

Water rate increase explanation in the mail

GIBSONS COUNCIL BRIEFS

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The Town will explain the reasons for a 15 per cent increase in water rates this year by rolling out a “low-key” communication strategy, director of finance Ian Poole reported Tuesday.

The Town hired a consulting firm and budgeted \$10,000 to develop a communications plan that will include a brochure mailed out with residential and commercial utility bills; an FAQ sheet that will be available online and at the Town office; and a communications register that will log comments and concerns about the new rates.

“The objective,” Poole said, “is to inform both residences and businesses about the benefits of conservation-oriented water pricing, which is to meet the goal of improved water services, to meet conservation goals and to save money. It is important to have our customers make the connection between value, price and consumption behaviour.”

“The water operating fund has shown losses for three years now,” Mayor Wayne Rowe pointed out, “and that can’t be sustained.”

No Glassford closure

The Town will not close the south end of Glassford Road after a majority of residents surveyed said they were against it.

Closing Glassford’s south end was an option included in the Town’s 2007 traffic calming master plan, which also set out measures for South Fletcher (east and west), North Fletcher and O’Shea Road, director of engineering Dave Newman reported.

This summer, after the intersection at the north end of Glassford was realigned and narrowed, Newman said, “staff saw an opportunity to complete a trial closure at the south end for minimal cost that was anticipated to greatly reduce the cut-through traffic and associated speeds.”

A survey sent out in August, however, found 21 residents opposed to the closure and 16 in favour.

“I saw it as an easy way to address everyone’s concerns and was caught off guard that over 50 per cent opposed it,” Newman admitted.

The committee went with Newman’s recommendation to take no action in light of the majority’s opposition.

“I’m still carrying the scars from the battle of O’Shea,” Mayor Rowe said, “so I’m not going against your recommendation.”

Traffic calming measures on O’Shea were removed at the request of residents in 2009, shortly after they were installed.

Aldersprings slowdown

The committee also agreed with Newman’s recommendation to reduce the speed limit on Aldersprings Road to 20 km/h after about half of the road’s residents signed a petition requesting speed bumps.

While speed bumps were not considered a viable option for the short dead-end road, the speed reduction is called for, Newman said.

“If you’re driving at 50 km/h, there’s no way you’re driving that road safely,” he said.