

BACKGROUND TIMELINE: ToG Harbour Development, as related to the george hotel and condo proposal - 2013

2004-2007

- The Hyak Marine (George) Hotel proponent comes to Town of Gibsons staff and elected people, pitching a hotel and convention centre. Town Planner Chris Marshall turns him away because the proposal is **consistently, way out of scale with the OCP**. The proponent changes the 'design' a number of times, though the scale never gets smaller.
- Development pressure issues from this and others proposals, gives rise to need for the Town to consider a study of the cumulative impacts of development of the harbour area.

Study:

- **The town commissions and pays for the Coriolis Report - Approvals Process for Three Major Development Proposals in Gibsons Landing.** 3 Projects: The hotel, GLHA Harbour expansion and the Shoal Bay condo development project.

Coriolis Recommendations:

- The Town will gain no value from three traffic/parking studies that each look at individual impacts relative to the existing situation and do not **address the combined effects of the other projects**.
- The onus is on the applicants to assess the impacts and determine whether they are negligible or to show **how parking can be accommodated without going below grade**.
- The Town should advise the hotel proponent that a **detailed view and urban design impact analysis** will be required before the Town will consider whether to grant approval for 4 storeys (the current maximum in the OCP) or more.
- The Town should put a high priority on defining its **detailed expectations regarding public access to and along the waterfront**. This is particularly important for the two adjacent waterfront development sites (hotel, residential).
- The proposals require rezoning, so there is an opportunity to discuss voluntary **amenity contributions** that each project could make.
- Because the projects require rezoning, each developer will presumably negotiate a development agreement or servicing agreement with the Town. Applicants can be advised that one condition of the agreement will be the **direct payment of the Town's costs for technical support**.
- Applicants should be expected to make an initial contribution prior to actually executing the servicing agreement, **to fund the Town's costs in processing the applications**.

2007/2008

- **SHOAL BAY** Development proposal consisting of 109-114 condominium units on a land assembly beside the Gibsons Marina is proposed. **Height variance required for up to 64 ft.**
- **Public opposition to Shoal Bay is fierce.** Public hearing goes from 7 pm til midnight. More than 350 residents come out for the hearing. Total results conclude over 75% against this proposal. Gibsons council votes it down 4:1. Councillor Tretick the only supporter, votes to '*represent his constituents*'.

2008

- **Insistent development pressure** in the Harbour Area, is met with resistance from the citizens and the negative political backlash from the failure of the Shoal Bay development grows.
- **Citizens for Gibsons Landing** come as a delegation to Council asking for leadership, to resolve issues around development in the harbour and alleviate the negative conflict over Harbour development, within the community.
- **Council agrees to commission a Harbour Plan.**

Harbour Plan RFP - Issues to be dealt with in planning include:

- Height and Massing of buildings in Harbour area;
- Review of the Form and Character guidelines for the Gibsons Landing Development Permit Area;
- Environmental Standards for Development in Harbour Area, environmental rehabilitation of the foreshore and guidelines for future development along the waterfront;
- Parking. any new development in the Harbour area will need to provide not only parking for the proposed uses but also for increased uses within the Harbour such as a pedestrian ferry, increased moorage on the Government Wharf and existing uses that don't have parking or insufficient parking;
- Traffic analyses that address the long term traffic volumes generated by future incremental development and its impact on the community's goal to be pedestrian and bicycle oriented.
- Guidelines for development over the Aquifer;
- Greenhouse Gas reduction objectives for the area (carbon neutral?); and
- Development Permit Area for the Harbour that requires the use of alternative energy sources (Geo-Thermal, Ocean, Solar, sewer pipe etc.)

2009

Harbour Plan - Matrix Consulting wins the bid to carry out the harbour planning and reporting process. Phase 1 included a design charrette and two public open houses. The meetings were well attended and fostered sincere community engagement. Identified concepts and requirements included:

- **Key concepts :**
 - **Place-keeping:** "The Harbour Area has a strong sense of place as it stands."
 - **Fit, Grain, & Permeability:** "The grain of the Harbour Area is largely responsible for the perceived village scale and character, and the high degree of permeability"
 - **Growth & Density:** "The amount of residential growth / increase in density in the Harbour Area **must** be only so great as is sustainable by: preservation of scale, character, grain, and permeability; preservation of view; and an acceptable impact on parking and traffic."
 - **Incremental Development:** "New development should occur incrementally, over time.... Small scale development that corresponds with incremental development will more naturally respect the existing grain of the area."
- The planning committee is committed and doing a great job
- The community is diligently observing and keeping track of the process. Detailed background re: Harbour Plan series of articles 1-4 written by Suzanne Senger [Harbour Plan Articles by Suzanne Senger](#)
- **The proponent keeps coming** regardless of the Coriolis
- report and the harbour planning. Hotel convention centre plan changes to 4 storeys and sprawling across Gower Point road to envelop well # 1, the Maritime Museum and Arts Building and back again.
- Chris Marshall continues to turn Klaus away, giving the same message: the Town will not consider the proposal until it respects the OCP.
- Scale and character and siting of a hotel project and specifically the developer's project, is an integral part of the Harbour Plan process discussion. A #D model, of the proponents latest version of the 4 story Tug Boat Landing Marina concept was set up on display at the harbour plan public meetings.

- The Harbour planning process **Phase 1 resulted in a “Vision”** which the community agreed on. But the developer was not happy with the result. **The Town was lobbied by the proponent that the Vision plan was not ‘economically viable’.**
- The Vision was then analyzed for economic viability, and **an Alternate vision, which accommodated the Hotel proponents economic needs, was presented.**
- The Alternate vision came forward and **the community was very upset** because the alternate changed the use and scale of key parts of the plan area, which had the citizens had anticipated becoming public space. However, in the interests of moving forward, mending rifts in the community, and getting the job done - **the public came to the middle and compromised.**
- The Phase 2 Report (Economic Analysis) defined the Alternate vision and **clearly established maximum allowable size/height/massing etc.** The Harbour Plan DPA 5 was built on this Alternate vision.
- The Harbour planning process resulted in **a genuine policy built on legitimate public consultation, into which the hotel proponent had input and the hotel project was given “consideration ... on an individual basis”, throughout the planning process.**

2010

- **Chris Marshall quits** as Town planner. Michael Epp is recruited to his first Planner job
- The developers consultant is observed visiting Town Hall on a weekly basis, lobbying the new planner.
- The proponent expands his holding, buying the Sholseths’ property and securing an option on the Dixon property.

2011

- Election year. Rowe ‘Team’, managed by **Joanne McNevin**, wins Mayor’s seat and 2 council seats.

2012

- **First council meeting of 2012**, the project consultant Art Phillips asks council to write a letter of support of the Tugboat Landing Marina project ‘land use in principle’, for DFO. The site plan ‘supported in principle’ does not show fuel tanks in the rec lease and it does delineate riparian areas on the stream and foreshore even though the previous application gives no consideration to watercourse riparian areas, or geotechnical setbacks.
- **The Harbour Plan is passed unanimously by the current council.**
- August/September: Hotel proponent’s marketing team canvasses residents and business owners via a telephone survey. *Citizens are told that callers are phoning on behalf of the Town and asked if they think a hotel in the harbour would be good for Gibsons.* Citizens who respond positively are given info and invited to the September 8th meeting.
- September 8th The George public open house. A well financed sales pitch.
- The George Hotel PR/Marketing campaign is launched and slogans pop up around town such as:
 - “Gibsons is dying... and the George will save us”
 - “It’s a done deal”

2013

- February: George **DPA arrives** at Town Hall.
- February: Michael Epp, **Town planner quits** his job in Gibsons to commute to North Vancouver.
- March: New town planner Andre Boel starts from scratch.
- May: Andre Boel takes his time studying the OCP working with developer.
- June: The **proponent hires a new architect.**

- July: **Staff report** update on where the project is at, to Council and APC. *See below *
- September: A series of **private PR events** are held at the Hyak board room. Attendance is highly controlled. Issues of concern are quashed, messaging is different at different events. Unfounded assertions are made on numerous issues.
- October: The proponent comes back with a **new taller design**
- November: **'Open House'** hosted by the proponent. Some misleading and factually incorrect information given to the public.
- November: APC meeting to discuss the project before all relevant documents are received.
- January report to council on George V2. Suddenly with no explanation, a taller building 'fits'.

*** Issues raised in July staff report including rationale for turning back the proposal:***

- 'Urban like' density significantly higher than anything anticipated in the OCP.
- Form of the development (massing, height) does not fit with the OCP re: scale and character and view protection.
- Significant impact on public spaces
- Use of areas leased to other parties
- No explanation of economic assumptions
- Ambiguity re: community amenities and affordable housing
- Cost of social and environmental implications not identified
- The total floor area of the building results in a much higher floor space ration that set out in the OCP
- The proposed building is large in comparison to the scale of other uses.
- The building is substantially higher and bulkier than anything else in Gibsons.
- OCP guidelines repeatedly refer to VILAGE SCALE AND CHARACTER>
- The proposed building appears to have many effects on: height, setbacks, massing, scale, permeability, view protection and enhancement, sun/shadow impact and on village context and character.
- Reduces limited open water views in front of the park
- Application appears to use portions of the crown foreshore and Gibsons Marina
- Winn Road compensation has not been addressed
- Winn Road is a highly used community area
- Loss of views to the water is contrary to town policy
- Loss of pedestrian streetscape
- Loss of public parking
- Lack of setbacks at Winegarden park with overwhelmingly large building, take away from community value as natural community/park space.
- Setbacks too small to accommodate OCP policy 12.4.2 which seeks developments to manage storm water on site. Proposal looks to use Winegarden park for their storm water management
- Pg 10. The hatbour area plan definition of residential tourist accommodation means "Areas which permit high density multi-family development AS DEFINED ELSEWHERE IN THE SMART PLAN or tourist accommodation.... Or some combination of these uses." The smart plan defines high density multi family designation as areas which permit apartments and condominiums greater than 3 storeys with a density range between 60-110 units per hectare. (typical floor space ratio 1:2-1:4) The George is 3:1.
- No details are provided to support stated workforce and salary assertions. Salary levels not consistent with industry data.

Further information requested by staff includes:

- Site survey
- Natural grade lines and elevations
- Clarification re; number of parking spaces

- A list of proposed public amenities excluding commercial spaces and responding to affordable housing and community amenities policy
- Identify impacts on Winegarden park and mitigation measures
- Geotechnical review on aquifer impacts
- Clearly indicate areas of public land proposed to be developed and rationale for use or purchase
- Clarification re; role of the watercourse that transects Hyak and winegarden park.
- View analysis from key public use areas and shading
- Provide proof that the project meets/exceeds provincial SLR requirements
- Indicate how the town will be compensated for loss of parking
- Provide supporting information to clarify economic benefits, salaries, taxation, expected occupancy
- Archeological assessment and asset management plan.