquisition, disposition or expropriation of land or improvements, if the council considers that disclosure could reasonably be expected to harm the interests of the municipality;
  - Legal:
    - i. Legal matters affecting a municipality;
    - ii. Information that is prohibited from disclosure under the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* or any other Act.
    - iii. Negotiations and related discussions respecting the proposed provision of a municipal service that are at their preliminary stages and that, in the view of the council, could reasonably be expected to harm the interest of the municipality if they were held in public.

Regarding land purchases, the reason for these provisions is to allow a Council to consider a property purchase without making it public first as that can drive up the price of a property, or jeopardize negotiations. Council determined that this purchase had enough potential benefits to the community to act to secure the property. By holding a referendum to gain assent of the electors for the purchase, the decision is now in the hands of the residents of the community.

**Q23 What are the annual operating costs of the options in the study?**

- A. For the purposes of the 2010 Feasibility Study conducted by Opus Dayton and Knight, it was assumed that for the initial stage operations and maintenance costs would be approximately \$96,500/year. To update that figure to reflect 2017 costs, we have added 20% making the costs approximately \$115,800/year plus an annual inflation adjustment. This was used consistently for all of the location options that were considered in the study. The 2013 study on Joint Treatment with the Skidegate Band Council listed the operating costs at approximately \$115,000/year (updated to \$128,800/year by adding 12% to account for years of inflation between 2010 and 2013).

**Q24 With the Skidegate option, could we recover our costs through savings in sharing the facility?**

- A. The 2013 study on Joint Treatment with the Skidegate Band Council anticipated our operating costs to be approximately \$115,000/year (updated to \$128,800/year by adding 12% to account for years of inflation between 2010 and 2013).

**Q25 Concerned, if you do not vote, does it count as a “yes” vote?**

- A. No it does not. Only votes cast as per the requirements of the *Local Government Act*, the *Community Charter*, and the Village of Queen Charlotte Election Procedure Bylaw No. 108-2017 will be counted, and they will be allocated as appropriate between yes, no and rejected ballots (i.e. unclear ballot).

**Q26 Would the subdivided lots provide a reasonable solution to our housing issues?**

- A. As is the situation in many communities in BC, there is no single solution to our housing issues. The purchase of this property would definitely add more fee simple property to our inventory, which would be helpful. In addition, the Village has been moving forward on several other housing related fronts.

Through meetings with the Council of the Haida Nation (CHN) on island, and the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing at UBCM, the Village has been pursuing the release of Crown Grant land within the municipality to provide new building lots for affordable market rentals, non-profit cooperative housing, supported social housing and owner purchased property.

Council also requested at UBCM that the BC Government review and renew our subsidized housing agreements and put interim agreements in place to halt the unaffordable increases we have seen until the new government can review the issue and work with housing providers to develop a plan that won't make housing inaccessible.

Finally, the Province announced that they are investing \$291 million over two years to build 2,000 modular supportive housing units across BC for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. The Village Council is investigating in this initiative.