

Mayor's Message – August 2017

This year's Sea Cavalcade enjoyed some of the best weather ever. Tourists, who have been keeping local establishments hopping all summer, were even more numerous over Sea Cavalcade weekend, and it offered something for everyone, old or young, participant or spectator. Kudos to everyone who helped make it such a success.

Our delight in the hot, sunny days has been tempered by ongoing concern for those living in BC's Interior, some of whom are just being given clearance to return home after evacuation from fire-ravaged communities, and some of whom, sadly, who have lost their homes. We are proud of the contribution firefighters from the Coast made to help combat the fires. But while an impressive level of firefighter bravery, public generosity and government support will help to ease the concerns of those affected by the fires, our hearts are with them as they strive to rebuild their families' lives. We recognize our good fortune in not facing a similar situation here on the Coast.

By now, you will have read or heard about the potential for a new 128-bed residential care facility to be built on Shaw Road near Christenson Village. The Town was approached by the Trellis Group after it became clear to Trellis that residential care did not fit into the current community plan in Sechelt, and that this was unlikely to change within a timeline that would enable Trellis to deliver on their contractual agreement with Vancouver Coastal Health. As it turned out, Gibsons had an appropriate property available, already zoned for a community health facility. The Christenson family had specified just such a use for the property when deeding it to the Town, and we had built it into our OCP accordingly.

Currently, Vancouver Coastal Health is doing their own due diligence around this possible location. Should they give the project a green light, it will provide us with the opportunity to play our part in addressing a significant lack of residential care beds on the Coast, and the resulting need for local residents, often seniors, to occupy acute care beds in the Sechelt Hospital, when they would more appropriately be cared for within a residential setting. Almost every day, there are patients in the E.R. awaiting a hospital bed, and this affects our medical professionals' ability to provide timely care.

Should the project proceed, it will also bring some 150 new jobs to Gibsons, with many spin-off benefits to local businesses and services. Trellis has indicated its interest in developing housing for their employees on a portion of the property, another important consideration. The project will also help to solidify the Town's financial position, through almost \$1 million in development cost charges; \$140 thousand in building permit fees; and annual taxes of more than \$100 thousand.

This is the type of clean industry that suits our community well, and we are excited about its potential benefits. We will keep you informed as further information becomes available.