

## **Mayor's Message August 2015**

Recently, some local residents have asked me for an explanation of the potential effect of conflict of interest, on municipal matters. I wanted to take this opportunity to share some relevant information on the subject with our community.

Like all Municipal governments, our Council operates under the *Community Charter*, which requires a council member to declare a conflict of interest if he or she has a direct or indirect pecuniary interest, or some other form of bias, in a matter under consideration. The Charter recognizes that the facts of each situation will be unique, and recommends seeking a legal opinion where that will increase clarity. Section 101 of the Charter sets out the basic rules that, if a council member is in conflict, the member must not remain in or attend any part of a meeting during which the matter is under consideration; participate in any discussion of the matter; or vote on the matter or attempt in any way to influence the voting on the matter, whether before, during or after a meeting.

As you may have seen in local media, recently Councillor Silas White advised Town staff that because his property is so close to the proposed site of the George Hotel and Residences project, he believes that it will have a unique effect on the view from his home, and that this may place him in a conflict of interest when it comes to decisions about the proposed project. Following receipt of a legal opinion, Councillor White has agreed to step away from discussions and decisions related to the project, in order to be compliant with the legislative requirements incumbent on local government officials. Although Councillor White will remain on Council, it will fall to the remaining members of Council, each of whom has expressed confidence that they can review each step of the process objectively, to do this work.

We appreciate the understanding and patience of local residents as we take all necessary steps to maintain the integrity of the application review process. If you wish further information, please contact Emanuel Machado, Chief Administrative Officer at [emachado@gibsons.ca](mailto:emachado@gibsons.ca)