

## Jesse McClinton - Community Conversations #2 – November 12, 2023

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Location: Saltair Community Centre on North Oyster School Road, 2 p.m. – 4 p.m.

Guest presenters:

- a. Todd Etherington (CVRD Manager Water Operations) assisted by Vanessa Thomson, Manager of Utilities and Darcy Mooney, General Manager of Operations
- b. Ben Maartman – Director, Area H (Diamond & North Oyster)

Kerry McIntyre (SDRA) called the meeting to order at 2 pm sharp and introduced each presenter in turn through the meeting.

Ben Maartman presented the acknowledgement, recognition of local First Nations

### **Jesse McClinton – Opening Remarks & Update**

1. Purpose of these “Conversations”: meet and greet constituents; provide opportunities for questions and answers; recognize topics of particular interest to larger audience of residents; provide information through guest speakers (thanked current guests); impetus for doing these meetings originally came from Ben Maartman
2. New Parks Commission met November 2 primarily to work on next year’s budget
3. CVRD is looking for volunteers to work on their Parks masterplan for all of the regions; if there is any interest, please contact Jesse for referral to appropriate parties
4. Great turnout again for the meeting on the Saltair Local Area Plan (LAP); many thanks to all the participants. There will be 2 more meetings scheduled – please continue to provide input and feedback through the CVRD survey to ensure the LAP reflects the wishes of our residents
5. CVRD has 16 directors from the various regions and municipalities – there is a new Board Chair – Aaron Stone (Ladysmith) and Vice-Chair – Kate Segal (Cobble Hill); Board dynamics are positive and all parties seem to be working very well together
6. Has been working recently with Ruxton Island residents and BC Fire Service to determine a plan for the island – a challenge for an area that has no roads. Next trip will be to Thetis to spend some much-needed time with them to explore their unique issues and determine if there are ways to support their residents better
7. Expressed thanks to the Evans, their donors, the SCC and the volunteers for all their work on an extraordinary Halloween event – a highlight of the year and a great expression of community spirit
8. The Advisory Planning Committee (APC) is looking at the BC government legislation regarding densification through accessory structures/suites and the impacts of short term rentals on housing supply;
  - a. The legislation on the latter is primarily targeted at single family homes that are dedicated to short term rentals, thereby effectively taking them off the market for families wishing to buy a home. This practice has hollowed out some neighbourhoods, affects fire services, and artificially increased home prices (reduced supply).
  - b. In looking at options for Saltair regarding accessory suites/structures, we are looking at models from CVRD Areas A (Malahat/Mill Bay) and C (Cobble Hill)
9. Next “Conversations” meeting will be in January 2024 and will cover topics that have generated many calls/emails – ditches, roads, crosswalks, transportation, etc.
10. Quick comments on Stocking Creek Dam replacement – looking to ensure funding is in the 2024 budget so work can start as soon as possible – needs to be part of the Works budget and schedule; the contractor for the previous filtration plant has been terminated and a new plan going forward is in the works – Todd Etherington will provide details.

**Ben Maartman – Director, Area H (Diamond/North Oyster)**

1. Introduction – his personal background; currently a farmer (Soggy Bottom Farm) in Yellowpoint; deeply interested in representing constituents honestly and accurately
2. Area H is a sister to Saltair – many of the same concerns, issues, and rural environment
3. On the other side is the RDN (Regional District of Nanaimo) which is currently focused on bylaw enforcement, permits and fire regulation – a different perspective
4. Area H has about 2400 residents, roughly the same population as Saltair but the largest portion of our area is dedicated to farming – our population centre is the Diamond. The residents’ perspective: “we have paradise already” – they want no more government and no more taxes. Even curbside garbage pickup (mandated by BC law) is not really welcome.
5. Biggest issue for the residents now is **water**. Only about 100 residents are on shared water treatment systems of which there are 3. Everyone else is on individual wells; most of those only go to the first level/tier of the aquifer.
6. The aquifer that runs under a large area of North Oyster is well documented – where it runs, geological structure, and where most of the wells exist.
7. Huge threat to the aquifer comes from Schnitzer Steel Canada which has applied to expand operations directly over it; residents want it moved to protect their water.

**Todd Etherington – CVRD Manager Water Operations**

1. New water main replacement project – see copy of PowerPoint presentation posted separately on the sunnysaltair.ca website; highlights:
  - a. Started in 2013 with the parcel tax + gas tax surplus funds to pay for it.
  - b. Stopped by Island Health Authority in 2020 to force CVRD to fix the water filtration fiasco.
  - c. NOTE: Restarted in 2023 – meeting with Island Health convinced them that issues with water filtration were far more complex than anticipated and project had no real relationship with other water project(s) such as water mains and dam and these projects should be allowed to go forward
  - d. Now have much improved relationship with Island Health
2. New dam for Stocking Creek outflow – also part of the PowerPoint presentation
  - a. Ladysmith contracted with Stalker Excavating to remove material from the dam on the downstream side and laid rock riprap to further reinforce the structure; in addition, to address the leak, loose material was removed from the spillway channel and a water barrier was installed and topped with rock
  - b. A new plan for a new dam 30 yards below the existing one is in process
  - c. Search is on for funding from many sources to complete the new structure, tentatively planned for 2026 – provided many dependencies are satisfied
  - d. Ladysmith and CVRD share costs (like the water licenses) 50/50 so funding must be arranged on both sides
3. Water filtration system
  - a. As above, project is no longer on hold due to new agreement /relationship with Island Health
  - b. New technology required to ensure Stocking Lake outflow is filtered properly consistently and that backflow & flushing waste water is adequately managed (these are the two largest challenges)
  - c. Existing grant will be in effect; additional funding required and sources are under investigation

**QUESTION PERIOD**

1. Q: What is the allotment of water for Saltair compared to Ladysmith?
  - A. Both the total quantity of water available for purification and the total allowed for removal per the current water licenses ( 1 for Ladysmith; 2 for Saltair) is the same: the split is 50 / 50 for each.
2. Q: The presented material indicated some roads had fully completed 6" water mains installed; this is not accurate as part of Old Victoria Road were not done (other examples given by other participants)
  - A. Parts of some roads already had the 6" water mains and did not require upgrades; proper fire hydrants have been installed (minimum 500 feet apart) on all roads with 6" pipes; if your insurance company still believes you are on stand pipes (2" pipes), inform them that you are properly fire protected. The CVRD will supply a letter so stating if insurance company requires one.
3. Q: For those properties who were sent the registered letter that they are in an area known to be an extreme hazard for flood, should the dam disintegrate and the lake empty – how long before an emergency warning would be issued?
  - A. CVRD does not have daily monitoring of flow or water levels but Ladysmith does; if they detect an emergency, they would let us know. CVRD has no alarm process for this situation other than the existing Emergency Response Plan. Those in the defined flood hazard area would be first people notified; no estimate of how long that would take.
4. Q: Regarding the catchment area for Stocking Lake: it is certainly susceptible for damage from forest fires. Can the new system deal with resulting turbidity/runoff?
  - A. That is an excellent question and I don't know the answer; will pass along to the engineer and if not already accounted for, will ask that the requirements to mitigate be included in the plan
5. Q: From Stocking Creek Farm: like the previous query, am in the hazard zone, received the registered letter 5 years ago explaining how the situation would be dealt with. How long will it take to be fixed? When will be no longer under threat? Where is the public safety plan?
  - A. Question for Brian Bouma; will have to get back to residents after consultation
6. Q: Why can't the fire department use stand pipes?
  - A. Stand pipes are 2" diameter and usually only used when the main is less than the mandatory 6" – and almost always indicate a 2" main. These provide insufficient pressure/flow for fire equipment. In addition, if equipment were hooked up, suction from the pumps could actually collapse the main.
7. Q: How long is the grant for the filtration system accessible?
  - A. Good to 2029 – we aren't going to lose the \$3.9 million and the funds cannot be used for any other purpose than this project
8. Q: Dam – series of questions regarding costs, construction techniques, water licenses
  - A. Current cost estimates are \$5 million – this is a class C estimate – it is +/- 35% and meant only as place marker until detail design, quotes, etc. are in  
The existing road to the site can handle the heavy equipment used to fix the leak, etc. so that should be sufficient; additional access will be needed to new dam site  
Sheet piling will be used and will require some specialized construction techniques and equipment – will be part of detail design/costs

By increasing water storage capability, will also increase distribution available; will there be new water licenses to define what Ladysmith will get – TBA – note that the licenses are owned by the CVRD, not by Saltair or Ladysmith

9. Q: who owns the land that will be flooded by the extended dam and the land around the perimeter? For any pipes going through the dam, who owns that right of way? Will an environmental assessment be done per previous report?
  - A. The CVRD owns the land downstream and around Stocking Lake. Regarding the pipes, TBA – will have to find out and get back with response. An EIS will be done as part of the project plan
10. Q: Will there be consideration for large-lot planning – water accessible for growth?
  - A. Part of consideration for licensing
11. Q: If there is sufficient surplus in the short term (until demand grows to supply) can we take the surplus and move/sell it to, for example, Thetis
  - A. Prohibitively expensive to pipe water from VI to Thetis; alternatives would be found in emergency situations
12. Q: What if we lose access to the lake or the filtration plant – e.g. in an emergency?
  - A. There is a contingency plan in place: in event of emergency, both North Cowichan and Ladysmith could take water from Stocking Lake – the systems are interconnected
13. Jesse – clarification re: secondary suites, accessory housing: the BC government is focusing on municipalities and cities with the current legislation