

OTTER POINT & SHIRLEY RESIDENTS & RATEPAYERS ASSOCIATION (OPSRRA) INFORMATION UPDATE MARCH 2004

OPSRRA is a representative community organization with an elected Board of Directors and strives to present the points-of-view of the residents of the rural communities of Shirley and Otter Point to local government. It was founded in 1992 and has a membership of about 350.

Lifetime memberships are \$5.00 and available from OPSRRA directors—see our web site (www.opsrra.com) for further information.

Are you an OPSRRA member? Do you want to receive the OPSRRA newsletter and notice of meetings directly to your e-mail address? OPSRRA is now e-mailing this newsletter to over 60 of our members.

Contact Arnie Campbell at: d.acampbell@shaw.ca if you want to receive this service.

FREE ADVERTISING FOR LOCAL BUSINESSES ON OPSRRA'S WEB SITE

Do you operate a small business? Are you an OPSRRA member? OPSRRA is offering a free business listing service for members on its web site: www.opsrra.com. We will list non-members for a suitable donation!

The purpose of this service is to provide an opportunity for businesses in Jordan River, Shirley and Otter Point to advertise their goods and services to their local community. We anticipate having listings for accommodation, farm produce, art, furniture, fishing charters, eco tours, firewood, knitting, soaps, landscaping, bookkeeping, sewing and more. More information, businesses already listed and a registration form are available on OPSRRA's web site under Business Listings.

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1. OPSRRA Annual General Meeting

The AGM was held on February 17th and the incumbent executive and directors were re-elected by acclamation.

The executive for this year are:

Ken Pungente—President, Arnie Campbell—Vice-President, Wendy Miller—Secretary / Treasurer.

The directors are:

Frances Stocks, Byron Tweedy, Virginia Boyd, Wendy Morton and Mitch Moneo.

The Treasurer reported that we have \$333.87 in the bank, with expenses of \$159.54 and revenues of \$225.00 in the past year.

Minutes of the AGM meeting will be available on the OPSRRA web site later in March.

2. OPSRRA or OPRRA?

A significant item on the OPSRRA AGM agenda was a motion to examine the future of the Association as a representative ratepayers association for both Shirley and Otter Point. This issue came about as a result of the recent formation of the Shirley Education and Action Committee (SEAS) - thereby creating what could become a second ratepayers association in Shirley.

Maureen Nelson, President of SEAS, was invited to address the AGM and she outlined her association's concerns about the sudden and significant growth in land use issues in Shirley. In a subsequent letter to OPSRRA, following her presentation, Maureen Nelson indicated that the membership of SEAS does not see a conflict with residents of Shirley belonging to both organizations and that SEAS looks forward to working with OPSRRA on issues of mutual concern.

Meanwhile, OPSRRA has created a committee to look into the matter and OPSRRA's directors will make a recommendation to the membership as to whether OPSRRA should continue to operate as a ratepayers association in both Otter Point and Shirley (OPSRRA) or confine itself to Otter Point (OPRRA). The OPSRRA committee consists of director Virginia Boyd and director Frances Stocks: they intend to contact OPSRRA members that are resident in Shirley to determine their wishes. In the meantime OPSRRA directors will liaise with SEAS to ensure that information is being shared between the two associations.

3. SHIRLEY COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION AGM

Date: Wednesday, March 17th 2004

Time: 7:30 p.m.

Place: Shirley Community Hall

Contact Chuck Minten – SCA president at 646-2077 for further information

4. NEW ADDITIONS COMING TO THE OPSRRA WEB SITE

OPSRRA's web site now receives over 100 visits a month. Here are some new additions coming to the web site this month:

Foreshore Access

“The Juan de Fuca Electoral Area is endowed with an extensive and diverse coastline that attracts residents and visitors to the area where the land meets the sea which is known as the foreshore” This is the opening line in the introduction to a 2003 report commissioned by the JDF Economic Development Commission, that looks at 52 public foreshore sites from East Sooke, Otter Point, Shirley and Jordan River. OPSRRA has been given permission to place the full report on its web site. Are you planning to explore the local coastline? This report includes detailed information on each site including directions for getting there, terrain, habitat and pictures.

Otter Point/Shirley Local Area Plan

Much will be heard and said about the new Official Community Plans that are now under development for Shirley and Otter Point. In the meantime the old Local Area Plan (developed in 1994) remains as the guide to local land use planning. The current LAP will soon be available for viewing on OPSRRA's web site (www.opsrra.com) and should be a useful reference guide for comparison purposes, as drafts of the new plans are presented for review.

Community Bulletin Board

OPSRRA has been posting notices of meetings in its monthly newsletter and will shortly have the ability to post meeting notices on our web site too. If your organization wants to have access to this free community service, contact Arnie Campbell at d.acampbell@shaw.ca.

5. OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN UPDATE

The Shirley OCP committee meetings have begun. Committee members are: Dominique Bernardet, Maureen Nelson, Max Kuo, Dick Kirby, Rob Vanveen, Gerhard Wild and Cleo Gardiner. The committee has not selected its chair yet.

The Otter Point OCP committee is still being put together. It will hopefully have its initial meeting in April.

The present Otter Point /Shirley Local Area Plan (LAP) will be replaced by these two new Official Community Plans by August 2005. The present LAP will be available on the OPSRRA website (www.opsrra.com) later this month.

6. BOUNDARY RESTUCTURE (AMALGAMATION) UPDATE

The Boundary Restructure committee met on February 10th to consider three options:

1. End the committee.
2. Continue to meet while awaiting a decision from the province on further assistance, for the District of Sooke, with policing and highways costs as well as approval for the District to levy higher taxation multiples on managed forestlands.
3. Set a deadline for a reply from the province and, in the meantime, try to have a meeting with the provincial minister of Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services.

The committee voted for option #3. A meeting with Minister Coell is set for March 2nd. Following that meeting the committee will meet to decide whether to continue or not.

7. LAND USE COMMITTEE "A"

The next meeting of the Juan de Fuca Electoral Area Land Use Committee (LUC "A") for this area will be:

Date: Wednesday, March 17th 2004
Time: 7:00 p.m.
Place: Sooke Council Chambers
2225 Otter Point Road

The following item is anticipated to be on the agenda:

Request from Chew Excavating to remove covenants on their property in Shirley.

Contact the CRD Planning Services office (642-1620) to confirm the agenda and to receive a briefing package.

On-going problems with the make-up of Land Use Committee "A" has resulted in the following recommendation to the CRD Board of Directors by Erik Lund, JDF regional director and chair of LUC "A":

1. That the Board agrees to establish a Land Use Committee made-up from the Chairs of the Advisory Planning Commissions (APC's) of the Electoral Area. This committee will also be comprised of the Municipalities who have made an agreement with the Regional District.
2. That the Board agree to let the following vote on Juan de Fuca Land Use matters at the Board:
 - a) The entire Board. Or
 - b) The municipalities who abut the Electoral Area who have made an agreement with the CRD to participate. Or
 - c) LUC "A" and LUC "B" as stipulated in Order-In-Council Number 1048.

The full text of the draft recommendations to the CRD Board was given-out at recent Town Hall meetings hosted by the regional director and would be available from his office.

8. LOT AVERAGING CORRESPONDENCE

There are presently four land use applications before LUC "A" that involve the issue of Lot Averaging. These applications are: Sheringham Estates, Chew Excavating and Anderson Logging (from Shirley) and De Mamiel Estates (from Otter Point). Because Otter Point and Shirley are unincorporated, the final decision to allow Lot Averaging falls to the province under the Local Government Act. A provincial Approving Officer from the Nanaimo office of the Ministry of Highways reviews the application and makes the final decision.

OPSRRA wrote to the provincial minister responsible for the provincial legislation expressing our concern.

OPSRRA
8448 West Coast Rd.
Sooke, BC V0S 1N0

19 November 2003

The Honorable George Abbott
Ministry of Community, Aboriginal And Women's Services
Rm. 103, Parliament Buildings
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4

Dear Minister Abbott:

I am writing on behalf of the Otter Point and Shirley Residents And Ratepayers Association to express our organizations objection to the province allowing Lot Averaging in the Juan de Fuca Electoral Area. Enclosed with this letter is a recent information handout on OPSRRA; you can also visit our web site (www.opsrra.com) for additional information about the association.

At our October 21st membership meeting a motion was passed that asked OPSRRA to lobby the provincial government to change the provincial statute for the following reasons:

1. Lot Averaging goes against our Otter Point & Shirley Local Area Plan (CRD Bylaw 2366). See appropriate section enclosed.
2. It goes against the democratic principle of local planning and control over land use.
3. It circumvents public participation by not requiring that public hearings be held when Lot Averaging is being considered.

4. Creates problems for local government in later years, when covenants placed upon properties at the time of approving Lot Averaging, are subsequently asked to be removed to allow for further development.

I would appreciate your comments on this matter and ask to be kept informed of any plans to have this statute changed.

Regards,

Ken Pungente – President OPSRRA

Copy: Brian Kerr MLA
Erik Lund—JDF Regional Director
Bill Jordan—Executive Director CRD
Shirley Action Committee

And OPSRRA received the following reply.

Ken Pungente President
Otter Point and Shirley Residents and Ratepayers Association
8448 West Coast Road
Sooke, BC V0S 1N0

Dear Mr. Pungente:

Thank you for your letter of November 19, 2003, on behalf of the Otter Point and Shirley Residents and Ratepayers Association (OPSRRA), to my colleague, the Honourable George Abbott, former Minister of Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services, regarding lot averaging and requesting the provincial government to change provincial legislation pertaining to lot averaging to address the Association's concerns. Please accept my apology for the delay in responding.

I appreciate hearing of the Association's interests in lot averaging and in having the Local Government Act changed. The interests of your Association will serve to inform the Ministry in any future deliberations regarding legislative change.

Thank you again for advising me of the interests of the OPSRRA in lot averaging.

Yours truly,

Murray Coell, Minister

pc: Brian Kerr MLA Malahat-Juan de Fuca
Bill Jordan, Executive Director, Capital Regional District
Erik Lund, Director, Capital Regional District

9. CONFUSED ABOUT YOUR TAX ASSESSMENT AND 2004 TAXES?

Did your tax assessment go up by 20%—more or less? Join the club. Depending upon where you live in Otter Point or Shirley you probably saw your property assessment increase by at least 20 % and perhaps as much as 30%.

Does that mean that your taxes bill will increase by the same amount? Unlikely. We pay our taxes to the province, but it is also the tax collector on behalf of itself and two other levels of government and the school district that share the proceeds of your tax assessment. The School Tax, at almost 40% of your total tax bill, is the single largest item. This is offset, somewhat, by the provincial Homeowners Grant. The Local Services Tax (about 48%) is actually two taxes under one heading: included in this category are the Capital Region wide taxes for hospitals, transit, B.C Assessment Authority and many, many others, that everyone in the CRD pays for, and the Specific Taxes for the Juan de Fuca Electoral Area—these taxes are truly our own and are estimated to increase by as much as 15% this year. The final category is Provincial Tax; it is about 12% and goes to the province to cover a portion of our policing and highway maintenance costs.

Because your property assessment went up does not necessarily mean that your taxes will also go up—although they probably will! Once the School District #62, the Province, the CRD and the Regional Director finalize their budgets, they then look at how much tax money needs to be raised. This amount is then divided by the total tax assessment from the Electoral Area. The number that they come-up with is called the Mill Rate and this is what finally determines your property taxes owed. Suppose that the total budget for all levels of government in the JDF Electoral Area is \$1,000,000 and the total assessed value of all property in the Electoral area is \$10,000,000 then in order to raise 1 million dollars in tax revenue they would need to tax at 10% of the \$10,000,000 to raise \$1,000,000. If they only needed \$900,000 then they would set the Mill Rate at 9%. In an ideal world a 20% increase in total property values, using this example, would result in the Mill Rate going down as there would now be more property value (\$12,000,00) to raise the \$1,000,000 in needed taxes. Wait for the Mill Rate to be announced in April and decide for yourself whether the increase in your property assessment is being followed by a decrease in the Mill Rate. Good Luck!

This newsletter is published monthly on the www.opsrra.com web page by OPSRRA—the Otter Point and Shirley Residents and Ratepayers Association. Comments or requests to have information included in the newsletter can be directed to: Arnie Campbell, Vice President. Phone: (250) 642-3113 or e-mail d.acampbell@shaw.ca
