

Association for the Protection of Rural Metchosin,
#1-4401 William Head Road, RR#1,
Victoria, BC, V9C 3Y6
29 July 2010

Mayor Ranns and Council,
District of Metchosin,
4450 Happy Valley Road,
Victoria, BC, V9C 3Z3

Dear Mayor Ranns and Council,

Policy on Complaints

I am writing to request that at its August 9 meeting Council retain the existing policy on complaints, for two main reasons

1) The change is not needed to reduce frivolous complaints, which are rare, and can be rapidly identified and discounted by enforcement staff. The cost of dealing with the occasional “frivolous” complaint is far less than the danger to the community’s ambience and environment of not dealing with bylaw infractions.

2) The restrictions to "health and safety" and "harm to the environment" are not only loose, but also unduly restrictive. Presumably, all bylaws should be enforced (otherwise, why have them?). But in addition, many complaints may relate to the broader community interest, such as destruction of municipal property, visual impairment, etc. These issues affect more than an “adjacent neighbour”, or “one directly impacted” as proposed in the draft amendment.

We also urge council to strengthen its bylaw enforcement. Lax enforcement leads to rampant abuse, and a mockery of the bylaws – and of the community values which led to the bylaws in the first place. Two initial measures would help:

1) Make more use of CRD bylaw enforcement – and allow CRD officers to pursue the matter to a conclusion.

2) Increase the budget for enforcement and legal costs, and use it. Compliance would soon improve, and enforcement costs fall.

Yours sincerely,

Ken Farquharson
President