

Protecting Metchosin's Rural Ambience

Message from the Association for the Protection of Rural Metchosin

On August 9 Council will consider changing its policy on bylaw enforcement.

Current policy (P-100, dated Feb 5, 1996) states that given lack of resources (for pro-active inspections), *"it is the policy of the District to rely on citizen complaints."*

Section 3(a) of the current policy states, *"Upon receipt of a complaint, the District will initiate an investigation."*

The proposed revision would read, *"the District will initiate an investigation if one or more of the following applies:*

- a health and safety concern exists;*
- the alleged offence involves harm to the environment,*
- the complaint is from an adjacent neighbour or one directly impacted by the alleged offence."*

Why the proposed change? Statements by the Mayor and some councillors at their July 12th meeting suggested they wished to reduce "frivolous" complaints. No evidence was offered of frivolous complaints. Official Council reports record remarkably few complaints.

Does it Matter? Yes! Adoption of the new policy would reduce the number of complaints, directly by reducing potential complainants, and indirectly, by impairing confidentiality (alleged offenders would need only identify which adjacent neighbour complained). The end results?

- less bylaw enforcement (and more illegal soil deposit/removal, more conversions of accessory buildings to second houses, more tree cutting, etc.)
- in brief, reduced rural ambience and environmental integrity.

What to DO? In our (APRM) view, Council should retain the present policy. How do you feel? Please let our Mayor especially and Councillors know what you think, preferably in person, but at least in writing **before the August 9 meeting.**

Email for Council as a whole: mayorandcouncil@metchosin.ca

Mayor John Ranns: 478-3446, email: jranns@shaw.ca