



GABC posting misinforms residents

A recent article posted on the social media and web sites of Gibsons Alliance of Business and Community (GABC) either by design or by intent provided a distorted perspective of a number of matters.

The article entitled "Gibsons could lose its marina to the George" provides no evidence to support that headline other than quoting an opinion by Gibsons Council candidate Katie Janyk: "So if Klaus Fuerniss needs the A-dock, his only option is to buy the whole marina. It's a no-brainer." What is a no-brainer is that there are ways to accommodate the hotel proponents' desire for the use of A-dock, such as through a licensing agreement or a potential reconfiguration of the lease. As the Marina sublease is held by a private company it will be up to those parties to negotiate a suitable arrangement. To state that 350 boaters could lose their moorage is simply irresponsible and has caused the Marina operators to have to protect their business by issuing a notice (copy attached) to their berthholders to calm their fears created by this groundless conjecture.

The article is rife with other errors and innuendo only a few of which I have time to address:

1. The writer begins with the statement that documents obtained through the Freedom of Information Act have uncovered 'new facts' such as the developer wanting to use the waterfront of Winegarden Park for private mortgage. A Freedom of Information request was hardly necessary to uncover this 'new fact.' since it was included in the developer's application which has been at the Town's public counter since November, 2013. If the proposed project were to gain approval in principle, *then* discussions would take place between the developer and the Town as to the access to that area and appropriate compensation to the Town.
2. Another supposedly 'new fact' is that another condo development is planned next to the proposed George Hotel. While it may be that present or future owners of the adjacent property will want to propose some development, the *fact* is that there have been no plans submitted, or to my knowledge discussed, since the last proposal was turned down February 5, 2008.
3. The writer states that the freedom of information request included "all documents and emails concerning the George and Mayor Wayne Rowe." She then states, "No documents concerning Mayor Rowe were released." What she fails to state is that no documents were released because there are none. Rather she prefers to leave the impression that something is being concealed. This is a familiar tactic of certain critics of mine who have been frustrated by the fact that there is no substance to their claims.
4. The writer further displays her ignorance of municipal processes when she states in bold print "This letter never went to council or the advisory planning committee and was not made public." The letter referred to is a letter of May 1, 2013 from the Director of Planning addressed to the developer setting out comments pertaining to the initial proposal, which was subsequently withdrawn, revised, and resubmitted to address these concerns. Responses from our planning staff to applicants are standard procedure. All of the back-and-forth correspondence is not necessarily brought to council but rather forms the basis of distilled reports made by our staff to council. In this instance the contents of the letter were reported on in some detail by the Director of Planning in a report to council on July 23, 2013. It was also specifically referenced in the developer's new project submission on November 12, 2013, the ensuing advisory planning commission meeting of November 15, 2013 and the Council meeting of January 14, 2014.
5. The article also refers to a comment by Mr. Art Phillips, the project consultant, "that the project can only go forward if Winn Road is sold to the developer." While the details of what form this may take and what compensation should be paid remain to be resolved, it is important to note that the developer was advised by the previous council in 2010 that it was willing to consider the transfer of title of Winn Road. [See attached letter of Chief Administrative Officer Paul Gipps].

There is much more in this article that should be repudiated but frankly the bias is so evident that it does not merit further time. The writer summarizes the article with the statement that "it becomes clear that the town of Gibsons and the developer have had a cordial relationship since the George was proposed in February last year." Frankly I would be greatly disappointed if our staff were not cordial and prepared to work with a developer who proposed to bring a project to our town involving \$60 million of construction and that would ultimately contribute in excess of \$2 million of servicing costs and development cost charges and a potential additional \$300,000 of increased annual taxes.

On November 15 please support council candidates who do not engage in hyperbole but rather are open to examining and objectively weighing the pros and cons of issues.