

Association for the Protection of Rural Metchosin
Spring 2008 Newsletter and Notice of Annual General Meeting

Dear Fellow APRMer

Upcoming Meetings

7:00 pm Wednesday, May 21: Regular Members' Meeting. Metchosin PreSchool (beside Old St-Mary's—note the change of venue due to extension work on the Community House). Metchosin resident and experienced community planner Nancy Cooley will lead another discussion on **community engagement**. At our April meeting, Nancy made the point that people buy into visions which they have created. At the level of the community, it is up to Council, through OCP and other processes, to provide the forum for achieving consensus. It became clear during the discussion that APRM's role is different. The APRM's rural vision is set out in the Constitution. The Association seeks means to realise that vision through identifying measures to achieve it, educating the public, and lobbying different levels of government. APRM has made many recommendations, including procedural ones, to Council on establishing participatory public processes to define the community vision. There is a feeling of frustration at the lack of results, however. Our May meeting will provide an opportunity to explore further what we can do to secure improvements in our performance, including in the context of current issues (see below).

7:00 pm Wednesday, June 18: ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING. Metchosin Preschool. Our speaker will be Deborah Curran, who is a Founding member of **Smartgrowth BC**. She will talk on "**Can You Be Rural and Smart?**" Deborah is a lawyer with extensive experience of municipal and environmental law who works primarily with the Environmental Law Centre at UVic.

The AGM will elect a new executive, review minutes of previous meetings, hear the Treasurer's report, approve the draft budget for the next year, and start planning for the summer picnic/social/gathering.

Election of Executive: The current incumbents* are willing to stand, *if necessary*. But other nominees will be most welcome, either to be nominated in advance, or at the meeting. If you are interested in serving or would like to know more details, please contact our Returning Officer, Lorne Rosenblood (*tel: 478-2025 or lrosenbl@uvic.ca*).

*Incumbents are: President (Derek Wulff), Vice President (Jim MacPherson), Secretary (Ken Farquharson), Treasurer (Moralea Milne), Chair of Resource Group (Frank Mitchell) and Member at Large (Sally Garcelon).

Issues Updates:

Secondary suites: Council intends to hold a Public Hearing on Bylaw 550 on June 3. This bylaw would allow larger secondary suites than at present (the lesser of 90 sq. m. (vs 60

sq. m at present) , and 40% of livable dwelling space (vs the current 35%). Past APRM meetings have supported larger suites. Members have never agreed on how much larger, many feeling that 90 sq m were excessive. (Part of the problem is lack of consensus on the principal purposes of suites, such as accommodating inlaws, grandparents or childrens' families, care givers, rental accommodations for families with children, mortgage helpers for owners, etc.).

APRM has also recommended (without results) that any change in suite rules should include registration for purposes of safety, health, assessment and to recover some costs of enforcing the bylaw. Council has not accepted these views.

Council has indicated that it wishes to hear public views on **other suite issues** (e.g. enforcement, detached suites) independently of Bylaw 550 (after the Hearing and after Council's decision on Bylaw 550).

Village Centre: At the request of Council committee, staff prepared a revised vision for the village centre which would extend its area to include both sides of Metchosin road (almost to Wootton Road) and reduce the area on both sides of Happy Valley Road West of the Community House. Council has presented these ideas to the landowners who would be affected. Presumably, plans will then be submitted to the public. The executive feel that this process is exactly backwards: far better to start with open public discussions on vision for the Village Centre, then go to planning. The May meeting will provide an opportunity for the membership to state a view on this issue before formal contact to council.

Agricultural Advisory Committee: APRM has congratulated Council on establishing this committee, which will be concerned with finding ways to promote agriculture in the District.

Soil Deposit and Renewal: APRM's recommendations on on this bylaw over many years have not (yet?) had the positive results we would hope for.

OCP Review: No action on the overall review, only piecemeal changes noted above.

Other Development Issues: The various past proposals for rezoning Centre Mountain and the Sooke Road Industrial Park seem still to be in abeyance. Let us hope that this is permanent, and not temporary pending the November election.

If you have any queries, please free to call me at 478-2677 or email at derekwulff@shaw.ca.

Yours sincerely,

Derek Wulff
President