

Paying Taxes and Old Age Not A Prerequisite for Sharing Your Opinion

On September 30th, Gibsons' Council hosted a Community Dialogue to collect input from the community on a draft version of our Strategic Plan – a document which is meant to guide Council's decisions, activities and allocation of resources for the next three years.

The event turnout was great, with nearly 40 people showing up to share their thoughts about first, where Council should put its focus in the near-term, and second, their vision for Gibsons over the long term.

While fighting climate change and the creation of more affordable housing emerged as the dominant themes, it was extremely interesting to hear the wide variety of specific ideas that folks had for attaining those goals.

It was also quite eye-opening to hear from a few "under 30s", who agreed, for example, that it was time for Gibsons to move beyond its long-held identity as "home of the Beachcombers." In their view, Gibsons should be working toward a very green economy and public profile, which attracts tourists due to its stunning seaside location, wealth of local, sustainable businesses and strong commitment to earth-friendly policies.

One of those same young persons also observed that she did not feel that she was a full member of the community with the right to participate in community affairs until recently, after becoming a home owner.

At the time of the 2016 Canadian Census, a full 27% of Gibsonites were renters. So as Mayor, I was quite concerned to learn that some members of that fairly significant group might feel they don't have an equal voice in local decision-making because they do not pay property taxes.

In fact, if we are to make the best possible decisions as Councillors, we must hear from the entire community, whether young, old, parents, childless, women, men, homeless, renters or property owners.

Each of these groups moves through life in Gibsons in a slightly different way, experiencing a range of day-to-day pleasures and challenges. Each of them has a vision of the future for themselves, their loved ones and the community at large.

So in closing, I issue a request to all Gibsonites. Please let us know what you love about Gibsons, what could be better and how we should be planning for the future, in person, by email to mayor@gibsons.ca through our social media platforms, or by calling me personally at 604.989.2364. Your opinion is more than welcome – it's critical.

