

To the GDCC:

The Gibsons Alliance of Business and Community Society (GABC) does not support the George Hotel and Residences project as currently designed.

Section 1.03 of the GDCC bylaws states: The Chamber will support and encourage the interests of business in municipal, regional, provincial and national matters and *will act on behalf of its members in all such matters*. It would be contrary to your bylaws to issue a statement of support for a project that your members do not support.

We are aware that while some members will not support this project, others will. However, we consider that polling members via email within a 48-hour turnaround time will not yield accurate or fair results. All the information on which to base a judgment critical to the future of our Town has not yet come to light. Town planning staff have not yet fully examined the DP application or identified issues, let alone recommended to Council how to proceed. In the meantime, rather than following due process the developer has orchestrated a highly controlled and targeted PR/Marketing campaign to win support. Some say the information in this campaign has been highly selective. As a result *no real public conversation* about this project has yet taken place. For the Chamber to poll its members at this time and in this way would be irregular, and to state support for this project at this time would be completely premature.

As an instructive aside, a similar attempt in 2008 by the Gibsons Landing Business Association to rush (ramrod) through a statement of support for Shoal Bay led eventually to the organization's demise. The lack of proper process began a series of events that upset many GLBA members. Specifically, many became frustrated at the apparent abuse of power on the GLBA board. Membership began to decline rapidly and eventually GLBA dissolved. At GABC, we very much appreciate and support our Chamber and specifically the fair and balanced leadership role the Chamber has taken to date. We sincerely hope the GDCC will not make the same mistake GLBA made.

GABC's position on the George—it cannot support the George hotel and residences project as designed—is soundly based on what we do know. The project is completely contrary to the Town of Gibsons Official Community Plan, massive in scale and completely out of character. To allow this project to proceed as is would set a dangerous precedent of oversized development in the community that would destroy the charm and

character of the Landing. To destroy the character of the Landing would not only be detrimental to the community at large but also have negative impacts for all kinds of businesses, from tourism businesses to local competitors (like restaurants and aestheticians) to retail. The impact would be especially negative to the growing business and professional services sector—the charm and lifestyle of the quaint seaside village, a major draw for these business people and their families, would be lost.

Furthermore after having looked at the limited available economic analysis of this project, we find the numbers simply do not add up. We are deeply concerned that this development would require tax holidays and DCC relief and could potentially become a huge liability for taxpaying residents and businesses in the Town. Without an independent analysis of the proponent's economic assumptions, everything the proponent is saying is pie-in-the-sky projection with no validity. To blindly support this project without a really clear understanding of the numbers is simply *not good business*.

GABC supports hotel use on this site, as such use is consistent with the Gibsons OCP/Harbour Plan. We support a small-scale boutique hotel there, no more than 3 storeys (7.5m) high from Gower Point Road as clearly defined in the economic analysis of the harbour plan Phase 2 and set out in the zoning bylaws. We support this use as long as the development follows the zoning bylaws (with potential for minor **variance**) and with this caveat: that Gibsons Aquifer is the Town's and the business community's greatest asset—far greater than this proposed development project—and *we expect all development projects in the Town of Gibsons to follow the precautionary principle with respect to aquifer protection*.

Playing by the rules sets clear standards and levels the playing field for all investors and businesses. This proponent is asking for huge concessions in lands, up-zoning value, and privatization of public assets. Giving these concessions to this proponent would set a costly precedent in the Landing. It would undermine existing property values. In effect, it will be *taking* from citizens and other businesses and taxpayers. We do not see this effect as generating new wealth: we see it as redistribution of the existing wealth from the hands of many—into the hands of the proponent, all at the risk of polarizing citizens and existing and new businesses.

GABC supports sustainable growth and development that creates wealth and opportunity and enhances our quality of life *without taking from others*. We support development that will nurture existing and future citizens and the business community. This project does not meet our expectations as a

sustainable, wealth-generating business, and we would like to see the proponent come back with a project that does. Until that happens, we cannot support the George hotel and residences, and we ask that the Chamber *not* formally support this project either.