

The NEWSIE “*Building consensus is a challenge for communities. We can; we will.*”

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A publication of the **Saltair District Ratepayers Association** February 2018

Dear SDRA Member,

*This Newsie covers CVRD meetings and news about the Community Centre, water and the ever ongoing regional recreation and a possible additional tax line.*

*We welcome Letters to the Editors and telephone calls on issues and ideas!*

**Contacts for SDRA**

**Membership: 49 households with 79 members**

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## **1. Community Centre.**

By now, most of you will have noticed there has been a lot of activity at the Community Centre both inside and out. The roof is being renewed while all the activities continue inside. Mel Dorey's article in Take 5 explains that \$300,000 is being invested to renew the whole roof, fix furnaces and renew the inside of the gym. \$130,000 of that is coming from part of Saltair's share of gas tax, \$31,000 is from reserves and \$139,000 is being borrowed over 5 years, but it will NOT require an increase in taxes.

Aside from the daily activities there was a community sing-along to celebrate Christmas. Volunteers made it great even though it was cold and rainy. There were many laughs and audience participation. It is hoped this can be built and join the Halloween and Easter events in Saltair.

## **2. CVRD Drinking Water and Watershed Protection Service Meeting**

Several Saltair taxpayers attended the CVRD Drinking Water and Watershed Protection Service meeting in Ladysmith on February 15. The theme was that a Regional approach is needed for water and watershed issues.

The CVRD asked 3 things:

1. Consider how the availability and quality of water impacts you and your quality of life
2. Attend February 2018 open houses and join the Placespeak conversation
3. Provide input on the proposed regional water protection service and the degree of cost you could support.

So what is your input on a new tax for watershed protection?

What degree of cost can you support?

So the CVRD proposes a new tax line be added to everyone in the CVRD for REGIONAL WATERSHED PROTECTION.

Where are funds from this new tax to be spent? The answer from the CVRD is in bold below:

**“The Cowichan, Koksilah, Shawnigan, Mill Bay and Malahat watersheds have been highlighted as a priority area for implementation of the integrated plans and subsequent allocation of resources”.**

There are several watersheds in the CVRD. The watersheds are separate and unique. Integrating them is physically impossible – only the watershed taxes will be integrated. So what can the new taxes pay for? Studies? Another consulting firm?

**Look for a possible referendum item to authorize this tax at the fall election this year.**

This tax will be about watersheds only. Our watershed is the Stocking system. Because it is an open surface system, we are required to either further filter it or use wells instead. This proposed new tax will NOT help us.

What degree of cost can you support knowing this?

We will still be responsible for ALL of the costs for our water system.

The SDRA will be making our position known to our area Director and the CVRD overall, but that's just 1 letter. If you have an opinion on this proposed tax, let our area Director and the CVRD know.

### 3. Regional Recreation

We are in the run up to a possible referendum attached to the fall election this year. Last election had an area by area referendum to have the Sportplex in Duncan added as a permanent tax line. Saltair along with many other areas voted NO. After that vote, CVRD staff advised Directors that future referendums should be area wide or not done at all.

So if this goes to referendum in the fall, we can expect an area wide vote where we can easily be out-voted. The following is a reminder what are deemed Regional Recreation Facilities

Regional Facilities	Annual Cost	Daily cost
1. Cowichan Aquatic Centre, Duncan.....	3.84 million.....	\$10,520 daily.
2. Island Savings Centre, Duncan.....	3.25 million.....	\$8,904 daily
3. Performing Arts Centre, Duncan.....	1.11 million.....	\$3,013 daily
4. Sportsplex, Duncan.....	.24 million.....	\$657 daily
5. Cowichan Lake Recreation.....	2.26 million.....	\$6,191 daily
6. Frank Jameson, Ladysmith.....	1.5 million.....	\$4,109 daily

7. Kerry Park Recreation.....	2.67 million.....	\$7,315 daily
8. Shawnigan Lake Community Centre.....	.68 million.....	\$1,863 daily
TOTAL:		
FOR REGIONALLY SIGNIFICANT FACILITIES \$16.03 MILLION.....\$43,917 DAILY.		

Saltair currently pays \$40,000 yearly to Frank Jameson in Ladysmith.  
Area H, north of Ladysmith paid \$89,000 to Frank Jameson. Years ago, Rene Beaudin, the then Area G Director, agreed to have Saltair pay \$40,000 annually. When area H agreed to pay Frank Jameson the arrangement was based on taxes – hence the amount they pay increases. Our usage of Frank Jameson is about half of that of Area H.

The CVRD has not said IF a referendum will be held. The SDRA has sent a letter to them reminding them Saltair is NOT in favour of the regional concept. That letter is included at the end of the Newsie.

#### 4. Affordable Housing

The CVRD Directors are discussing a possible new function (TAX) to encourage affordable housing. Their reasoning is there should be a function in the CVRD so when the federal and provincial governments make grants available to build affordable housing, the CVRD will have a function to receive the grant money. The amount to be collected that has been discussed is \$750,000.

I am not aware of any discussion as to who will build, or where or what type of housing. But should start paying now and have our tax dollars sit at the CVRD for when grants are available? IF grants are available and IF the CVRD gets one.

Before this new tax is added there will have to be public consultation. The CVRD takes out newspaper ads and posts on their website. But taxpayers need to attend and have their say.

#### 5. Public Meetings

Take the time to go to public meetings and have your say. Be aware how questions are asked. Do you believe everyone deserves a safe water supply? Do you believe everyone should have affordable housing? Do you believe we need to protect our watersheds?

Answer YES to those 3 questions and the result may be the following “We hear you think water, watershed and affordable housing are important to you, so here's why we need to set up a FUNCTION/TAX to get the results you have requested.

So go to public meetings. Listen. Ask questions. Have your say.  
One of the comments at the last CVRD public meeting was “Not at the table you risk being on the menu”.

Remember – Regional Recreation, Regional Watershed, Affordable Housing= new tax lines that can then be increased each year.

## **6. Can Saltair be a test case for a project Island wide for emergency preparedness?**

We posed this question last Newsie. Since then one of our SDRA Directors canvassed a number of residents. Their answer was mostly NO.

A few people have expressed interest, but not enough to make the project feasible. It would need at least a dozen volunteers devoting numerous hours training and a commitment to keep updated.

Unless we see a surge of volunteers from this Newsie we will consider the project dead. We may consider a public meeting with ways for each household to protect themselves.

## **7. [www.sunnysaltair.ca](http://www.sunnysaltair.ca)**

Type that in your web browser if you have internet. You will find a website that our community can truly be proud of. Two volunteers have built, maintain and update the site- Jackie and Grace. There are pictures and notes about past events, the current tenants of the Centre, and the upgrades to the Centre. The minimal costs of keeping the site operating are paid by a grant in aid held through the SDRA. Jackie also maintains her Facebook site – All Things Saltair. If you request, the site will inform you automatically of any new messages. The site is an easy way of keeping yourself informed of happenings in Saltair and being in touch with your neighbours.

## **8. Trans Canada Trail**

Although the newspapers announced some time ago that the Trans Canada Trail was complete, it was just more PR. But now, by end of November this year, it WILL be complete. The very last section is between Chemainus and Saltair. Brian Farquhar, Parks Manager at the CVRD has assured us the plans and financing are in place. The grant to do it expires end of November so it has to get done now.

THIS IS THE LETTER SENT TO THE CVRD DIRECTORS I REFERRED TO ABOVE POINT 3.

CVRD Directors,

The Saltair District Ratepayers Association (SDRA) again want to express the concerns of our community on the Regional Recreation initiative that has been on the agenda of the CVRD for years now.

We know your first stage - the community involvement stage has been completed. Several of our members attended one of the meetings. We were disappointed at the community turnout but surprised at being told it was a better turnout than at Island Savings and Lake Cowichan. We were not surprised to be informed that community members at both other meetings felt that being outdoors and walking were preferred ways of recreation. That same message was sent from the meeting we attended.

It would further appear this position is supported by the vision outlined by the urban planner, Gil Penalosa who was hired by the CVRD.

We understand the second phase was ANOTHER study of facility use. Not a substantial variance from the one from 2011.

So now the last phase - coming up with a plan. Is this one going to be different from the many others we have seen over the years?

Please keep in mind that not 4 years ago Saltair residents voted a resounding NO to Sportsplex funding. Please keep in mind that years ago, during the planning stages of the Aquatic Centre, Saltair taxpayers said NO via the Area Director. Over the years as North Cowichan and Duncan asked for tax support of the pool, Saltair taxpayers said a resounding NO. Saltair taxpayers have been unwavering on this issue.

As late as the SDRA Annual General meeting in 2017, our members were against paying for what the CVRD deems the regional facilities. That feeling has been reinforced now that we have also have a community centre.

Saltair already has an agreement to pay into Ladysmith Frank Jameson Community Centre. This is a facility that your previous studies have indicated some Saltair taxpayers use.

We have no vote on any facility outside of Saltair. Adding a tax line for any facility on which we have no vote is equal to taxation without representation.

We therefore request that the views of Saltair and other Areas' taxpayers be respected and that any regional funding be limited to development of walking trails.

On behalf of Saltair taxpayers,

Diana MacTavish, Director

Saltair District Ratepayers Association