

Mayor's Message – September 2017

As Council meetings resume after our August hiatus, a number of projects continue to attract interest and feedback. We appreciate this level of interest, which helps bring people to the table to engage in the processes required to move significant projects forward in a responsible manner.

One example is the Gospel Rock project, for which the Town is beginning to review the development application. Thanks to rigorous and inclusive planning, during which a broad range of voices were heard over the past several years, the Gospel Rock Neighbourhood Plan respects two key concerns, heard from all sides: that the waterfront promontory below Gower Point Road be preserved, and that greenspace be maintained in the forested area above the road. It is reassuring to know that the promontory is destined to remain undeveloped, and that the designated greenspace exceeds requirements and protects key sites such as Cross Rock and Little Africa.

While the application review process is in its early stages, it is prompting questions and concerns from the adjacent SCRD neighbourhoods about the proposed transportation routes to access the development site, contained within Block 7. While some access route has been proposed, it is still too early in the application review process to determine the implications of the development on existing neighbourhoods within Gibsons and in adjoining areas. Still, it is clear that concerns remain.

Currently, the Town is awaiting further information from the developer, as well as feedback from the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MoTI), and from the Sunshine Coast Regional District (SCRD). Once all of this information is in hand, staff and Council will be in a better position to evaluate options, costs, and impacts on various neighbourhoods. As this work progresses, we will continue to listen to public feedback, within the context of the clear and consistent processes which guide our decision making.

Many of you may recall that several years ago, we went through an exercise to restructure areas E, F and the Town of Gibsons into a new municipality. Perhaps it is time once again to weigh the pros and cons of such an affiliation, given our Council's clear responsibility to act in the best interests of our Town and its residents, while respecting the concerns of our neighbours.