



Qualicum Beach Residents' Association

Newsletter

Welcome to our July Newsletter. Your Board had originally hoped to send out quarterly email Newsletters but the road to you-know-where is paved with good intentions. We are all volunteers and QBRA has had a very busy year and, therefore, this Newsletter is in the department of 'better late than never'!

Purpose of QBRA

QBRA is a non-partisan non-profit society whose purposes are to: "encourage and promote the improvement of political, social, cultural, economic and environmental matters that affect the residents of Qualicum Beach; and, to make suitable recommendations to Town Council regarding specific issues that benefit and improve the quality of life in Qualicum Beach".

QBRA Public Meetings

Your Board has decided that the organization and hosting of public meetings in Qualicum Beach is a priority for 2013. QBRA has hosted three successful public meetings so far this year:

- ☒ First Responders Information Meeting at the *Civic Centre*;
- ☒ Coffee Morning Discussion on the Clarion condominium project at *Rotary House*;
- ☒ Growth & Development in Qualicum Beach: Towards Positive Dialogue between Developers and Residents at the *Civic Centre*;

As with all QBRA events, these meetings were open to all residents of Qualicum Beach and were all very well attended. Thank you to everybody who helped organize them and took the time out to attend.

The most recent public meeting on growth and development was organized in response

to the discussion at our coffee morning on the Clarion project. During this event, there were numerous comments about the speed with which this project was considered and approved by Town Council. It only took six weeks to approve this new five-story building next to Town Hall and many residents felt that it was too fast for the community to have input.

Some attendees liked the proposed Clarion project and others did not. Regardless, there was considerable discussion about the Town Council process for considering its approval. The Town has a policy whereby it encourages the proponents of large projects to conduct an information session so local residents can learn about the project, ask questions and express their views.

Many residents have expressed the view that these sessions are not useful. In the

case of the Clarion project, the information session was convened the day after Council's first reading of the application. It was not well advertised, the room was crowded and most people were unable to be seated.

At the conclusion of the coffee morning session, it was decided by the over sixty residents in attendance that the QBRA Board should ask for Town Council to defer the second reading and public hearing on the Clarion project to allow for discussion between residents and the developers. Accordingly, the QBRA Board delivered a letter to Council but did not receive a reply.

At the same time, the QBRA Board offered to meet with Council or Town staff to discuss its policy concerning pre-application dialogue between residents and proponents of development projects, in the hope that there would be a willingness to revise its policy to provide for more interactive discussion, better notice of meetings, independent facilitation of discussion and other ideas for improving dialogue. A reply has not yet been received from Council on this offer.

Despite this lack of response from Town Council, the QBRA Board decided to organize a follow-up public forum at the Civic Centre on June 20th entitled: "*Growth and Development in Qualicum Beach: Towards Positive Dialogue Between Residents and Developers*".

Bruce Fleming-Smith, a former member of the Town's Advisory Planning Commission (APC), was a panelist at the Forum along with Luke Sales, Director of Planning for

Qualicum Beach and Dave Bryan, a local real estate developer. Please see the newspaper editorial and report on this event in the "In The News" section of this newsletter below.

Bruce outlined ten ideas during his presentation on the panel. One of the ideas was to form a *Qualicum Beach Building Forum*, much on the lines that other municipalities have in place, which would provide an opportunity for developers and residents to jointly review building design prior to the submission of applications for Town Council approval.

In addition, Bruce recommended the publication of more detailed information about the reviews conducted by the Town's *Advisory Planning Committee (APC)*. He said that there is very little information available on the Town's website about the advice provided to our Council by its APC. On the other hand, if you search the minutes of the Parksville or Vancouver APC on their respective websites, you will find far more comprehensive information than is available in Qualicum Beach.

One of the Councilors who attended the QBRA public meeting, Scott Tanner, brought forth a motion at the council meeting on Monday, July 8, 2013:

That council directs staff to review, and report back to Council on the ideas presented in the letter by Bruce Fleming-Smith and at the June 20, 2013 QBRA forum on Growth and Development in Qualicum Beach: Towards Positive Dialogue Between Residents and Developers.

Some Town Councilors expressed concerns about the notion of resident/developer dialogue and Councilor Tanner's motion was deferred until September. Councilor Broulette called the idea that the Town should ask developers to consult residents about their projects, "folly". She said that, after all, it is the developers that are making the investments and not the residents and to ask them talk with each other would be another barrier for the developer. Our Association was mentioned several times during the Council meeting and we were heartened to see evidence of QBRA's hard work being recognized by some Councilors, and local newspapers and their readers.

Although the QBRA Board is not optimistic that that a majority of Council will agree to new measures to encourage developers to seek more input from the residents/voters/taxpayers of Qualicum Beach prior to seeking Council approval, we will continue to advocate such a policy.

September will be a busy month for our Town Council. In addition to considering Councilor Tanner's deferred motion for more resident consultation, Town staff is expected to report on the implications of extending the Town's urban containment boundary, another measure that will encourage growth and development and result in increases to our population, services and, perhaps, our taxes.

If QBRA members would like to read all of Bruce Fleming-Smith's ten ideas for improved dialogue between developers and residents, let us know by return email and we will send you a copy.

LETTERS AND FEEDBACK

Please feel free to contribute an article or letter to our Newsletter. We reserve the right to edit all submissions, of course, but we would very much like to hear from our members.

At our last public meeting on *Growth and Development in Qualicum Beach*, we received several positive written comments, including:

- This meeting was a good start!
- Thanks for the lively debate.
- Good Discussion!
- Nothing seems possible to fix the impasse re: Council
- Suggested topic for a future public meeting: changing municipal laws to avoid the current dilemma.
- Thanks to Bruce Fleming-Smith, you were "bang-on"!

Why are there so many Residents' Associations in Qualicum Beach?

In our town of Qualicum Beach there are several residents' associations. The original association was the Qualicum Beach Residents' Association, which formed about forty years ago. Since then, the *Eaglecrest Residents' Association* and the *Chartwell Residents' Association* have been created.

The Eaglecrest and Chartwell neighbourhoods were originally outside of the Qualicum Beach town boundary. Each of their residents associations worked successfully to bring their areas into

Qualicum Beach. These groups also did yeoman work in coordinating their neighbourhood for emergency preparedness. After their residential areas were integrated within the Town of Qualicum Beach, they continued to operate as a separate residents' associations.

Other residents' associations have been created to address specific neighbourhood issues such as the Waterfront Residents' Association; and, the North Qualicum Beach Homeowners' Association.

QBRA has worked with all of these associations as members of the *Federation of Oceanside Residents' Associations* (FORA), which was created to deal with the Health Centre. Hopefully, this group will move on to deal with other areas of concern.

Although each of these organizations have good reasons to exist, QBRA is the only residents' association that attempts to address issues pertaining to Qualicum Beach as a whole. We have members from every area of Qualicum Beach. All of our events will continue to be open to all residents of Qualicum Beach and we will continue to encourage the members of all residents' associations to attend and take part in our events.

Oceanside Health Centre

QBRA is represented on the Federation of Oceanside Residents' Associations by Dave Golson and Peter Quily. Dave has passed on this link to our members. It provides an opportunity for everybody to retroactively attend the Opening of the OHC in June:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hjFRrIdXtI&feature=share&list=PLRSwDpSO92L3E2fC8TFdLHI85n8-QB-yI>

PLEASE RENEW YOUR QBRA MEMBERSHIP NOW

THE QBRA BOARD HAS BEEN ADVISED BY ITS HARD-WORKING SECRETARY, JANET RAINES, THAT WE CURRENTLY HAVE ABOUT 20 MEMBERS WHOSE MEMBERSHIPS ARE ABOUT TO EXPIRE. PLEASE LET US KNOW BY RETURN EMAIL IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO RENEW; OR, SEND AN APPLICATION RENEWAL TO:

QBRA
P.O. Box 32,
Qualicum Beach, B.C. V9K 1S7

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT OF THE QUALICUM BEACH RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION.

Breaking News

We now have a website under construction. At present we have one page, a membership form, email information

The site is

<http://www.qbresidents.ca>

Clarion Project

One of the QBRA Board Members, Dave Golson, has been following up on the Clarion condominium project, next to the Town Hall with the Town Planner, Luke Sales. This is a five-storey building, approved by Town Council following its removal of height restrictions in the village centre. Here's Dave's report on his most recent meeting with Luke

I asked about status of various technical issues previously raised including: water catchment, set-backs, grading, and potential flooding in light of recent events. Luke Sales explained that until the details for the building permit are received in 4 to 6 months time, he cannot state whether there are any concerns. He admitted that he was expecting the storm water retention to be addressed, but stated that if the developer did not handle water catchment on site, as promised, it would be up to the town to handle any challenges. I had the impression he felt that there would be no real problems with the design, but time will tell as he has not seen their plans as yet. I recommend that we continue to monitor this over the next several months with a view to developing a complete understanding of the financial implications related to all utilities, traffic lighting, and storm-water drainage (particularly if the most likely area for potential flooding in the low grade northwest corner) is caused by grading and run off from the easement that the town owns at the west end. Dave Golson



THE CLARION
PROPOSED MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT
QUALICUM B.C. CONSULPRO INC.

VIEW LOOKING SOUTHEAST

WA
ARCHITECTURE

- How important is commercial at this site?
- Height drives densification
- Shoppers will go where the drivers are (cost, availability etc.)
- 4 stories maximum
- Consider a lane way access through the building
- 2 story town houses around the perimeter and the taller building in the centre
- Bavarian style buildings are dark
- All levels of community (most expensive downtown area)
- Get rid of commercial requirement on ground floor.
- Add an evening meeting like this so working people can attend.
- Slow down the process
- Motion: QBRA requests the Town Council defer third reading of the By-Law (so it is not at the same meeting as the Public Hearing) Carried

Is Qualicum Beach already plenty big enough for you?

As noted above, a majority of the Qualicum Beach Town Council has asked Town staff to report in September on whether to extend the Town's "urban containment boundary". If this boundary is extended, the population of Qualicum Beach will grow beyond the limits currently in our Official Community Plan. The following is a light-hearted questionnaire adapted from Eben Fodor's book, "*Better Not Bigger*". It is intended as 'food-for-thought' related to development and growth through the extension of the Qualicum Beach urban containment boundary.

1. How much more traffic would you like to see in Qualicum Beach?
 - a. There is already plenty of traffic, thanks.
 - b. Just a little bit more, please.
 - c. A whole lot more.

2. How much more agricultural land, forests and open space do you want to be developed?
 - a. It would be nice if we could save what we have left.
 - b. I suppose that we have to sacrifice this land in the name of "progress".
 - c. I can't bear the sight of undeveloped land going to waste.

3. How much higher do you want your property taxes to go?
 - a. For what I am getting, I think that I'm paying enough already.
 - b. I'm happy to pay more, even if I can't see any benefits.

4. How much more of your local natural resources do you want consumed?
 - a. I'd like to conserve our natural resources and use them as efficiently as possible.
 - b. We have to sacrifice our resources to create prosperity.
 - c. We should sell all our natural resources for a quick buck.

5. Would you prefer that your town government subsidize new development or should they use the money to improve existing services and still have enough left over for a tax cut?
 - a. I'll take the improved services and the tax cut, please.
 - b. Let's keep the development fire stoked with my tax dollars.

6. How much bigger do you want Qualicum Beach to become?
 - a. It is already big enough.
 - b. Let's just keep growing and see what happens!
 - c. I love big cities, but am too lazy to move to one.

If you answered "a" to one or more of these questions, you should pay careful attention to what our Town Council does related to Qualicum Beach's urban containment boundary when the Town staff reports in September. If you would like to borrow "Better Not Bigger", let us know by return email and we will lend you a copy!

IN THE NEWS

There have been many interesting stories and editorials in our local newspapers over the past month. Here are a few that the QBRA Board found particularly interesting:

Early input sought on developments;

Tanner proposing motion to involve community groups

[BRIAN WILFORD](#) / OCEANSIDE STAR

JUNE 26, 2013

Residents want to be able to influence proposed developments before they get too far along in the official process but there was no clear idea of how to achieve that emerging from a panel discussion arranged by the Qualicum Beach Residents' Association last Thursday.

The QBRA asked town Planning Director Luke Sales, architect Bruce Fleming-Smith and real estate developer Dave Bryan to give their views on how to achieve more dialogue, especially in relation to large projects.

The meeting, packed to standing room only, was called after The Clarion, a five-storey, 53-unit condominium development next to town hall, sailed through council in little more than a month.

Sales said the planning process is based on the Official Community Plan and it's in forming that plan that residents can have their say.

He said he didn't think holding referenda on proposed developments would help.

Fleming-Smith said it's possible to identify key properties in the town, such as the tennis courts and the bus garage site, and to hold workshops or study groups, possibly under the auspices of the QBRA, on what is best for those sites.

Perhaps The Old School House could hold an art competition based on ideas for the bus garage site, he said.

"There will be change," he said. "We just want change we're happy with."

Advisory Planning Commission members are often left "shaking their heads," he said, over the lack of opportunity for residents, developers

and the town to discuss possibilities "before entering a highly articulated process." Bryan said Qualicum Beach, "fortunately or unfortunately, is very tightly nailed down as far as available properties go."

What gets built, he said, depends on what's going to sell. Three-to-five-storey apartment blocks haven't sold well, he said, and a show of hands revealed that only a few would consider moving into an apartment-style building in the town but a large majority would consider a patio home or town home.

The problem, Bryan said, is that there's no place in Qualicum Beach to put even just 10 patio homes.

"We've got this place nailed down so tight there's nothing," he said. "We're not serving our own people."

Resident Graham Riches asked about changing the make-up of the APC but Bryan said that's too late in the process.

"By the time I get to the APC, I'm done." Bryan said. "The APC is there to help the process along."

Fleming-Smith noted that Vancouver's Urban Design Panel often sends big-money developments back for refining.

Bryan said it would be great to have such a collaborative process involving a range of professionals "but that's not what we have here... that's not the APC."

Resident Kevin Monahan said there needs to be a mechanism for going back to the constituents when something bigger comes along to avoid "late-stage antagonism."

Fleming-Smith said there would be better communication if there was a "more collaborative, cohesive attitude on council."

Bryan said the planning department could suggest to developers that they pitch their projects to relevant community groups.

On Monday, Coun. Scott Tanner gave notice that he'll introduce a motion at a future council meeting asking staff to look into referring

developments to community groups before they enter the formal process.

Coun. Mary Brouillette objected to "another layer" for developers to get through but Tanner said that's not what he's proposing.

Mayor Teunis Westbroek said such groups have worked in the past on issues such as secondary suites.

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EDITORIAL: How refreshing

By Parksville Qualicum News

Published: **June 25, 2013 10:00 AM**

This had the potential to turn into a counterproductive complaint-fest.

To the credit of the panelists, the 120 people in attendance and the leadership of the Qualicum Beach Residents' Association, the forum Thursday night at the civic centre became a constructive dialogue that might yield results.

Clearly initiated by The Clarion development and the speed (according to some) it was passed through council, one would not have been alarmist to guess this forum Thursday was going to see a long line of people at the microphone crying over spilt milk and dividing the council and community once again into little camps.

Alas, it was not. How refreshing.

Some of the suggestions may be entirely unworkable and/or create more problems than they solve, but at least there was some productive, respectful discussion.

Much of the credit for the comfortable temperature in the room goes to the three panelists asked to speak and answer questions about development in Qualicum Beach and how better communication can happen between residents and proponents

before the project ends up being approved by council.

Architect and former advisory planning commission member Bruce Fleming-Smith, the town's director of planning Luke Sales and local realtor/developer Dave Bryan set the tone with their open, honest approach to the evening.

Sales was understandably unwilling to participate in any political parts of the discussion, but he did provide insight into how things work at town hall in regards to development.

Fleming-Smith came with a suggestion for a new group — perhaps formed with representation from the town's three residents' associations — to provide input for council on development.

Bryan was engaging, entertaining and informative, even supplying some numbers and profit margins developers are generally loathe to discuss in public.

While we don't agree the town needs yet another unelected group to advise council, at least this discussion was civil, and perhaps it will alert developers that they must do a better job communicating with the residents of this unique community.

— Editorial by John Harding

City, town tinker while builders move on

(Oceanside Star, July 10, 2013) By Brian Wilford

Qualicum Beach cut its development cost charges in the downtown core to zero to attract development and got the five-storey Clarion condos.

However, The Clarion was already working its way through the planning department at the town hall as a three-storey project with full DCCs when the developer got wind of the plans to eliminate the DCCs and remove the height limit.

The subsequent zero DCCs was a million-dollar gift (thank-you taxpayers) and the additional storeys were at least another million dollar gift. For that, the town got a building many view as too massive, given what's around it, with no commercial space on the ground floor, a mixed result at best.

Parksville says it wants density downtown and less dependence on residential taxes but is proposing to hike DCCs by an average of 55%, with the biggest hits to commercial (59%), industrial (59%) and institutional (69%).

We can presume, through the presentation of this proposal, that it was arrived at through a logical, bureaucratic process: these are our known capital projects over the next 20 years and this is what the DCCs will have to be if we don't want to raise taxes and utility rates by more than 25%.

Developments have been approved all over Parksville but they aren't being built.

The most promising sites - a new Save-On Foods and a Canadian Tire at Wembley Mall and a new Quality Foods and multi-family housing at Despard Avenue and the Alberni Highway - are on the outskirts of the city and will serve more to spur development in Coombs-Errington and French Creek.

Qualicum Beach is giving it away and not getting what it wants. Parksville is planning to collect another 55% of nothing. The builders, meanwhile, are busily working away in the electoral areas of the Regional District of Nanaimo, building some very nice homes and businesses and apparently making a buck.

One solution would be to encourage the RDN's bureaucrats to tinker with success.

Another would be for Parksville and Qualicum Beach to pay closer attention to the competition next door.

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NOTE: This newsletter is published by the Board of Director of the Qualicum Beach Residents' Association.

Every effort has been made to ensure accuracy. If readers identify errors in fact, please advise the QBRA Board by return email.

Thank you