

Bowen gets \$1.46 million

For sewage treatment facility expansion

by Tim Rhodes

On September 24th, Premier Gordon Campbell and Jay Hill, Member of Parliament for Prince George – Peace River and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, announced 174 new infrastructure projects valued at over \$719 million to help communities throughout British Columbia meet their pressing infrastructure needs, help stimulate the economy, create jobs, and support continued economic growth.

Bowen Island Municipality received \$1,460,148 for the Snug Cove Sewage Treatment Plant Expansion. Although typically the local share of these loans is 1/3, Bowen Island's share of the cost is only 20% or \$292,030, an amount Councillor Cro Lucas described as realistic for the municipality to handle. The provincial and federal governments will each contribute 40% or \$584,059.

Councillor Lucas and Councillor David Wrinch co-chaired the Infrastructure Committee, struck on February 23rd this year, specifically to address the opportunities provided by the federal government's Infrastructure Stimulus Fund (IFS) and the Communities Component of the Building Canada Fund and, with the assistance of municipal staff and volunteers, prepare grant applications. This grant is the second of two grants submitted; the first grant for sewer collection expansion was unsuccessful. Wrinch gives Lucas "ninety percent of the credit" for the work involved in the application. "Cro and I volunteered to get some shovel-in-the-ground projects together suitable for the grant applications, but Cro really took the reins. Dai Roberts assisted us in the first application—we only had two weeks notice—and Chris Buchanan at the municipality: his assistance with information gathering and the detail involved in completing both applications was invaluable, as was Wil Hilsen's input." Bowen's MP, John Weston also played a role, providing advice to Council and championing the grant as it moved through the system in Ottawa—a level of service Mayor Turner described as astonishing. Weston credits his team: "It's not about me but about the team. The staff and volunteers here and in Ottawa are fully committed to serving the community."

In August of 2008, the municipality was approved for a \$400,000 Towns for Tomorrow grant to cover 80% of the cost (Bowen's share would be \$100,000) of Snug Cove Sewage Plant – Environmental Enhancements to "modify and expand the existing sewage treatment plant to include: effluent quality enhancements, effluent reuse for fisheries enhancement, sludge processing on the island and capacity expansion to provide advanced secondary treatment for commercial and residential sewage." Because the Towns for Tomorrow grant appeared to overlap somewhat with the Snug Cove Sewage Treatment

MP John Weston is becoming known as "the pesky MP" which perhaps explains why his electoral district, West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea-to-Sky Country, has received about 10% of all the federal grants given to BC in this last round of federal Economic Action Plan grants.

Plant Expansion grant, it complicated the process. Lucas said the Towns for Tomorrow grant has been "parked" until the Spring to allow the Building Canada Fund grant to proceed—a "surprise move." He credits CAO Hendrik Slegtenhorst, who recently took over negotiations, with being a "very positive influence" on the process. Councillor Peter Frinton hopes that ultimately something can be worked out to incorporate the Towns for Tomorrow grant into the expansion project saying, "It's a shame to give money away"; however Wrinch is concerned that the maintenance required for effluent reuse system could be in the range of \$20,000 - \$30,000 per year.

Lucas is enthusiastic about the opportunities an expanded treatment plant could provide, especially the capability for "sludge thickening." This capacity creates the potential for on-island septage (septic tank contents) collection to be delivered to the treatment plant and ultimately the sludge would be combined with organic waste, "cooked" somewhere on the island, and produce topsoil. This process could create on-island employment, reduce GHGs (all septage is currently trucked off-

island and topsoil trucked on), and perhaps even create a revenue stream for the municipality.

Lucas views the expansion of the treatment plant as a giant step forward. "[This expansion] removes one of the substantial stumbling blocks facing of any other development coming down the pipe," and enhances the opportunity to deal with the surplus lands and Abbeyfield. Wolfgang [Dunst] confirmed that as part of his development for Parkview Slopes, he has agreed to provide the sewer from the four corners up Mt. Gardner. This would not only service his development, but also the community centre site and surplus lands, and make it more realistic for Roger McGillvary's Belterra to connect to the system.

What really enthruses Lucas is providing the sewer extension to Abbeyfield. "It's no longer so farfetched. It's a case of timing, but hopefully within two years we might be able to provide [the sewer to Abbeyfield]." He even goes so far as to suggest Abbeyfield might want to start the work necessary to put its street-front lots on the market.

Wolfgang Dunst of Bowen Island Properties Ltd. was equally pleased with the news of the grant, not only for his own purposes but for what he called "a very important need that Abbeyfield will answer for this community." Roger McGillvary of Belterra Cohousing saw the announcement as "very good



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news, not just for us but for the whole community." Mayor Turner had not responded at press time.

The sewer treatment plant expansion will allow some long anticipated plans in Snug Cove to move another step forward, not only those of private enterprise, but the community centre and Abbeyfield, and the disposition of the community (surplus) lands. Reason for celebration.

Bowen Island Municipality

COMMUNITY BARBECUE INVITATION

MP John Weston and Mayor Turner, on behalf of Bowen Island Municipality, invite you to a community barbecue in celebration of the Federal, Provincial, and Municipal Governments' investments in the health, safety and community of Bowen Island as part of the Building Canada Fund Grant - Communities Component.

Friday, October 2nd, 2009 4:00 pm - 6:00 pm, Doc Morgan's Lawn

COME HELP US CELEBRATE!

On September 24, 2009, these three governments announced that they would together accomplish the priority expansion of the Snug Cove Sewer Treatment Facility.



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