# THE WESTWARD INDEPENDENT

A FREE NEWSPAPER
WWW.WWIND.CA

ISSUE 14





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# THE IMPLICATIONS OF TACIT AGREEMENTS IN LOCAL GOVERNANCE

## A CASE STUDY OF NORTH COWICHAN AND THE COWICHAN VALLEY REGIONAL DISTRICT.

**Residents of North Cowichan and the broader Cowichan Valley Regional District (CVRD) have been unexpectedly subjected to changes in their utility and garbage billing.**

These changes, including the removal of utility payments from the tax bill and the imposition of a mandatory garbage collection fee, have sparked concerns about the nature of consent in local governance.

At the heart of these issues is the concept of tacit consent, a legal doctrine in which a party's silence or inaction is interpreted as implied consent or agreement. This doctrine, while often relied upon by governments and institutions, raises significant questions about transparency, accountability, and the rights of citizens.

North Cowichan's Separate Utility Bill: An Implied Agreement? The decision by North Cowichan to remove utility payments from the property tax bill and issue them as a separate bill has frustrated many residents. This change was implemented without explicit consent from the citizens, raising questions about whether it constitutes a tacit agreement.

Under the doctrine of tacit consent, the local government might argue




that by continuing to pay the new utility bills without formal protest, residents are implicitly agreeing to the new billing arrangement. However, this situation also highlights several challenges inherent in tacit agreements: Ambiguity and misunderstandings: Many residents may not fully understand the implications of the change or may assume that their silence does not equate to consent. This can lead to disputes, particularly if residents feel they were not adequately informed or given the opportunity to voice objections.

Lack of documentation: Without a clear paper trail or documented consent from residents, it becomes challenging to verify whether the change was genuinely accepted by the community. This lack of documentation can lead to legal challenges, particularly if residents claim they were not properly notified or consulted.

Inequitable treatment: The shift to a separate utility bill may disproportionately affect certain residents, such as those on fixed incomes who rely on the predictability of a combined tax and utility bill. If these concerns are not addressed, the change could be perceived as unfair, potentially leading to legal challenges or demands for policy reversal.

The CVRD's Mandatory Garbage Collection Fee: A Forced Service or Tacit Consent?

Similarly, the Cowichan Valley Regional District's decision to impose a mandatory garbage collection fee, regardless of whether residents use the service, has sparked significant controversy. Many residents argue that they should not have to pay for a service they do not use, raising concerns about whether their tacit consent is being assumed simply because they have not formally contested the fee. However, over 3,000 residents signed a petition to keep the private garbage provider, which could be seen as citizens disagreeing with the new forced billing and service.

In this case, the potential issues with tacit agreements are even more pronounced: Unintended Consequences: Forcing residents to pay for a service they do not use can lead to unintended consequences, such as financial strain, resentment toward

**(Continued Top Of Page 11)**



## CASH REWARD OFFERED!

In a twist of irony, it seems a local group of zealots has decided to fight free speech by snatching up stacks of our papers (AND STANDS!) and chucking them straight into the recycling bins—how environmentally conscious of them, right? Can you imagine the audacity? Disregarding the right to read and the environment all in one go!

But don't worry, we're turning their crusade into a little game of our own. We're offering a cash reward to anyone who catches one of these unfriendly community members in the act. Why, you ask? So we can share their eco-friendly antics all over our social media!

Catch a vandal? Win a prize! Nothing says fun like defending free speech and exposing the hypocrisy of cancellation warriors!

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# DR. MARTIN BARKER - THE ADDICTED HOMELESS




**Hello Cowichan Malahat Langford. I am Martin Barker and I am planning on being your Conservative candidate in the riding for the next Federal election.**

I have been personally affected by the growing addicted homeless in our communities. I sold my house and moved when vandalism, theft became common in my neighbourhood. Needles in my hedge, car windows smashed, tires slashed, open drug use on the roadway in front of my house. I know many people now afraid to go places or leave their homes.

NDP-Liberal 'science' is not working. Naloxone use is up, Overdose deaths are up, crime is up. Many of our neighbourhoods are transforming into wastelands.

I am not unsympathetic to the plight of our less fortunate. Addiction is a heavy affliction to bear. I've seen it first hand having spent 7 years volunteering my services to the Warmland shelter in Duncan. There are tragic stories in the addicted community. Stories of abuse, mental health, unfortunate circumstances. This population deserves our empathy and support.

But we must also protect our citizens, we need to pursue policies that help these poor souls but also protect our people, our businesses, our places of leisure.

What is certain is the current plan of expanding the availability of free drugs and injection centres, open door criminal systems, and acceptance of public drug use are not helping addicts or making our communities safer. Politicians like Alistair MacGregor are championing these failing policies.

If you think there is a better way to help these people while keeping citizens and businesses safe. Vote for me as your next Conservative Candidate.

I cannot represent this community without your support at the nomination meeting. I want to be the common sense representative of our riding. You can support me by buying a conservative membership and attending the nomination meeting (date unknown), follow me on my social media, donating to our local Conservative EDA (so we can afford a good election fight next year) and to me if you support my nomination.

Let me fight for you in Ottawa, we know the NDP hasn't and we know the Liberals won't. Support me as your voice of reason in Ottawa. I will fight for our riding.

**Martin Barker**

# BC NURSES EXPOSE UNION CONFLICTS AND GOVERNMENT COLLUSION IN HEALTHCARE CRISIS

**I am Corinne Mori, a registered nurse who has been barred from working in BC for the past 2.5 years due to COVID vaccine mandates.**

Along with a team of self-organized nurses, I am actively investigating and demanding accountability from the BC Nurses Union (BCNU). We are concerned about an apparent conflict of interest between the BC NDP government and the BCNU. Substantial taxpayer funds have been transferred to the union, which should be holding the government accountable. Despite these funds, there have been no tangible improvements in healthcare, especially in rural BC. This flow of taxpayer money has reduced the incentive of the BCNU to effectively represent its members.

BC was the only province in Canada to enforce these mandates, infringing on legally protected individual autonomy and compromising healthcare ethics. This contributed to the collapse of our public healthcare system, particularly in rural areas. Recently, I discussed with rural BC mayors the impact of ER closures due to staffing shortages. These officials were unaware of the financial transactions between the BC NDP government and the BCNU. We are formally requesting a BC Auditor General investigation into these payments to ensure taxpayer money is being used appropriately. I will forward this information to every elected official in the province, attaching documentation for review.

On July 26, Bonnie Henry rescinded the vaccine mandates for healthcare workers. While this may seem like a victory, we caution against that assumption. The BC NDP continues to act as if the law does not apply to them. New requirements for further disclosure of medical information raise additional concerns. Affected workers are still being mistreated, and these new measures could erode our rights further. Unions in BC were created to protect employees, but their structure creates a high risk for corruption. In Canada, unions are nonprofit and do not pay taxes or require transparent financial reporting. Audited financial statements only ensure conformity to reporting standards, not the accuracy of financial transactions. A forensic audit is necessary to verify the money flow.

Union membership is mandatory in Canada, with dues deducted from paychecks. For nurses, this is 2% of regular pay. This guarantees unions a customer base and removes their incentive to perform their duties. Unionized workers are governed by the Collective Agreement, effective only if enforced by the union. Complaints against the union are submitted through the BC Labor Board, not the courts. Once a union member, individual legal rights in the workplace are transferred to the union, which handles conflicts through a grievance process. The union decides whether to represent the member, with the final step involving an arbitrator.

Key figures in this situation include Bonnie Henry, Adrian Dix (Minister of Health in the BC NDP government), HEABC, BCNU, and affected nurses. Bonnie Henry's Public Health Order did not state that healthcare workers should be terminated, only that they could not work. In BC, HEABC directed health authorities to terminate non-compliant workers, violating healthcare professionals' responsibility to protect individual autonomy in medical decisions and the collective agreement.

After the terminations, Freedom of Information requests revealed over 20,000 COVID sick calls from double-vaccinated staff in just four health authorities within six months. By August 2022, health authorities normalized COVID, telling staff to work even if positive. Critical staffing shortages were filled by higher-paid, non-unionized travel agency nurses, costing taxpayers significantly more. We discovered substantial taxpayer money from the Ministry of Health flowing to BCNU, raising conflict of interest concerns. Last year, BCNU received $100 million from the BC NDP under conditions tied to the new collective agreement. Union executive pressure on members to vote yes was not transparent about these conditions. By Dec 31, 2023, none of this money had been disbursed to the nurse benefit fund. In 2024, $6 million was designated for a Nurse Hardship Fund, but many members in financial hardship were denied assistance.

A Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Health and BCNU establishes annual payments totalling $850 million over three years. Despite these funds, there is no plan to provide the necessary nurses to sustain nurse-patient ratios. Pre-pandemic, there were 2,000 empty nursing positions; now, there are over 5,000. The Retiree Benefits Fund, funded by taxpayers, has disbursed less than $5 million in the last five years, with half a billion dollars sitting in BCNU's bank account.

In a Freedom of Information request, Adrian Dix met with BCNU in 2018 to assess the Retiree Benefits Fund, which remains unused for its intended purpose. The upcoming BC Provincial election has seen Conservative BC and BC United promise to reinstate terminated healthcare workers. We believe the BC NDP rescinded the mandates as a political strategy due to declining public support.

Terminated nurses have been waiting for arbitration, which occurred in March 2023. A settlement was agreed upon by BCNU and HEABC, allowing terminated nurses to be rehired if the Public Health Order is rescinded by January 31, 2025. If rescinded by March 31, 2025, it is up to health authorities to rehire them. This settlement does not address the rights and benefits of all affected nurses, particularly those who relocated or experienced workplace abuse. We will submit a complaint to the Labor Board for failure of duty in fair representation. I will not advise individual healthcare workers on reapplying for work, as it is a personal decision. However, united resistance to coercion could have stopped these mandates.

Solutions include making union membership voluntary to ensure accountability, preventing unions from operating under a non-profit umbrella and receiving government money, and requiring scheduled forensic audits for unions holding funds for specific purposes. We need an investigation by the BC Auditor General into financial transfers from the BC NDP to BCNU. BCNU needs to transfer our representation to our own legal counsel. When Dix and Henry are fired, they should receive the same treatment we experienced.

- Corinne Mori, one of thousands of BC RN's who were unjustly stripped of their livelihoods due to government abuse of its power. She has spent the last two years examining how our local and provincial governments are moving into a concerted effort to increase taxation to unsustainable levels, overregulate the public where bureaucracy chokes all independence and initiative, and exposing the intent to remove all rights and freedoms from the public. She is running as an Independent in the upcoming BC election, Kootenay Central riding, to ensure that the public has the choice to elect a representative who will fight to protect the rights of the people.

**www.corinnemori.ca**



# PREMIER EBY'S EMPTY RHETORIC ON B.C.'S POPULATION CRISIS OFFERS NO SOLUTIONS

**Premier Eby's complaints about B.C.'s out of control population growth ring hollow. "Sound and fury, signifying nothing".**

Shakespeare's mournful description of human life in Macbeth can be aptly applied to Premier David Eby's constant expressions of frustration with Ottawa's pedal-to-the-metal population growth strategy.

Speaking on July 17th beside Newfoundland Premier Andrew Furey, who the B.C. government is supporting in a challenge to the federal equalization program, Premier Eby ramped up his complaints to new heights of rhetorical flourish. He asserted that British Columbia's "unprecedented population inflows" – 180,000 new British Columbians last year alone – are "completely overwhelming".

Eby laid out the devastating consequences of B.C.'s disproportionate immigration intake on our public services and housing market: "To add a new city of 180,000 people every year to our province is not sustainable. Our schools are full. We are unable to keep up with housing starts."

It is undeniable that B.C. is being "overwhelmed" by the unprecedented population growth driven by the Trudeau government's open-door immigration policy, which saw Canada's population grow by nearly 1.3 million in 2023. According to documents obtained by the Canadian Press, Trudeau's government disregarded warnings by public servants that increasing immigration levels would worsen housing affordability.

B.C. is now paying the price for Ottawa's incompetence. Almost a million British Columbians have no family doctor. A poll from the Angus Reid Institute found that one in three B.C. residents are considering leaving the province because of the cost of housing. Schools across the province are overcrowded, with skyrocketing enrollment showing no signs of letting up. Surrey, the fastest-growing school district in B.C., is being forced to use nearly 400 portables as its classrooms overflow. The district is staggering start and end times for some students to increase capacity.

Premier Eby's repeated diagnoses of the negative effects of unsustainable population growth are correct. Now, what's his treatment plan? So far, the only solution he has floated is for premiers to be able to work with the federal government to align immigration levels with provincial capacity to integrate newcomers. This sounds great, but is of course purely theoretical.

What steps will be taken to move Eby's abstract desire for provincial-federal cooperation on immigration numbers from the warm and fuzzy realm of the abstract into the cold, harsh light of reality? Nobody in Eby's government appears to have thought that far.

One path forward would be to play hardball like Quebec, which is threatening to hold a referendum (their favourite pastime) on giving their province full control over immigration.

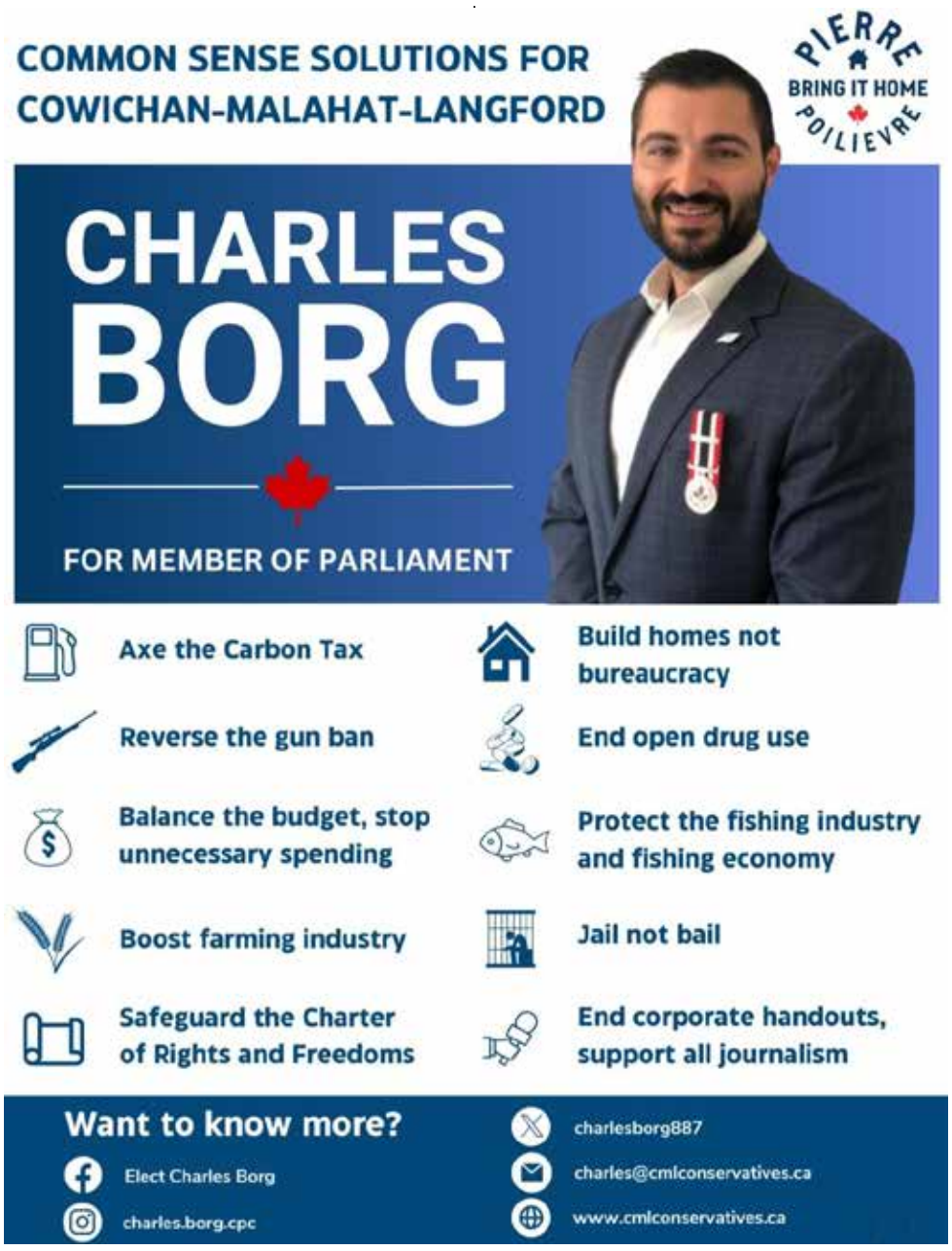
Premier Eby recently complained (his favourite pastime) about the Trudeau government's $750 million grant to Quebec to accommodate an influx of asylum seekers, arguing that B.C. deserves a similar grant to deal with our own influx of foreign workers and international students. This fundamentally misses the point. Quebec gets concessions like this because it exerts constant pressure on Ottawa get what it wants – if that means threatening a referendum or invoking the notwithstanding clause, they are more than willing to do so.

After the feds gave Quebec the $750 million grant, Premier François Legault was disappointed that it was not the $1 billion he had asked for initially, stating: "We'll take the money, but we'll continue to ask for more". Quebec is not ashamed to look out for Number One – we shouldn't be, either. Rather than being angry about Quebec's favourable treatment, our Premier should learn to emulate their highly effective pressure campaigns on the federal government.

Another way to moderate B.C.'s population growth would be to bypass the feds entirely, and cut the number of nominees accepted under the Provincial Nominee Program, an economic immigration program which allows B.C. to select permanent residents. Prince Edward Island recently took this route, slashing immigration nominations by 25% and refocusing the remaining nominations away from fast food and retail workers, favouring newcomers with skills in healthcare, trades, and childcare. P.E.I. made this decision to slow the rapid population growth on their increasingly overcrowded island, and reduce the strain on hospitals, schools, and housing. We could do the same, but this would require a level of political will that the B.C. NDP may not possess.

Merely complaining about B.C.'s runaway population growth isn't working – British Columbians deserve a government that will take concrete action to reduce it and give our infrastructure and public services some breathing room.

Riley Donovan is a journalist and editor of Dominion Review. You can follow him on Twitter @valdombre






# DOES SPRAYING CHEMICALS IN THE FOREST CONTRIBUTE TO WILD FIRES?

**Earlier this year, mass spraying of chemicals in our regional forests began, licensed to continue until April 2029.**

This initiative targets invasive plants on Provincial Public Land under the jurisdiction of multiple ministries, including Forests, Transportation and Infrastructure, Water, Land and Resource Stewardship, Environment, and Climate Change Strategy. The areas affected include Southern and Coastal British Columbia and Northern Coast Haida Gwaii, covering regional districts such as Alberni-Clayoquot, Capital, Cowichan, Cariboo, Central Coast, Central Kootenay, Central Okanagan, and more.

The methods of application include mechanical, cultural, biological control, and herbicides applied via wick/wipe-on, stem injection, ground vehicle-mounted sprayers, backpack, and handheld sprayers. The chemicals used include various herbicides such as Aminocyclopyrachlor (Truvist), Aminopyralid (Milestone), Clopyralid (Lontrel XC), Dicamba (Dyvel), Diflufenzopyr (Overdrive), Fluroxypyr (Starane), Glyphosate (Roundup), 2,4-D (2,4-D Amine 600), Imazapyr (Arsenal), Metsulfuron-methyl (Escort), Picloram (Tordon 22K), Florpyrauxifen-benzyl (Rinskor), and Triclopyr (Garlon). These herbicides have various environmental and health impacts, ranging from toxicity to aquatic life, vegetation, insects and other health issues in humans and animals..

The forestry industry, along with provincial authorities, also engages in similar practices. Researchers have raised concerns that glyphosate spraying might exacerbate wildfire risks. Glyphosate, the active ingredient in Roundup, is used to eliminate slow-burning hardwood species such as aspen and birch to promote the growth of more profitable coniferous trees like pine and spruce. This practice, widely adopted by the Canadian forestry industry, aims to streamline cut blocks for commercial purposes. However, hardwood species burn more slowly and can act as natural fire barriers. During the 2017 Williams Lake fire, mixed forests with aspen trees saw significantly less damage compared to conifer-dominated areas.




Despite the benefits of maintaining hardwood species, the forestry industry (along with the Province who sprays for "invasive" foliage) continue to use glyphosate extensively, spraying thousands of hectares of public forest annually. Critics argue that this approach not only makes forests more flammable but also undermines other ecological values. James Steidle, a woodworker and member of the Stop the Spray B.C. movement, describes the industry's view of forests as overly simplistic, comparing it to a vegetable garden where non-coniferous species are eliminated like unwanted weeds.

The BC Council of Forest Industries defends its practices, claiming they follow strict sustainability criteria and that glyphosate is applied precisely to minimize impact. However, researchers highlight the broader ecological implications, noting that glyphosate residues remain in surviving plants for at least a year, potentially causing unknown long-term effects. Diverse forests offer additional benefits such as mitigating disease, limiting insect infestations, and sequestering carbon dioxide. Some argue that current forest management practices are outdated and overly focused on financial gain at the expense of ecological health. The province of British Columbia mandates a predominantly coniferous forest on cut blocks, contrary to the natural diversity of these ecosystems.

Moreover, glyphosate's extensive use raises environmental and health concerns. It is associated with non-Hodgkin lymphoma and has adverse effects on beneficial bacteria in soil and water, as well as being harmful to bees. Herbicides like 2,4-D, once used as Agent Orange, pose risks such as endocrine disruption and decreased fertility. These chemicals can cause serious health issues, including eye damage, skin irritation, and reproductive problems.

In addition to aerial spraying, methods like "hack and squirt" and "cut and treat" are employed to manage forests. These techniques involve injecting or applying herbicides to tree stumps to kill non-desirable species. While intended to manage forest composition, these practices leave behind dry, dead biomass that increases fire risk.

Public awareness and education about local forest management practices are crucial. Understanding who controls local forests and their management strategies can reveal the impact of herbicides and other chemicals on forest fire dynamics and local water supplies. The public needs to engage in discussions and advocate for more sustainable and ecologically sound forest management practices to prevent the adverse effects of current methods. Quebec remains the only Canadian province to have banned glyphosate use in forestry entirely, setting an example for others to follow.

Maybe it is time to start pushing for, and promoting, the use of alternative forest management practices, such as controlled burns, mechanical thinning, and promoting the growth of native species, to help reduce fire risks without the adverse effects of herbicides to our ecosystem and our health and safety.

- A. Richards






# NORTH COWICHAN'S NEW CIVIC ENGAGEMENT: SPEED DATING FOR QUESTIONS

**Hold onto your stopwatches, North Cowichan residents, because the latest council bylaw has turned public participation into an Olympic event.**

With just 30 seconds on the clock to ask a question during council meetings, it's a mad dash to the finish line. That's right, if you blink, you might miss the entire democratic process.

Imagine it: You've spent hours stewing over a pressing community issue, carefully crafting your question to get straight to the point, only to find out you've got half a minute to blurt it out before being shooed away from the podium. It's civic engagement meets game show, and we're all contestants now. Maybe they'll start handing out door prizes for participation—assuming you make it to the mic in time.

And let's not forget the council's nod to "respectful behaviour," conveniently mentioned in the same breath as this new rule. It's all part of the "Respectful Spaces" initiative, which, as it turns out, might be less about fostering inclusive dialogue and more about ensuring you don't linger too long. The clock's ticking, and we wouldn't want to waste any of those precious 15 minutes allocated to public questioning—after all, when was the last time we even needed more than three questions?

But wait, there's more! This fast-paced format raises some intriguing questions about inclusivity. How does this sit with the Accessibility Committee? Do our more vulnerable community members, who might need a little extra time to articulate their concerns, get a few bonus seconds? Or is everyone equal under the tyranny of the stopwatch? After all, nothing says "diversity and inclusion" like making everyone speak at auctioneer speed.

One wonders who came up with this brilliant idea. Was it the same folks who've been championing "civility" in public spaces? Perhaps they thought the best way to keep things civil was to keep them brief. Too brief to cause a ruckus, too brief to spark a meaningful debate, but just long enough to give the illusion of public involvement.

In this new era of rapid-fire governance, we might as well start practicing our elevator pitches. Need to bring up that new development project that's got the whole neighbourhood in an uproar? Better condense it down to a few sound bites. Want to discuss how council decisions are affecting local businesses? Hope you can get it all out before the buzzer.

So, next time you head to a council meeting, be sure to stretch your vocal cords, take a deep breath, and maybe even do a few tongue twisters on the way in. You've got 30 seconds to make an impact—if you're lucky. After that, it's back to your seat, where you can watch the clock run out on what could have been a fruitful discussion.

Who knows? Maybe next, they'll reduce council debates to a "yes or no" button on their desks. That would surely keep things moving at breakneck speed, just the way they like it.




# BAG BAN BONANZA: HOW RETAILERS ARE CASHING IN ON YOUR GREEN GUILT

**In December of 2018, CTV began an article questioning the charge for plastic bags with: "No one likes to be nickel-and-dimed.**

That's why those who speak on behalf of consumers who pay for plastic bags and those who study the environment those fees are purportedly designed to protect are calling for greater transparency from retailers. 'If it is going to the environment, then let us see the figures on it," Consumers' Association of Canada president Bruce Cran told CTV News." In the article, retailers wouldn't tell CTV what their plastic bags cost them, with the Plastic Association of Canada suggesting each bag costs 2.5 cents at most. The article then goes on to state that there was serious profit to be made selling consumers plastic bags at 5 cents each. This leaves one to ponder what retail companies are NOW making at 25 cents a bag!

The article concludes: "The production of reusable cloth bags, for instance, produces fewer greenhouse gases but consumes much more water than plastic bags. And if shoppers reuse their plastic bags multiple times, it can in some cases be the greener option of the two. 'Consumers are sort of frozen,' Huddart Kennedy said. 'We don't actually have a great solution for how to transport things. Cloth bags aren't perfect. Plastic bags aren't perfect. Paper bags aren't perfect.'"

A study done by the Progressive Bag Alliance, subsequently peer-reviewed by Michael Overcash, then a professor of chemical engineering at North Carolina State University, compared the environmental impact of the creation of paper vs. plastic bags. Because the carrying capacity of a plastic bag and a paper bag is not the same, the study used the carrying capacity of 1,000 paper bags as its baseline and compared their impacts to the impacts of 1,500 plastic bags. The plastic bags used 14.9 kg of fossil fuels for manufacturing compared to 23.2 kg for paper bags. Plastic bags produced 7 kg of municipal solid waste compared to 33.9 kg for paper, and greenhouse gas emissions were equivalent to 0.04 tons of $CO_2$ compared to paper's 0.08 tons. Plastic bags used 58 gallons of fresh water, while paper used 1,004 gallons. Energy use totaled 763 megajoules for plastic, and 2,622 megajoules for paper.

With stores being reluctant to disclose what they pay for paper bags, we searched "bulk paper bag purchases" and found on ULine.ca that five bundles of 500 bags per bundle could be purchased for $60, and 10+ bundles could be purchased for $59, which would be a cost of $0.12 per paper bag.

From the Province of B.C. website: "Charge at least $2 for each new reusable shopping bag and at least 25¢ for each new recycled paper shopping bag. Let customers know about the fee in advance, and show any fee charged as a separate line item on receipts. You may use the fees you collect as you choose to offset your costs, for example, or to invest in a take-a-bag/leave-a-bag program." Why would the Province give this type of probable windfall of passive income to retailers, especially large grocery chains, to just use the income as they wish? A little top-up for their grocery union votes?

Exemptions to the bag "tax" include bags at drive-throughs and those used for deliveries. The exemption does not apply when picking up take-out food—good luck juggling your six containers of Chinese take-out.

Additionally, in B.C., stores can no longer offer plastic shopping bags, and oxo-degradable plastic packaging and single-use products won't be available for purchase. This includes food service ware, like bowls and boxes, made of biodegradable plastic, polystyrene foam, polyvinyl chloride, or polyvinylidene chloride materials, as well as biodegradable plastic or PVDC film wrap and all oxo-degradable plastics. Less waste sounds great, but much of it is greenwashing like the new paper straws which, according to Science Daily, contain a forever chemical: "Eco-friendly" paper drinking straws contain long-lasting and potentially toxic chemicals, a new study has concluded. In the first analysis of its kind in Europe, and only the second in the world, Belgian researchers tested 39 brands of straws for the group of synthetic chemicals known as poly- and perfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). PFAS were found in the majority of the straws tested and were most common in those made from paper and bamboo, the study, published in the peer-reviewed journal Food Additives and Contaminants, found. PFAS are used to make everyday products, from outdoor clothing to non-stick pans, resistant to water, heat, and stains. They are, however, potentially harmful to people, wildlife, and the environment."

Other changes will be implemented as BC tries to reach its "Clean BC" targets by 2030. We won't know all the "plans," but one coming July 1, 2028, will be a ban on PVC film wrap used to seal and secure food items in containers, and another ban by July 1, 2030, on polystyrene foam trays. (Will it be interesting to see what the meat departments will have to come up with—or will that be redundant as we will be eating bugs by then?)

No one is arguing that we need less waste in our environment and that we should all do our part, but when half of recycling has been shown to be a scam, and a large revenue of tax income for the Province, and when you have to now purchase plastic garbage bags instead of those you would get from a store with your purchases to use for garbage, and when we still see everything sold, down to cucumbers, wrapped in plastic, it leaves one to ponder, is this a grift?

# COUNCIL WATCH

*SOMEONE'S ALWAYS WATCHING...*

IT'S US, WE'RE WATCHING.

**North Cowichan:**

*June - July*

Statement of payments made in 2023 presented to council consisted of $92,227,518.00 paid to suppliers (such as Footprint Security $81,511), $382,388.00 in Grant Contributions, $20,509,761.00 paid in remuneration to staff with $304,776 in expenses, and $296,409.48 paid in remuneration to elected officials with $25,727.00 in benefits, and $61,428.00 in expenses.

Council agrees to send a letter to the province for an overpass between the new high school and around Home Hardware (Cllr. Justice opposed)

Discussions around North Cowichan's plan to purchase land for nearly $1.5 million to create a new park behind the recent development on Drinkwater Road (a condition agreed upon by the council to allow the developer to proceed) were brought up. A resident questioned the council's intentions, asking what they believe the park will actually be used for, suggesting that instead of attracting families, it might just become a hangout spot for those living in the 'supportive housing' complex on Paddle Road. The resident also pointed out that the million-dollar-plus expenditure doesn't include the costs of developing or maintaining the park. In response, Mayor Rob Douglas stated that the new developments in the area necessitate a park. (Is this just a token gesture for leveling hundreds of acres to make way for the RCMP building and three other developments?)

Public hearing regarding rezoning near Top Shelf Feeds to be put back into the Growth Containment Boundary to build apartments with a $4000 a unit fee to North Cowichan. Passed

2nd Quarter list of suppliers paid out (over 10k) presented for information. Cllr Findlay asks if there could be notes next to the payments so that when constituents ask what the payments are for, that council may be more able to answer (these very important questions).

Council passed a bylaw to restrict question period to 30 seconds per person, to a total maximum of 15 minutes for the question and answer portion.

**CVRD:**

*July*

Bill 44 was discussed (for information) regarding how they would implement the new housing strategies put forward by the province. It was suggested that "modest housing", aka low income, be located by all amenities so that the use of a car would not be needed, and could be located near foodbanks (was suggested as ideal by staff) - ("Bill 44" can be searched on wwind.ca to learn more.) Stated by staff: The cost of housing will remain the same in the next 10 years, stagnant, as long as we follow the provinces' mandates to build, otherwise it will go up 10%, so the supply will not lower prices of housing.

The Governance committee stated that because they are prohibited from public input for development (as per bill 44), how do we still hear from our constituents and how can they provide input? Through Facebook or an email? How do we balance hearing from constituents while following provincial legislation? Director Morrison stated that good governance should have Directors make decisions based on the same information, and "our only source of information should be from staff." Staff stated that the reason there is no more question period before a public hearing (as to after a hearing as it is currently) is because it could bring new information that would be debated on, and basically 'waste their time'. (see more on page 11)

# THE QUIET DEVASTATION OF YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT AND MISUSING 'REFUGEE' STATUS FOR SIMPLE IMMIGRATION

**In the intricate world of Canadian immigration policies and labour markets, discussing the impacts of these policies has become almost taboo.**

Yet, residents of the Cowichan Valley are increasingly feeling the strain of these issues, as they struggle to gain a foothold in the local job market. The combination of rising youth unemployment and the perceived misuse of refugee status for simple immigration are creating significant hardships for locals.

Canadian youth, particularly those aged 15 to 24, are facing a progressively bleak job market. As of May 2024, the unemployment rate for this age group surged to 12.6%, up from 9.5% in May 2023, marking the highest rate since September 2016, excluding the pandemic years (Statistics Canada). This disturbing trend signals a deeper systemic issue, primarily driven by the policies of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's Liberal government, particularly the Temporary Foreign Worker (TFW) program.

The TFW program has increasingly become a lifeline for businesses struggling to reduce operational costs. Employers can hire foreign workers at lower wages, supplemented by government subsidies, making these workers a more attractive option than local youth. These foreign workers, unlike their Canadian counterparts, are often denied the full spectrum of employment rights and benefits, further tipping the scales against local job seekers.

Temporary Foreign Workers are only supposed to be hired if the company cannot find local workers to fill positions. According to lmia.ca's map of temporary foreign workers in the Duncan area, the following positions are classified as "low wage": White Spot employs five food and beverage servers, Tim Horton's on the Highway has two food service supervisors, EBCO Industries in Duncan has one, T&H Enterprises (esthetics) has one, GTS Duncan Ventures Inc. employs one food and counter attendant, First Choice Holding on York Street employs two sales supervisors, ARTZ Nail Salon has one esthetician, electrologist, and related occupation, 1090938 BC LTD (a construction company) employs one administrative assistant, and Cowichan Bay Bakehouse employs two bakers. Prime Minister Trudeau and his administration have touted the TFW program as a necessary tool for economic growth, but the reality on the ground tells a different story. The program has systematically sidelined Canadian youth from entry-level jobs, effectively making it harder for them to gain crucial work experience and financial independence. For instance, have you noticed a common theme among the unskilled entry-level businesses in town? Franchises seem to favour hiring temporary foreign workers over local youth. This isn't just a coincidence; it's a calculated economic decision driven by flawed government policies. Perhaps the next time you see a bright-eyed young Canadian behind the counter at your favourite fast-food joint, you should take a picture—it might just be a collector's item.

Moreover, there is growing concern about the misuse of refugee status for what looks more like a golden ticket to Canada than a desperate escape from danger. According to the Government of Canada, refugees are individuals unable to return to their home country due to a well-founded fear of persecution based on race, religion, political opinion, nationality, or membership in a particular social group, such as LGBTQ+ individuals (Canada.ca). However, recent observations suggest that some immigration services might be stretching these definitions like a piece of old chewing gum, using expert paperwork wizardry to grant refugee status to individuals who hardly fit this traditional image.

Of course, no critique of the current situation would be complete without acknowledging our local left-wing crowd. Their relentless pursuit of diversity and equality, while noble in intention, has had some unintended consequences. By championing pro-immigration policies and an anti-privilege narrative, they've inadvertently contributed to the massive 12.6% unemployment rate among young Canadians. It's almost ironic, isn't it? The very people who are supposed to be advocating for fairness are part of the reason so many local youths can't find a job. What privilege does that 12.6% have now? One might wonder if this is what 'evening the score' was supposed to look like.

Financially, the incentives for securing refugee status in Canada are substantial. Under the Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP), government-assisted refugees receive a range of supports, including a one-time household start-up allowance and monthly income support based on provincial social assistance rates. For instance, in Ontario, a couple with four children might receive a start-up allowance of $8,970, plus monthly allowances for basic needs, shelter, and communication, potentially totalling over $27,000 in the first year (IRCC Canada). The maximum annual support can even reach up to $60,000 under exceptional circumstances (RSTP).

These figures highlight a significant level of support, prompting concerns among Canadians about the misuse of the refugee system. Claims have circulated that refugee families can receive up to $50,000 annually, though such amounts are rare and typically include various forms of support like housing and transportation allowances (IRCC Canada). Prime Minister Trudeau's administration has been criticized for not tightening the criteria and oversight for refugee claims, effectively allowing the system to be gamed. This not only strains resources meant for genuine refugees but also undermines public trust in the government's ability to manage immigration fairly and transparently. In the Cowichan Valley, locals are growing increasingly frustrated with what they perceive as a misuse of the refugee label. There is a strong sentiment that the government's policies are facilitating an influx of immigrants who may not meet the traditional definition of refugees, thus taking advantage of Canada's generous support system. This situation calls for a critical reassessment of the criteria for refugee status and stricter enforcement to ensure that only those truly in need benefit from these programs.

Addressing this issue requires comprehensive reforms to the refugee determination process and increased transparency in how funds are allocated and utilized. Only by restoring rigour and integrity to the system can we ensure that Canada continues to be a haven for those genuinely in need while maintaining public trust and support. It's high time we had an open, honest discussion about these policies and their real impacts on our communities. Maybe if we all clap our hands and believe in the employment fairy, we might just see a change. Until then, it seems our youth will remain stuck in the audience, watching their jobs performed by others. And for those who still think diversity at any cost is the ultimate goal, just take a good look at the drive-through window next time and ask yourself if this is the equality you had in mind.



# UNDERSTANDING AGENDA 21 LOCALLY: A CALL TO AWARENESS AND ACTION

**Two years ago, Agenda 2030 was called a conspiracy by many, and even used to shame some citizens running for local government who indicated that local policy was driven by the United Nations Sustainability Goals and Agenda 2030 (previously known as Agenda 21).**

Now we see towns like Duncan placing it right into their current OCP, and other local governments using all the wording and projected outcomes we see in these global goals.

After taking North Cowichan's Climate Action Plan and putting it into AI to read and summarize, this was the results: "The CAEP Update is a comprehensive strategy that aims to foster sustainable growth while addressing climate change, aligning well with the broader objectives of both Agenda 21 and Agenda 2030."

As the world approaches 2030, a thorough examination of the United Nations' Agenda 21 reveals its ambitious and far-reaching goals. Unveiled at the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, this comprehensive plan outlines a strategy for global sustainable development with profound implications for land use, resource management, and societal structures. Originally titled Agenda for the 21st Century, they felt it was not moving fast enough, so set the goals to be met by 2030, hence the name change to Agenda 2030.

The concept of "sustainable development" was introduced by Maurice Strong, former Director of the United Nations Environment Programme and Chairman of the World Wildlife Fund. In his 1987 book, Our Common Future, Strong articulated the idea of meeting present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet theirs. While the term initially appeared benign, promising responsible stewardship of resources, the underlying proposals in Strong's work sparked considerable debate.

Agenda 21 (2030), the action plan derived from these ideas, seeks to fundamentally alter land use policies worldwide. It proposes extensive control over natural resources—including land, water, and minerals—and aims to implement changes across every city, province, and town. This vision includes a significant commitment from countries, including Canada, which, along with 187 other nations, pledged to adhere to these goals.

One of the key provisions of Agenda 21 is the rethinking of land use. It suggests that private land ownership is unsustainable and advocates for greater public control over land resources. This vision includes restricting human access to large areas of land, designating them as off-limits or buffer zones. The current government's 30x30 plan, aiming for 30% of Canadian lands to be government/public-privately managed by 2030, aligns with this aspect of Agenda 21, and can be heard mentioned by Mayor Douglas multiple times in recent meetings.

Resource management under Agenda 21 emphasizes the role of public-private partnerships. During the COVID-19 pandemic, collaborations between tech companies and government agencies exemplified this approach. These partnerships are part of a broader strategy to regulate and monitor energy and water usage through technologies like smart meters, ensuring tracking and management of all resources. The land management will also use these public-private partnerships such as those already in place as "stalwarts" such as groups like Nature Trust, and other 'Trusts" and "Conservancy" associations.

Population control is another significant element of Agenda 21. The plan proposes a reduction in the global population to align with environmental goals, suggesting that an agricultural society (referred to by them as a peasant society) could support 5-7 billion people, while to live as we do in an industrialized ("Western Society"), that would only be sustainable for 1 billion people. This controversial aspect has raised concerns about feasibility and ethics.

Economic and social policies within Agenda 21 include the implementation of a carbon tax on businesses, which we see has a disproportionately impact on small enterprises and the middle class. Additionally, the agenda emphasizes social equity, aiming to address disparities in wealth and resources, meaning that your home ownership, or land ownership, is not fair to those that don't own a home or land. We should all be "equitable" living in the same apartments, and eating the same food.

The vision for urbanization under Agenda 21 involves developing dense, controlled urban centers and green city projects. This shift would reduce private homes and promote high-density living areas, altering traditional patterns of urban and suburban life. (See Provincial bills 44-47)




Agenda 21 has faced substantial criticism. Critics argue that its policies could lead to increased government control over personal property and daily life undermining individual freedoms. Concerns also arise about the practicality and fairness of its proposals, particularly in relation to population control and resource management.

The plan's origins, development, and key components—such as private land ownership, public-private partnerships, and population control—illustrate its ambitiously scary scope. While its intentions to promote sustainability are clear, the implications for personal freedoms and property rights have sparked significant debate. As the world moves forward, it is crucial to critically assess policies that may impact individual rights and democratic principles, especially as you see policies such as these passed by all local governments.

Local governments are generally well-meaning but often unprepared and lacking the background knowledge to understand that bylaws and policies brought to them by staff are incrementally advancing certain agendas. The World Economic Forum, often seen as a propaganda arm of the U.N., has been associated with the phrase, "You will own nothing and be happy." It is crucial to scrutinize all policies and deduce how they might contribute to these broader goals. Every policy linked to climate goals must be critically examined to determine if it aligns with Agenda 2030 objectives. For example, there are plans for forced retrofitting of old homes, consider whether this is genuinely intended to help residents save on increasing costs, such as those from BC Hydro, or if it is a method to remove people from their homes. Similarly, consider whether rising property taxes are genuinely for benevolent purposes or if they are a way to displace homeowners, particularly retirees who defer taxes. Always evaluate policies with a critical eye to uncover the true outcomes being presented under the guise of "sustainability."

Sources to read more: "Behind The Green Mask" - only available digitally from Amazon Project2020vision.com you can download Agenda 2030 booklet for $10

# THE DEATH OF A DREAM: BRITISH COLUMBIA'S NEW RENTAL POLICY

**Once upon a time, the dream of retiring in British Columbia, Canada, was a cherished aspiration for many**

Part of this dream often involved purchasing a small condominium or investment property, which could be rented out to generate income. This not only provided rental housing for the community but also offered a financial cushion for the property owners as they approached retirement. However, recent policy changes have dramatically altered this landscape, putting this dream at risk.

Effective July 18, 2024, a new policy introduced by the British Columbia NDP government has significantly shifted the balance of property rights in favour of renters. This policy mandates that landlords must now provide a four-month notice to tenants if the property is needed for personal use. This change is one of the most controversial and impactful policy shifts in recent memory, fundamentally altering the dynamics of the rental market.

For many retirees and landlords, renting out a property was a strategic move to secure their financial future. The rental income supplemented their retirement funds, and the property could eventually be sold to further bolster their savings. The introduction of stringent tenant protections, however, has made property management increasingly challenging and less profitable. Recent measures such as rent controls and the prohibition of terminating fixed-term leases have already strained landlord-tenant relationships. These policies were designed to protect tenants but have inadvertently discouraged investment in rental properties. The new four-month notice requirement exacerbates this issue, making it even harder for landlords to manage their properties effectively.

The new policy presents several significant challenges for landlords such as extended waiting period for buyers: When selling a property, the four-month notice period means that potential buyers, who typically want to move in quickly, might be deterred. This delay can make tenanted properties less attractive compared to owner-occupied ones, which can be vacated more swiftly. There will be financing complications for new buyers. Most mortgage rate holds are valid for 90 to 120 days. With a four-month notice period, buyers face uncertainty about their mortgage rates, which can fluctuate and affect their ability to finance the purchase. This uncertainty further discourages buyers from considering tenanted properties. Faced with the complexities of the new policy, landlords might opt to sell their properties as soon as they become vacant rather than re-renting them. This would reduce the overall rental stock, making it harder for tenants to find affordable housing.

The policy aims to provide renters with more security and predictability. However, the additional two months' notice may not offer significant benefits to tenants, who typically find new rental units closer to their move-out dates. Instead, it creates a disincentive for landlords to continue offering rental properties, potentially leading to a decrease in available rental housing.

While tenant protections are crucial, it is equally important to maintain a balanced approach that considers the rights and needs of landlords. Policies that heavily favour one side can have unintended consequences, such as reducing the rental stock and making housing more scarce and expensive.

The new policy by the British Columbia government represents a significant shift in the rental market, with far-reaching implications for both landlords and tenants. While it aims to protect tenants, it also creates new challenges that could ultimately reduce the availability of rental housing. As British Columbia heads towards its next provincial election, voters will need to consider the impact of such policies and advocate for a more balanced approach to housing legislation.

- A summary from LivinginSurreyandWhiteRock YouTube Channel

# B.C. TENANTS AT RISK - MASSIVE RENT HIKES AMID HOUSING CRISIS




**In a significant and controversial decision, British Columbia's Residential Tenancy Branch (RTB) has permitted two landlords to raise their rent by 23.5% over two years, far surpassing the province's 3.5% annual allowable increase for 2024.**

The landlords argued that their financial situation had become unsustainable due to a sharp rise in mortgage interest rates, which jumped from 1.9% to 6.65% in less than a year. The RTB sided with the landlords, allowing the rent hike to be implemented gradually over two years.

This decision has sparked concerns that it could set a precedent for similar cases, potentially leading to widespread rent hikes across the province. British Columbia is already grappling with one of the most expensive rental markets in Canada. According to recent data, the average rent for a two-bedroom apartment in Vancouver has soared to over $3,000 per month, making it one of the priciest cities in North America.

Over the past three years, rental prices in B.C. have increased by more than 30%, forcing many residents to spend an increasingly large portion of their income on housing. The province's vacancy rate remains critically low, hovering around 1% in major urban areas, which has fueled competition for available units and further driven up prices. The RTB's ruling may encourage other landlords to seek similar rent increases, further straining a rental market that is already in crisis. For many tenants, the possibility of even higher rents could mean the difference between staying in their homes or being forced to move out. This is particularly concerning for low- and middle-income families, who are already struggling to find affordable housing in a market that is pricing them out.

As the affordability of housing in B.C. continues to decline, the social and economic impacts could be profound. Increased rent prices could lead to higher rates of homelessness, greater financial stress for tenants, and a deepening divide between property owners and renters. The decision by the RTB, while addressing the financial needs of landlords, may ultimately exacerbate the province's housing emergency, leading to more instability and hardship for those already vulnerable in an increasingly unaffordable market.






(Continued from front page)

local government, and increased skepticism of future initiatives. This can damage the relationship between the government and its citizens, making it harder to implement future policies.

Regulatory Compliance: The imposition of a mandatory fee without explicit consent or adequate consultation may not comply with relevant laws

or regulations. This could expose the CVRD to legal risks, particularly if residents challenge the fee in court.

Transparency and accountability: The lack of clear communication and documentation surrounding the decision to implement the fee can compromise the transparency and accountability of the local government. This can lead to public trust issues, particularly if residents feel that their concerns were not adequately considered.

The situations in North Cowichan and the CVRD highlight the complexities and potential pitfalls of relying on tacit consent in local governance. While tacit agreements can provide a convenient way for governments to implement changes without the need for formal consent, they also carry significant risks. These include misunderstandings, lack of transparency, and potential legal challenges.

When one signs on for a service like BC Hydro, they must sign a long form contract agreeing to pay on a certain date for the services provided, if one breaks the contract by not paying, they will stop receiving the service. In the Case of North Cowichan's new 'utility bill' there was no contract made, and the bill itself just states that if not paid, it will go on next year's taxes. As the new forced garbage service and billing had not yet been implemented for the CVRD, there is no way to know what their penalty will be if not paid, but it certainly will not be stopping service as that would be exactly what most citizen's would like.

For local governments, it is essential to recognize and document tacit agreements to ensure that they are operating within the bounds of the law and maintaining the trust of their citizens. By doing so, they can promote effective collaboration, minimize disputes, and avoid the unintended consequences that often accompany these types of agreements.

*(Article written to ask the question, not legal advice)*

# CVRD DISCUSSES PUBLIC INPUT

**In a July meeting, the discussion on public input and its role in decision-making processes brought forth a multitude of perspectives from various directors. As the meeting unfolded, the directors shared their insights, revealing both the challenges and potential improvements in the current system.**

During the meeting, one staff member suggested that speeches from the public could move to the end of the meeting so that directors could receive all the same information from staff (suggesting that was the only factual information), make a decision, and then hear from the public after the decision was made. Director McClinton seemed to agree, as he suggested a potential modification to enhance the decision-making process: "I'm wondering if it might be possible, and I guess this would have to be referred back, but to permit members of the public to speak after the fact. I know we typically close meetings with questions, but at least we would be making our decision with equal information." This proposal aimed to remove the public from being seen as any source of "information."

Director Acton raised concerns about the quality and timing of the information presented during public input periods. She noted, "I think sometimes we're presented with kind of misinformation—not on purpose—or kind of like information that is slanted and not fully factual, so sometimes it's hard to completely process it so quickly, right? We make a decision and, like, you know, people are—the public is invited to our meetings because they're witnessing our meeting—but getting that information so quickly right before, I mean, I don't think is good governance." The challenge, as Acton described, is ensuring that decision-makers have accurate and sufficient information to make informed choices, suggesting that the only facts presented to the board are from staff and not the public. Director Acton also indicated that the question period was somewhat pointless as it just becomes a time to "stump the chair or make a speech." We ask, if the Chair is "stumped" by a public question, should he/she not be open to that and seek the answer for the public?

Director Marmon emphasized the fundamental role of public input in democratic processes, despite its occasional messiness: "Honestly, I think it's engagement. We want to engage the public in any means possible and to have them come in to be able to say something or listen to somebody that they came with say something—the engagement is so powerful." Marmon further underscored the value of participation in democracy, quoting, "The highest measure of democracy is neither the extent of freedom nor the extent of equality, but rather the highest measure is participation." Director Wilson echoed the sentiment, highlighting the essential nature of public input: "There are two words that came up there, valuable and essential, and to be quite honest I could never, ever contemplate doing away with public input. I couldn't, and I'm surprised we're even discussing it." On the procedural fairness front, Director Deck and Chair Morrison discussed the potential issues arising from the current system. Director Morrison noted the strategic use of public input by some individuals to influence outcomes: "I think this becomes a problem of procedural fairness because people have been using the public input very strategically, and people who have received negative outcomes have noticed that an application can be either delayed or kiboshed as a result of a one-sided opportunity of someone targeting a comment or a committee or a council and there not being the fair opportunity for the applicants to be able to rebut prior to a vote."

Director McClinton pointed out the logistical challenges of public engagement, particularly the timing of meetings: "If we want public engagement and true public engagement, we wouldn't be having the time for that at noon on a Wednesday. The people that cannot attend in the middle of the week, at the busiest day of the week—you know, we see it in those who are not here to give that public engagement." He also suggested it may be flirting with the rules of the Local Government Act. This remark called for a reconsideration of meeting schedules to enhance accessibility. Director Abbott agreed with the timing issues of the meetings and stated that, from what he heard, most of the speakers have been respectful and that more input from the public is needed.

In an attempt to address certain concerns, Director Segall proposed a motion to remove 6A from the public input policy, focusing on rezoning or land use amendment applications. This motion aimed to address the procedural fairness issues while still maintaining public input. Director Abbott supported the motion, emphasizing the need for the public to have adequate time to understand and respond to proposals: "Often we and the applicant work diligently for months, and the public get about five days to distill what's being proposed. So I'm in support of this motion to remove 6A."

As the meeting concluded, it was clear that some of the directors were united in their belief that public input is an invaluable component of the decision-making process. However, others seemed to suggest that the information provided by the public could not be relied upon, that staff were their only source of "real" information, and that some citizens just come to make speeches.

During the public input period of the meeting, a citizen stated, "I would just like to point out that this has been ongoing since at least December of 2023. I think it's as exhausting for you as it is for us. The other question that I have for you is in all of the documentation, whether it's public input or question period, this committee, this board, puts a high degree of importance on being respectful and being courteous. Some of the comments that we heard within the discussion today were not courteous, and they were not respectful of the public who tries our best to come up and express our opinions or ask our questions in a very respectful manner. I would hope that the board please review or consider sometimes the language that you use when speaking about the public." The Chair responded with an apology and a commitment to respect: "I think all of us value the input of yourself and others that come here. We will endeavour to, if we haven't been respectful, to always strive to be better."

The citizen concluded with a suggestion for more collaborative discussions: "We are the users of this system, and maybe could you consider talking to us offline to help facilitate your discussions and directions and what's really important, because I think we sometimes get off in the weeds, and a lot of things have been put in here that maybe could be avoided and sound less offensive." The Chair agreed and emphasized the importance of hearing and considering public input: "It's important that we hear public information, but we all hear it and package it similarly so that we're all processing it and using that information."

This interaction highlighted the ongoing dialogue between the board and the public, emphasizing the need for respectful communication and collaboration in refining the public engagement process.




**Dear WWIND,**

I was having coffee with friends and watching the world go by when I noticed a brand new Ford pickup truck with full police type lights on it and two brand new, very expensive Mountain Bikes, racked by the tailgate. Two people inside were in full police type uniforms with everything but guns! No expense spared! This truck had Bylaw Infractions Officers written on the sides of it in large letters. I was astonished and I asked my friends do they need all this to look for bylaw infractions? I was told that this truck was one of many now in the Cowichan Valley because of the many problems associated with the "safe" injection sites.



I was informed that they are patrolling the homeless encampments around the "safe" injection sites and also keeping an eye open because of all the crime that is happening around our town because of these sites. I said "Then they are not Bylaw Infractions Officers, but rather another layer of policing?" I wonder if it is right that the taxpayers of Cowichan Valley are paying for an auxiliary police force to help try and combat and control a runaway experiment brought on by the Federal Government and a naive Provincial Government driven by ideology that has gone very, very wrong with overdose deaths that have tripled and crime alongside it?

North Cowichan has increased property taxes by 5.28% and the CVRD has increased property taxes by a whopping 16.35% with little being done to repair our aging infrastructure. And looking ahead there are going to be more tax increases.

It is time that our local politicians and taxpayers complain to our federal and provincial governments that we are tired of paying for their foolish decisions.

**Sincerely, John**

**Dear WWIND,**

I have read several articles in mainstream news that the Federal Government and now our BC Provincial Government are making glorious press releases about legislating local governments to create large increases in density in their Land Use By-Laws.

In my opinion, these announcements are total gaslighting for votes with absolutely no thought as to who and how we are going to pay for the infrastructure required to support this increase in density. Things like water, sewer, transportation, medical support, roads, highways and parking.

I sit on a Board of Directors for a community water system. More density means greater water storage or more drilled wells drawing down the aquifer. We strive mightily to keep up with the increasing environmental laws and demands of new drinking water regulations, dam safety regulations and keeping the aging system working while trying to keep the service affordable.

We apply to governments for infrastructure grants only to be turned down forcing us to have to borrow and heap more costs on to the people who worked hard and bought a home in the area.

In the last year or two, the federal government has brought in over a million immigrants that need jobs, homes and amenities. I am not against immigrants but some common sense is needed in meeting the infrastructure requirement needed to support all of these people. Right now the bill is being picked up by the ordinary working person and homeowners.

I urge people to write or email our federal and provincial governments and ask for financial help supplying the local infrastructure required to meet the needs of the utilities to deal with the increased density being forced on them.

This year we have a provincial election and next year a federal election. I beg people to look very closely at your candidates and look for common sense and a desire to be fiscally responsible while dealing with our many problems and stay clear of candidates that are only concerned with flashy news releases with no thought to consequences other than creating votes and large governments who don't answer hard questions with anything but memorized talking points that are nothing but baloney.

**Concerned citizen, J. Money**

**Dear Mp McGregor,**

We are still waiting for a response from you to our email of June 28th.

We cannot understand how you could misunderstand the purpose of the Reclaiming Canada event, and how you could be so adamant about censoring an event that is designed to bring Canadians together to rebuild a healthier Canada. Especially in light of the dismal state that BC has descended to in every area including: economic, medical, housing, addictions and homeless, and sustainable agriculture. This decline in every area and increase in budget and spending in the years in which you have been our MLA. One would hope that you would have not only attended the Reclaiming Canada conference, but supported an event such as this.

We appreciate your response, as you surely had information that is different from what the event actually was, to have had your views. If YOU were misinformed, then feel free to admit this.

Awaiting any response, other than an auto responder that this correspondence has been received. We want ANY acknowledgment that you are present at your job, paid by us and other taxpayers.

For those in CC and BBC who are also on information overload, I have attached Sonya's misinformed letter to the Mayor of Victoria, plus a brief video recap of the event she was trying to censor. As anyone can clearly see, there is a huge discrepancy.

This is what really happened:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YJU7YklaDVw

Most people would call this joy, love, uplifitng, truthful...

**Benoit Chabot Family**

**Dear WWIND,**

Oh, PLEASE help me understand where these councillors come from!

ISLAND MUNICIPALITIES LOOK TO GO ELECTRIC WITH THEIR FLEET, INCLUDING GARBAGE AND DUMP TRUCKS - Times Colonist article by Michael John Lo, July 23/24

Has Esquimalt council not learned from the one EV they now have, a "2012 Nissan Leaf"? For god's sake! The first lesson is that as batteries age and are used, they DETERIORATE. The second lesson is that as they age, they DETERIORATE in performance, meaning they require more charging time while providing less mileage. Thirdly, at a certain point, the battery becomes inefficient and must be replaced. Finally, at that point, a decision must be made whether it's worth the enormous cost to replace the battery or to throw the EV away.

The electric 2012 Nissan Leaf in their possession is the best example of the fallacy of electric vehicles. The life expectancy of a 2012 Nissan Leaf battery is 10 years. The cost of the battery is $16,000, that is, of course, if you can find one. The cost to replace the battery is $5,000. So, in other words, the running costs for a 10-year period = $21,000. (That amount of money can buy a lot of fuel.)

The old Leaf in Esquimalt's possession is either long overdue for a battery replacement or the battery has been replaced and will be due again in 2032. Hey, folks, in other words, in only 8 years. In the year 2032, any manager that decides to do a second battery change on this "vintage" Nissan Leaf should be FIRED. But now for the real problem of how to dispose of it?

Sell it? Good luck, as no one in their right mind will buy a well-used EV in need of a battery replacement. Junk it? What wrecker would want a piece of junk with a toxic battery they must dispose of somehow in order to salvage a few used parts that no one would want. Hey councillors, multiply the foregoing cost and headaches of an EV Nissan Leaf to that of humongous batteries and having to junk large trucks.

Yup, all of this as the "climate change scare ship" HCMS FRAUD, piloted by former Green Party Leader, Captain Andrew Weaver, abandons the sinking ship, now that the truth about climate change is slowly emerging. CO2 from the burning of fossil fuels has NOTHING to do with the changing climate. Good old Mother Nature is in control of that business. Yaaahhh, got it councillors? Probably not.

**John Walker, Cobble Hill**

**Dear WWIND,**

We think it is important that wording for "government-funded", "Ottawa spending", "federal govt. budgets", or "Provincial govt. Spent" should ALL be worded: "TAXPAYERS spent, Taxpayers are to fund, Taxpayers will be giving 5 million dollars to Ukraine, etc."

We need to make people realize the taxpayers, NOT the govt. are paying. Perhaps then taxpayers will stop being so complacent, and start giving the govt. a bit more harassment about putting all our children and grandchildren into perpetual debt, and paying interest that is bogus.

It is maddening to see on every advertisement, poster, or event that support thanks to the provincial Govt., an NGO, Federal Cultural Grants, "this or that" organizations = almost all who are funded by Prov or Fed Govt A good investigative journalist could also find out....to WHOM are "we" paying the millions of dollars in interest for money WE supposedly decide to spend?

**L. Benoit**

**Dear WWIND,**

Not all homeless people are mentally unstable. Why? Outside my apartment

Complex, on the street, a homeless person was right out of character, yelling, screaming, and swearing. We thought he was going to smash the bottom windows of the apartments and we were ready to call the authorities. The rampage went on for about 15 minutes nonstop. My son was taking our dog for a walk, opened the gate, and immediately this homeless person, said, "Oh hi puppy", and wanted to pet our dog. His out-of-character performance was an ACT. Do not let some of these people fool you. They just want attention. Our premier David Eby says otherwise, they all have mental problems. I do not buy his theory.

**Joe Sawchuk**

**Dear WWIND,**

Have folks noticed it is political door-knocking time? Have your paper with your questions ready! You might want to know how things will be changed, rather than the "what we want to see/do"

Would you like to see old growth preserved from the constant encroachment and logging restricted to plantations where the wood can be used locally and industries supported…how can this happen? Would you like to see healthcare workers encouraged with the promise of no more mandates, and the thousands that left their jobs paid compensation to return? Would you like to see big mining companies abide by the rules; restore the land they use not pollute the waters and not give favours to get their way? Would you like to know that children are not going hungry and there is fresh, clean water for all? Would you like to see our local governing bodies with people who are ready to listen respectfully and have balanced and varied views and come to fair decisions? Would you like to see wild salmon thriving, farmers supported, and trains on the island? How will you help the poor souls bent over double by their shopping carts and unable to think of anything other than the next fix? Oh yes, there is a lot we would like to see - but tell me how this can be accomplished Mr/s Politician.

Above all I want peace; peace in the world instead of the warmongering which pays so handsomely to the few; peace in our communities where all are housed and can afford to eat nourishing local food and get help for addiction and anger - peace in our homes where our children are taught how to deal with emotions and learn meditation and parenting skills for when they have children, and how to nurture and enjoy the beautiful natural world and gain peace from a walk by the river or ocean or in the forest.

We have become controlled by fear; fear of a virus, of a fire, of accidents, of racial and religious intolerance, of increased government bureaucracy and surveillance, of a market crash, imposed digital banking, unaffordable rents and a raised mortgage and escalating costs…fear drives us to pay high insurance premiums and stockpile against the grim future; fear that our politicians and our media are not telling the whole truth and only a very few really want to help the people they got elected to serve ..until the party makes them fearful that they had better toe the line or lose a privilege.

There is only one antidote for fear that I have found, but it is personal and everyone has to find their own solution as to how they can live in kindness, gratitude and love. Then we will have peace. There is no other way if we are to make the best use of our precious time on this earth.

**Paula Foot**

As the Westward Independent slowly makes its way into other communities on the island, we will expand to include stories from these communities, as well as locals who 'council watch' as we do. Here is one of those folks from our neighbour to the north.

# PORT SIDE REFLECTIONS

## RESIDENTS MOURN THE DEPARTURE OF THE MARTIN MARS WATER BOMBER




**Port Alberni residents are saddened to see their town's Icon, The Hawaii Mars Water Bomber Aircraft, presently lounging on the waters of Sproat Lake, Vancouver Island, but tentatively scheduled to take its last flight on Sunday, August 11.**

The iconic aircraft has been donated to the BC Aviation Museum in North Saanich, Coulson Aviation declared. The Province of BC has donated $250,000 for the last flight, while the BC Aviation Museum is footing $500,000 towards this endeavour. Total cost for the flight is estimated at $1 million.

Coulson Aviation pilot Peter Killin, who has spent more than 1,000 hours at the controls of the Martin Mars, will pilot the aircraft from Sproat Lake to the East side of Vancouver Island and over his hometown of Powell River and onto Victoria International Airport on the Saanich Inlet.

According to owner Wayne Coulson, "the City of Port Alberni Council declined against keeping the Icon aircraft in their hometown because of significant fear to the risk and danger to the craft." Liability and insuring the craft's safety was their main concern.

At the Coulson's employees, friends and family BBQ, Sunday, August 4th, the line-up of onlookers stepping into the hold of the Philippine Martin Mars Water Bomber, now painted in its original dark blue, presently sitting on the grounds of the Coulson base, was a non-stop procession.

The Philippine Mars Aircraft was sold to the Pima Air and Space Museum in Tucson, Arizona, USA, while the Hawaii Mars Water Bomber Aircraft was donated to the BC Aviation Museum.

The BC Aviation Museum is fundraising to build a new hangar to house the Mars Bomber and other BC firefighting aircrafts on land that was donated to the museum by the Victoria Airport Authority.

The Hawaii Maars Water Bomber Aircraft went up for sale in 2022 for $5 million dollars but is now being donated to the BC Aviation Museum.

Initially constructed in the 1940s, the Martin Mars was the largest aircraft built by the US Government during WWII. Only seven of the aircrafts - with a 200-foot wing span and 120 feet in length - were ever built.

The United States Navy operated the airplanes between California and the Hawaiian Islands for 13 years in support of military operations in the South Pacific.

In 1958, a consortium of timber companies with the subsidiary 'the Forest Industrial Flying Tankers (FIFT)' purchased the surviving fleet of four aircrafts and converted the Mars airframes to water bombers in 1960 and operated as aerial firefighting aircrafts for 47 years in BC.

The Coulson family-owned company acquired the Hawaii Mars Water Bomber and the Philippine Mars Aircraft in 2007 and operated them as firefighting units until 2013 when the Province of BC ended their contract. Together the team of aircrafts collectively dropped 55,000 liters of water as an initial attack strategy to tame a forest fire. That is, each aircraft is capable of dropping 7,200 gallons of water and/or gel at one time.

Over the span of 55 years, these iconic aircrafts served the Province of BC from 1960 to 2015 and dropped over 50 million gallons each which is more water on fires than any other single firefighting aircraft in history anywhere in the world.

The Hawaii Mars was contracted to help fire fighting briefly in 2015 - their last flights at Sproat Lake ending an era of bomber rumbling throughout the Alberni Valley.

Hence, this summer the residents of Port Alberni are again witness to the mighty rumble of the majestic aircraft and if lucky enough win a local Sproat Lake flight on the world's largest water bomber. Some paid flights were offered. Port Alberni residents pay $1,000 while out-of-towners gave a mere $5,000 USD. Some VIP flights were offered. City Councillors and City CAO enjoyed the lake taxi tour and ACRD Sproat Lake Director Penny Cote also got a tour of the lake on the majestic beast.

However, residents are feeling the loss of their town's Icon - one that will be remembered by many long-time residents who would run outdoors to view the majestic aircraft fly by.

Coulson often did a fly-by during many of the city's local events and it was like the world stopped and everyone would look at the sky as if it were Superman, but no, it was the Martin Mars displaying its fine supremacy of gigantic flying machinery. It will be so missed.

Like Port Alberni-born resident, Lisa Hagen, said, "This would have been a great Tourist Attraction - One that would have seen people stay in Port Alberni and enjoy our city instead of driving straight through to the West Coast."

- Charlaine Lacroix, Port Alberni

# ANOTHER 5G TOWER GETS THE GO AHEAD BY ACRD COUNCIL

**Only two Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District (ACRD) directors voted against allowing a Rogers 5G Communications Cell Tower be put up in the Beaver Creek District of the City of Port Alberni, BC, at their July 24, 2024, board meeting.**

Beaufort Director Fred Boyko and Beaver Creek Director Susan Roth, who was extremely upset with the decision to allow the 114-meter microwave tower to be installed in her riding, voted against the installation stating it should be erected further away from residents as many ill-health effects have been known to occur with exposure to low-frequency electromagnetic fields.

But ACRD General Manager of Planning & Development Mike Irg advised the board that Health Canada has approved the installations of 5G Towers and urged the directors to issue a letter of land use concurrence for Rogers Communication. I could not find any Health Canada studies.

Paul Bischoff, a tech journalist and privacy advocate compiled data (1) regarding telecom's political contributions to influence policies that benefit their industry.

The wireless industry has admitted that no appropriate safety studies regarding wireless radiation and human health have been conducted. (2)

Rogers Communication showed few people voiced their discontent with erecting the tower with more residents stating there is poor cell service in their area that needs rectifying.

With a social media post asking for people to voice their opinion against the installation, only one comment was positive to protest the board to not allow the tower. Others voiced approval for the 5G microwave tower or similar comments that show the lack of research people do regarding Electromagnetic Frequencies (EMF).

Good cell phone power is what the majority want. It matters not if microwave frequencies cause cancer, brain damage, hurt the animals and plants, help wildfires and kill bees. Allow better cell phone communication is what is important.

- Charlaine Lacroix, Port Alberni

# HOLLIES GOLF COURSE GETS THE OK TO RE-ESTABLISH AN RV CAMPGROUND



Photo - Charlaine Lacroix

**A Temporary Use Permit (TUP) application was granted to Hollie'e Golf Course at the March 13, 2024, Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District (ACRD) board meeting to establish a 35-site RV campground for temporary accommodations on the Alberni Highway in the District of Cherry Creek, Vancouver Island, BC.**

This site was previously granted a 22-campsite 3-year TUP in May of 2017 but had to close the site in June of 2022 evicting all campers from their dwellings. Some, according to owner Heather Powell, had nowhere to go but to the Walmart parking lot.

The RV campsite will be open for both long-term stays, temporary seasonal accommodations and overnights.

There are 23 conditions Powell needs to fulfill before re-opening her site to the now extended 35-site campground on the two-acre lots - plus "a $10,000 bond so adherence to the conditions be held," according to Planning Dept. Manager Alex Dyer.

The TUP has taken a long time to be dealt with. According to owner Powell, "in 2017 it took six weeks to process. This application took years. All other Vancouver Island Regional Boards take from six to eight weeks to process TUPs."

According to Powell, she did submit a rezoning application and paid her $5,000 application fee, "But they never moved it forward." The staff just recommended she get a second TUP and then apply for rezoning.

The ACRD does not disclose rezoning applications that residents can peruse to see where and how their files are being processed. Other Island Regional Districts do have on their websites the filing of all applications being processed. However according to Director Fred Boyko, "the ACRD is working on producing a site that will allow residents to view their applications." It is still in the process.

It has been a trying situation for Hollies Golf Course owner Heather Powell. During 2020, when she should have applied to renew her TUP, SCRD office was closed, correspondence withered, communication was almost non-existent and most of the world was turned upside down with the pandemic.

No eviction notices were allowed even if people did not pay their rent. People were scared to get close to anyone. The world was in turmoil and a renewal contract was easily missed.

Hence, later in the year, the SCRD staff contacted her to renew and Powell obliged and paid her fees and applied for a renewal. Not a rezoning as the staff had urged her.

The amount of RVs had increased on her allotted RV campground portion of her property but without being able to evict anyone, and with people having no place to park an RV, Powell found it difficult to say you cannot park your unit here. This turned to a difficult situation but Powell worked hard to find other rental spaces for some of the tenants but not fast enough for the SCRD staff and voila, they gave her notice to vacate all tenants.

Sadly, all RV renters had to vacate and the site was cleared. Many were then seen at the Walmart parking lot.

But, Powell now has a new TUP which will allow her 35 RV Units on her property - a welcome addition for the homeless RV dwellers.

It seems that the government system is more interested in bringing down the hammer than working with the taxpaying establishments. You do not follow the rules to the letter - pay the price. But who is paying the price - the people living in their RVs cause they cannot afford a home that get displaced and stressed even during a pandemic?

Where has the compassion gone? Displacing over two dozen residents because one forgot about a renewal during a pandemic? Is there more that meets the eye as I cannot contemplate the reasoning for the evictions. In a homeless crisis, the local government adds to the escalating scale of uncertainty.

It seems, in my opinion, that the government is no longer working with the people who pay their salaries but are working for policies dictated that have no warrant.

It is good to see that Hollies can again open their doors and help the homeless crisis with at least a place to park for a while. - Charlaine Lacroix, Port Alberni

# SUSPICIOUS FIRE AT OLD SOMAS MILL SITE


Photo - Charlaine Lacroix

**Surrounding district volunteer fire departments helped the Port Alberni fire department squash a suspiciously started blaze just after 8am at the old Somass Mill site on Sunday, August 18.**

Cherry Creek, Beaver Creek and Sproat Lake together with the Port Alberni departments took the defensive response as the tall structure was well engulfed upon arrival hence saving the other main larger structure was the prime objective that was undertaken, according to PAFD Deputy Chief Travis Cross.

This is not the first fire set at the old Somass Mill site. A small fire in August of 2023 and another larger in October 2023 which again took all four fire departments to help out. The area is encased by barbed-wired fencing however, it seems, does not deter everyone from entry.

The City of Port Alberni bought the 43-acre site in 2021 for $5.3 million dollars and awarded Matthews West Developments Ltd. of Squamish, the redevelopment of the site contract which is aimed to be a multi-use site - that is residential, park, open space and local small businesses - a just fit for the 'Complete Community,' theme or most referred to as the 15-Minute City concept.

Sadly there seems enough land at this site that would have been a good fit to house the Martin Mars Water Bomber and bring in needed tourist activity and dollars, according to local residents.

The Somass mill site has been closed for several years and the City of Port Alberni have been undergoing deconstruction and are proud to say that most material from the old site has been resold, recycled with the monies returned to the City to help defray costs. The particular building burned today was to be retained and not be demolished according to the developers.

- Charlaine Lacroix, Port Alberni

# ROUNDABOUT PIZZA

**Jackson Mayo and his young family are the epitome of having a dream and working every day to obtain it. In the middle of COVID-19, when many small businesses were struggling, Jackson took a daring leap to open a pizza place in March of 2021.**

Roundabout Pizza was the first business to move into the newly built Beverly Corners complex, and Jackson put his heart and soul into creating his dream family business. He did much of the labor to get the restaurant started, being there daily to help with the contractors he had hired, or just putting his own elbow grease into the vision. Jackson and his wife had a three-year-old at the time of opening, and they knew it would take a lot of time away from the family to create this business. It was, in fact, a full-time job for the first two years, with Jackson rarely taking a day off.

Jackson has fond memories of working in his family's restaurant, RJ Cafe in Lake Cowichan, in his youth, and drew on these memories and experiences when beginning his journey to open Roundabout Pizza. Once the dream and idea began to percolate, Jackson dedicated countless hours to researching pizza-making online and on YouTube, experimenting with various baking techniques and assembly methods to perfect a pie that caters to a wide range of finicky preferences. Jackson learned the importance of little things like maintaining strict rules around dough temperatures to ensure a consistent outcome—a goal he continues to uphold, such as during the heatwave when he came in early, as usual, and added some ice to maintain the consistent temperature needed for a consistent outcome of the dough. As he says, people do not become regular customers until their third visit: the first time, a person comes to taste; the second time to see if the product is consistently the same; and the third time, a customer is born, knowing they will always get what they look forward to from past experiences.

Jackson's family was recently blessed with another child. Though Jackson still comes in early in the morning for at least four hours to test the dough temperatures and make sure everything is ready for the day, he can now rely more on his incredibly faithful staff, many of whom have been there since the beginning. This allows him to enjoy more family time with his wife and young ones.

When speaking with Jackson, I mentioned that I was impressed with his staff retention rate, which can be rare and, in my experience, indicates that the owner must treat their staff very well. Not only have many of them been there since the beginning, but they are all the friendliest young people! I mentioned some of the sweet boys that my son had played hockey with, and Jackson said he liked using the hockey analogy with his employees. He motivates his staff by comparing them to a rep team, stating that while there are some great house teams and some not-so-great ones, a rep team is expected to work above and beyond to achieve their best results. He believes it's important to instill pride in the young staff, reminding them that they have the honor of making someone's dinner and that the care they put into making a pizza will be appreciated by a family or group.

Some staff members are now moving on to college, but their contributions have been vital to the business, and they will always hold a special place in the family. Jackson stated that he is a "glass half full" kind of guy. Though his business does not have the luxury of buying in bulk and therefore feels the pinch of the current recession and the increased cost of food, he is grateful for his growing business and continues to enjoy satisfying the local's love for a delicious pizza pie.

"Our pizzas are made with love from locally sourced fresh Vancouver Island




ingredients including our house-made sausage and donair meat. Our sauces are also made in-house, including our tzatziki, BBQ sauce, sweet sauce and most notably our signature marinara pizza sauce. We carefully crafted our signature house-made crust to arrive at a happy medium-rise, health-conscious, fluffy crust. Our house-made dough is made using minimal oil and traditional ingredients, including extra virgin olive oil and double-sifted flour."
- www.roundaboutpizza.ca

"We Deliver" (250) 746 2299
Tuesday - Thursday 11:00am - 8:00pm
Friday to Saturday 11:00am - 9:00pm
Sunday - Monday 2pm - 8pm

- A. Richards

# STICKS AND STONES....BUT WORDS CAN NEVER HURT ME!

**As a child, I was taught the saying, "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me," as were most children in the Western world.**

It was a lesson in resilience, helping us navigate through life's harsh words and insults. However, it seems several members of the CVRD/North Cowichan council missed this lesson and are now pushing for a new "safe spaces" bylaw, which acts as a form of censorship on public input. According to Chair/director Morrison, words like "harassment" and "condemned" are deemed too harsh to be spoken in council chambers—unless, of course, they are the ones using them.
In my 20 years in the valley, I don't recall any council member being attacked with "sticks or stones" or even bumped into at a grocery store. Have our council members become so fragile that they perceive words as a genuine threat to their safety? We already have ample laws covering actual safety, so it's clear this proposal is about censoring and controlling public discourse.
The reality is, the only words they seem to find "over the line" are those that express legitimate concerns from a public growing increasingly frustrated with directives from council members who blindly follow orders from centralized government and non-elected global entities. These officials ignore local residents' well-being and legitimate concerns about local issues like environmental protection and land use. If the CVRD council actually prioritized their constituents' best interests and spent tax dollars responsibly on local necessities rather than on costly global plans, the dialogue would shift to far more positive interactions.

It's ironic that at a recent council meeting, when a member of the public referred to repeated unannounced property inspections by the "water police" as harassment, Director Morrison scolded them, halting the proceedings to insist, "we don't use that language here—this needs to be a safe and respectful space." Meanwhile, Aaron Stone had a headline in the paper expressing concern about the "harassment" (referring to words) directed at local officials, likely in response to a peaceful protest against the outrageous tax increase that would bring our taxes up to 19.9%.
I can see how terrifying words like "You need to learn how to budget!" and "This is outrageous!" could be to someone who doesn't want to be told how to spend other people's money. Area B director, Sierra Acton, even referred to her constituents as "complainers" during a CVRD public input event—though perhaps she meant it with the utmost respect.
Just more examples of glaring double standards. Rules for thee, but not for me.
This isn't about the emotional "safety" of elected officials; it's about shutting down our right to free speech and excluding us from our own governance. They know they're infringing on our rights, pricing us out of our homes, and destroying the life we've known on the island—just as is happening in other communities across Canada. The CVRD Directors and local mayors know we're aware of this, but they'd rather not hear our dissent as they proceed with their global mandates. All these elected members need to put on their big boy/girl/they/them pants and start listening to us, not taking measures to silence us. If they're triggered by a "word," they should remember what every child used to know: "Sticks and stones—but words will never hurt me."
In a free speech society, you must be prepared to occasionally hear things you find unpleasant. When rulemakers decide to mute dissenting voices, that's where true dictatorship begins. This is unacceptable behavior from those elected to represent us.
Kate - CVRD