

At the Table Report on municipal affairs

by Tim Rhodes

Thursday, September 3, 2009 – **CRC Public Meeting with the Approving Officer.** This meeting was convened to give the public an opportunity to comment on the Cape Roger Curtis subdivision application. In his introduction, Approving Officer Hendrik Slegtenhorst commented that neither he nor members of the audience would be engaging in debate. He also asked that speakers limit themselves to issues specifically around the subdivision

application and advised them that he had read all of the submissions made to former CAO Bryan Kirk and there was no need to cover old ground. With a couple of exceptions, Slegtenhorst was successful in keeping the speakers on topic.

Everyone in the room wanted the same thing—a significant park at the Cape—but not surprisingly the presentations reflected two different approaches: Those who supported approval of

the subdivision application as a demonstration of good faith that might encourage the applicant to develop another comprehensive plan, and those who asked that the subdivision be rejected in order to force the applicant back to the table. None of the speakers brought anything of significance to the discussion that would not be familiar to those who have followed the Cape Roger Curtis issue, nor did

(cont'd pg. 11)

Off The Cuff: Belterra or Belcarra? Where is Bowen headed?

A bi-weekly editorial by Tim Rhodes

Statistics can be interpreted in many ways, but looking at Bowen Island in relation to the 22 other Metro Vancouver communities (see “How Bowen Island stats up” – pg. 12) it is clear to me that, although we profess to support and promote many of the sensibilities contained in the Belterra¹ concept (a cohousing proposal), our actions—or lack thereof—appear to be moving towards creating the next Belcarra² (a wealthy exclusive bedroom community).

Bowen Island is at a crossroads. Given our history, this OCP Update may direct

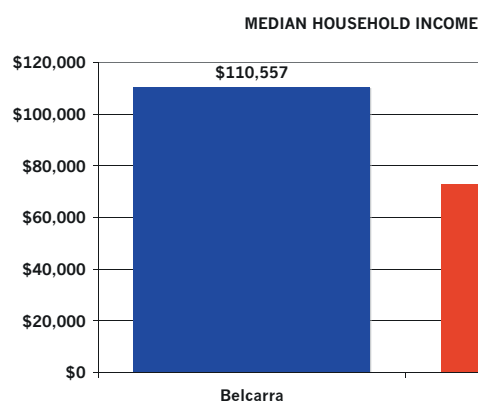
become increasingly unaffordable; precludes most young families from moving here and makes it difficult for young families to stay; drives away some who dream of something as simple as a market garden, and in large part ignores the needs of adolescents and young adults. Is it any wonder we are among the fastest aging communities in Metro?

One need only to look at the letters in this issue (pg. 2) to see how far behind we have fallen in fifteen years: “Lopez Island (about 2500 people with fewer in the winter) has four affordable

and the pressure they have put on our real estate; however, it is telling that in little more than a decade, our status has changed from one of the more affordable places in Metro to one of the least.

So depending on what we value, the updates to the OCP will have to be incisive and insightful—or not.

¹ Belterra is a cohousing proposal for Bowen (belterracohousing.ca): “Some people call [cohousing] a return to the best of small-town communities, while futurists call them an altogether new

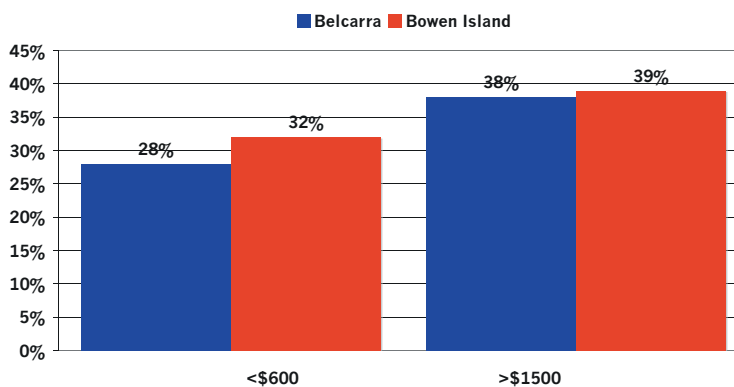


our development for the next decade or more. (The previous OCP held sway for almost 15 years and is largely responsible for the state we are in today.) Despite all our chest beating about the importance of community and diversity, we are increasingly becoming a wealthy white community of empty nesters that offers diminishing opportunities for the underclasses to participate. Our soaring real estate prices create exclusivity to the extent that they threaten to uproot long term residents who are land rich but lack personal wealth as taxes

housing developments, “a community center, community gardens and a farmers’ market, a just completed senior’s centre (market small homes with group facilities and some assisted living capacity), and is fundraising for a swimming pool.” Another letter demonstrates our inability to accommodate what would seem to be the most common of desires—affordable acreage for a small garden market farm.

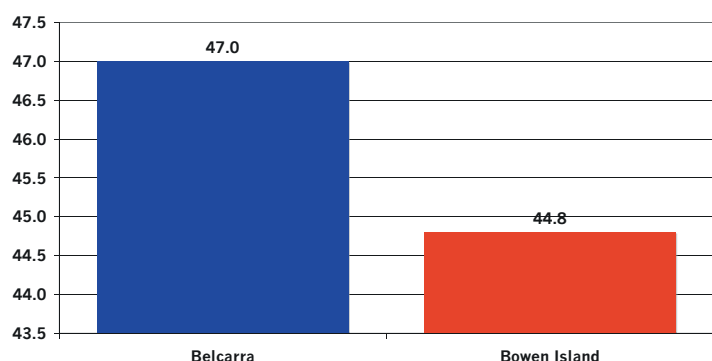
To be fair, we do get to share some of the blame with our mainland neighbours

OWNERS MAJOR PAYMENTS

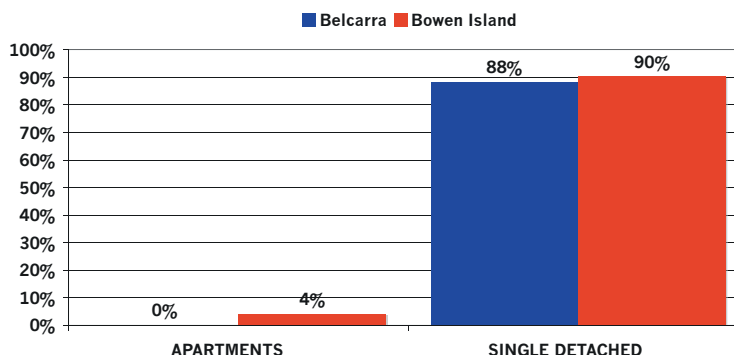


response to the social, environmental, and economic challenges of the 21st century... [Cohousing] describes neighbourhoods that combine the autonomy of private dwellings with the advantages of shared resources and community living... It’s about living in a way that’s responsive to a world that has changed dramatically in the last fifty years—a world in which home life has changed, women are integral in the labour force, resource limitations and environmental concerns are on the rise, and many people feel over extended. Cohousing is a place

MEDIAN AGE



HOUSING TYPES



active aging week

september 21 - 27

FREE WORKOUT WEEK

for anyone 50+

nutrition talks

body fat testing

blood pressure checks

posture & balance talks

with Sandy Logan



check out
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 for a schedule of events
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where people know their neighbours, a place where they can enjoy a rich sense of community and contribute to a more sustainable world.”

² Village of Belcarra Community Profile website (www.belcarra.ca): “The current population is 700, and has been growing steadily at a rate of about 4.5 percent per year since 1976. The population is expected to peak at approximately 800. Belcarra’s residential development pattern roughly parallels its two main arterial roads: Bedwell Bay Road and Belcarra Bay Road (see road map). Most of this development is oriented to the water and mountain views and natural setting characteristic of the area, and the majority of dwellings are single family units. The prices of these dwellings are at the higher end of the Metro Vancouver residential market and reflect the spectacular setting and rural nature of the community. Belcarra is a friendly and cooperative community whose household incomes are amongst the highest of any municipality in the Metro Vancouver region.”