

**Association for the Protection of Rural Metchosin
JANUARY 2006 NEWSLETTER**

HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL OUR MEMBERS!

NEW COUNCIL

Possibly the biggest excitement in Metchosin recently was the hotly contested municipal election in November with 13 candidates (including all 4 incumbents) vying for a council position and 2 candidates for mayor.

We have every expectation that our new Mayor, John Ranns and new Councillors, Jo Mitchell and John Webb as well as two returning Councillors, Bob Gramigna and Kyara Kahakauwila will conduct council affairs in an informed, constructive and participatory fashion.

For details on Committee appointments etc. check the District of Metchosin website (www.district.metchosin.bc.ca) or check the January issue of the Muse.

Summary of Mayor Ranns' Inaugural Address

Mayor Ranns in his inaugural address affirmed his "rural" mandate and specifically referenced common interests with other "green belt" districts around Victoria and support for a green/blue spaces strategy.

The OCP review is to be put on hold until solutions can be found to the contentious issues of secondary suites in accessory buildings, Bylaw No. 444 (Centre Mt.), the village centre and Metchosin School that will be fully acceptable to the public. He mentioned policing and his intention to address efficiencies to avoid the need for revenue (i.e. tax) increases, and he has proposed a new select committee on agriculture. Lastly, Mayor Ranns appealed for rational debate on issues and thinking outside of the urban "box". He asked that the community understand that ideas are not "policy" until they have been implemented and that ideas should be advanced and considered in this context. The full text of Mayor Ranns speech can be found in the January Muse.

Appreciation

The APRM is grateful to Keith Baker for the loan of his sound equipment and to Joel Ussery for his even-handed moderating at our all candidates meeting that was held on October 28th. Further thanks to all the members and attendees that participated in making this important meeting such a huge success.

APRM HOUSEKEEPING ISSUES

Election of New President: John Webb was required to resign when he was elected to Council. Under our constitution, the Executive has to find a substitute and then seek member support at the next General Meeting (Jan. 31 – see meeting schedule below). The Executive felt that Derek Wulff would bring passion, commitment and enthusiasm to this post, and he has agreed to accept this position, subject to members' approval.

Membership Co-ordination: Past president Frank Mitchell has been co-opted (with his agreement) to organise and solicit memberships.

Membership renewals

IF this box has a check mark, this means our records show you have not renewed for the year 1 July 2005 – 30 June 2006. Please use the attached application form!

(If you have already renewed, please feel free to encourage a rural minded friend to join!!!!)

MONTHLY MEETING SCHEDULE

(subject to change, to be notified in the Muse and by email)

UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED, MEETINGS ARE HELD ON THE THIRD WEDNESDAY OF THE MONTH AT 7 PM AT THE METCHOSIN COMMUNITY HOUSE, 4430 HAPPY VALLEY ROAD.

The first part of each of these meetings and the refreshments are open to the public. Please feel free to bring interested friends. After refreshments and the raffle, there is a business meeting to review issues of concern to members,. Meetings are also announced in the Muse and on our website. (www.aprm.ca)

TUESDAY JANUARY 31st – 7:30 PM (note date and time)

Public Meeting and General Meeting

Public Meeting: “Keeping Rural in the Urban Periphery”, Brandon Hughes member of the Canadian Rural Partnership Team see website: rural.gc.ca/ruralteams.phtml

General Meeting: to review (a) Presidential appointment (see above) and (b) current issues, including members’ concerns.

WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 15th

Public Meeting: “ Historical Aspects of First Nations in Metchosin”, Pakki Chipps (Becher Bay First Nation member, ethnobotanist and educator) and Darcy Matthews (professional archaeologist with Millennia Research and graduate student at UVic whose current research focuses on burial cairns in the South Island).

WEDNESDAY MARCH 15th

Public Meeting: “Metchosin’s Green Spaces Strategy.” Andy MacKinnon (Metchosin resident, author of *Plants of Coastal BC* and global authority on Coastal Douglas-fir forests) and Susan Blundell, biologist with ENKON on “Smart Development Strategies.”

WEDNESDAY APRIL 19th

Public Meeting: Topic, Invasive Species, speakers to be arranged

WEDNESDAY MAY 17th

Public Meeting: To be arranged

WEDNESDAY JUNE 21st

Public Meeting: topic to be decided

Annual General Meeting (including election of new Executive)

Please plan to attend the above meetings – and bring others who may be interested in the topics.

CURRENT ISSUES

OCP Review:

Members will recall that the previous Council proposed a “piecemeal” or “modular” OCP review with emphasis on secondary housing and industrial parks. At that time, APRM spearheaded a public appeal for an overall OCP review. The major reasons we advanced a complete review were the long delay since the last review (10 years), the need to see if any major changes were required to reflect changing circumstances, and above all, to provide a forum for newcomers to the community to acquaint themselves with the OCP, make their voices heard, and become fully incorporated into the community (as many as

one half of Metchosin residents are newcomers since the last OCP review in 1993-1995). That objective was realised!! Several contentious issues were recognised in this process and the new Council has decided to postpone the overall OCP review pending further public review and clarification of specific major issues, particularly: secondary suites in accessory buildings, commercial and industrial development and the village centre.

- 1 **Green/blue spaces strategy** The OCP review process underlined the importance that Metchosin residents attach to the natural environment and maintaining a green and rural landscape in the face of development pressures, while meeting demands of the region for recreation, preservation of rare species, working rural landscapes, etc. Council has now initiated a green spaces strategy planning process, that will operate as a sub-committee under the Metchosin Environmental Advisory Select Committee (MEASC).
- 2 **Trails Planning**: During the last few years, several instances emerged where the existing parks and trails plan did not appear to offer adequate guidance to development decisions. This issue was also noted during the OCP review and it is hoped that Council will clarify requirements and decision making.
- 3 **Village Centre**: Residents expressed many ideas for a revitalised village centre during the OCP review. The mayor has directed that a Council/school district liaison be implemented to help find appropriate uses for Metchosin Elementary School (once it is vacated by Happy Valley School students), aligned with our rural focus and that will provide opportunities for our youth.
- 4 **Secondary Housing**: This issue – especially whether to allow secondary suites detached from the principal residence -- has been under active discussion for the last 6 years. Following several member meetings and reviews by the Resource Group, APRM submitted a discussion paper to Council in April 2004 (the paper can be downloaded by going to “issues” on aprm.ca). APRM recommended against detached secondary residences, but recommended more flexibility in size of secondary units. During the OCP review process, a substantial minority of residents argued for detached secondary residences, however, and it is far too early to declare the issue dead. Stay tuned.
- 5 **Model CRD Pesticide Bylaw**: CRD has issued a draft Pesticide Bylaw for consideration by regional Municipalities. The Bylaw would prohibit non-essential use of chemical pesticides on private land and on land owned by the municipality, but would allow appropriate use of pesticides in agriculture, forestry, controlling pests that transmit human diseases and to address pests that threaten the integrity of sensitive ecosystems. Metchosin passed a Public Works Policy Regarding the Elimination of Pesticides and Herbicides for Cosmetic Purposes on Municipal Grounds in February of 2001 (the objective of the policy is to eliminate pesticide use on municipal grounds and to initiate public education/awareness on this issue). Council has asked MEASC for consultation on this issue. Further information is available at the CRD website: http://www.crd.bc.ca/rte/pest/info_resources.htm
- 6 **CREST (Capital Region Emergency Radio Network)**: Inadequate coverage and inequitable cost to Metchosin are issues that council are grappling with. However Metchosin does have an important veto that it can exercise.
- 7 **Community Works Funding**: The district has signed onto an agreement that enables Metchosin to receive a portion of federal gas tax. Eligible projects include (in part): public transit (implement innovative technologies that support environmental sustainability, rehabilitation of roads and bridges that enhance sustainability outcomes, paths and trails); water and wastewater (developing or upgrading drinking water systems to improve water quality and reduce water use. increase energy efficiency).

and secure water supply in the face of drought, developing or upgrading wastewater and storm water systems to improve water quality and improve aquatic habitat, implement innovative technologies that support environmental sustainability, and investments in the enhancement and/or protection of community green space such as streams and natural corridors including habitat protections systems to improve water quality and improve aquatic habitat) and; capacity building (to increase local government capacity to undertake integrated sustainability planning in many areas). Please contribute your ideas to APRM (and council) on priority areas in which to concentrate these funds.

- 8 **Amalgamation of East Sooke and Related Issues:** In his recent inaugural address, Mayor Ranns stressed the need for all rural residents in the CRD to combine their voices to ensure that the “rural option” – and regional greenbelt – survives the urban development onslaught. Mayor Ranns and Council emphasised that any changes would need to be made with full consultation with the communities involved and that no changes would be made without approval via a referendum. In the meantime, they will be discussing possible options with the Minister for Community Affairs.

Some History:

- With growing development pressures after Metchosin’s incorporation, many “rural” E. Sooke residents felt that joining Metchosin might be a way to remain rural. The Silver Spray development proposals and establishment of Sooke Municipality in the 1990’s accelerated this interest and concern.
- The 1999-2000 Metchosin-East Sooke Restructure Study examined the possibility, but Metchosin did not pursue amalgamation for several reasons, including, most notably:
 - a) higher taxes of approximately \$53 per household per year (to accommodate the additional costs of staff, road maintenance etc.)
 - b) concern that costs were underestimated (especially the upgrading and maintenance of the East Sooke Road network)
 - c) incompatibility of Metchosin and E. Sooke land use regulations (E. Sooke allows 4 strata residences on a 10 acre lot)
 - d) concern about whether a majority of E. Sooke residents were pro “rural” or pro “development”
 - e) manageability of a much larger area (almost all Metchosin residences are within 12 minutes of the Fire Hall; it takes 20-25 minutes to drive from Metchosin to E. Sooke Firehall)
 - f) governance issues (relationship among the Fire Halls including possible need to appoint a full-time Fire Chief, possible need for a ward system for electing Councillors)

Subsequently:

- Sooke Municipality annexed the Silver Spray property.
- February 2005; 78% of East Sooke voters rejected amalgamation with Sooke Current proposals for Sooke to annex several large East Sooke landholdings west of Roche Cove (and one east), including areas contiguous with Metchosin. The affected landowners seek the more amenable Sooke approach to development (compared with CRD, which seeks to maintain the existing East Sooke Land Use Plan). Annexation still depends upon resolution of some details (e.g. fire protection, responsibility for Roche Cove bridge) and approval by the Minister of Community Services but is widely expected to be approved by the Minister.
- A petition from over 400 E. Sooke residents requesting amalgamation with Metchosin has recently been received by Metchosin council
- Other small communities who are part of the Juan de Fuca Electoral Area have been frightened by the manner in which Sooke was able to pick off some significant pieces of East Sooke despite the rejection of annexation by that community. These

communities, East Sooke, Shirley, Otter Point and the Malahat now see amalgamation with Metchosin as a way (perhaps the only way) to defend their rural values and character.

RESOURCE GROUP

If you are interested in researching important issues affecting Metchosin, please consider joining the APRM Resource Group. Call Brad Doney, Resource Group Chair, at 474-8186 or email braddoney@shaw.ca.

PAST AND ONGOING ISSUES

3963 Metchosin Road: The proposal to rezone an existing FOUR acre AG/RU split zoned lot to AG (10 acre minimum) into TWO 2-acre lots, was, following strong public input, including a major brief by APRM, finally rejected by the last Council just before the November election.

5076 William Head Road: Trail Connection to the Goose: Landowner, environmental and safety concerns overruled a trail dedication. An alternate, safer trail site linking William Head Rd to the Goose through Boblaw Place was indicated.

Sections 120 and 121, Mt. Ash Viewpoint and Trails (Metchosin Properties): Trails have been dedicated which allow access to the Mt. Ash viewpoint and other areas.

Soil Disposal and Removal: Residents have often complained (sometimes for years) about noise, nuisance, traffic and environmental damage associated with some soil removal/disposal cases. Sometimes, these activities have commenced without permits; in others, amounts of soil or time periods allowed have exceeded reasonable levels in terms of nuisance and environmental impact. In March, 2005, APRM suggested ways to clarify and strengthen bylaw criteria and procedures in March. (Details can be found at aprm.ca.)

Sections 25 (Metchosin Park), 28 and 95 : There has been no further word on provincial plans for these properties since Land and Water BC was disbanded after the last provincial election. They may become one focus for attention under the Green Spaces Strategy (see above).

Bylaw 444 (Centre Mountain): There was some discussion of this project during the election. Some candidates, subsequently elected, stated a need to review this bylaw. It remains to be seen whether the developer will submit a proposal or seek further changes in the regulatory framework.

Please contact Vice President Gaert Linnaea for further details at 381-5752 or linnaea1@telus.net