

Cortes Island (Area I) Regional Director's Report

By now most of you are aware of the proposed division of the Comox Strathcona Regional District (CSRD) into the Strathcona Regional District (SRD) in the north and Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) in the south. The division is to take place at the Oyster River. What follows is a brief recap of the scanty bits of information that have been released to the public.

On July 13 Minister of Community Services, Ida Chong, forwarded a letter to the CSRD announcing the division. This was done without any consultation. Minister Chong mandated that the creation of these two new regional districts be completed by December 31, 2007. The division will be made possible by new Letters Patent that will include the transfer of assets and liabilities from the CSRD to either the proposed SRD or CVRD. Minister Chong outlined a number of directives that must be met in the newly formed Comox Valley Regional District. These included a Growth Management Strategy and the development of the regional water system, both of which were already being developed under the auspices of the CSRD. No directives were given for the SRD.

The Ministry of Community Services engaged the services of Doug Allen to lead the process on behalf of the ministry. The services of Meyers Norris Penny LLP (MNP) were engaged to prepare an independent analysis for the more complicated regional services (IE: regional solid waste and corporate support services.) After the October Committee of the Whole meeting, the Board of Director's "rose" on the Executive Summary of the MNP report, which outlines various recommendation options. It can be read on the CSRD website www.comoxstrathcona.ca.

I was among the director's in favor of releasing the '**unavoidable costs**' as outlined in the MNP report, however, the majority of Director's did not agree. Therefore, that information cannot be divulged. It is a significant number and I rather suspect that if you don't think this is an important local issue now you will when the actual costs are released. The Board and Province will continue division and service delivery discussions on November 22. This meeting will be "in-camera" and any further information the Board votes to "rise and report" on will be made public at that time.

Earlier in the process the Ministry of Community Services approved a restructure-planning grant, applied for by the CSRD, in the amount of \$95,000. These funds were used to cover costs associated with the planning phase of division and included special board meetings, CSRD management consultant to assist in meeting timelines, the independent services analysis, and legal/accounting costs. If the division continues, Phase Two-The Transition Phase will start January 01, 2008.

Increasingly, I am asked, "What can we do to stop this?" The only Action left to put a stop to this unnecessary division is a FIRESTORM OF OPPOSITION! The provincial government needs to hear from taxpayers opposed to the division of the CSRD. Your elected representatives are doing everything possible to reverse the directive but active public participation is needed immediately. There are only seven weeks left until this

division is to take place, which obviously includes the busiest holiday season of the year. Please give some time to this issue—today. Letters should be sent to Premier Gordon Campbell at Premier@gov.bc.ca and PO Box 9041 Victoria BC V8W 9E1

Copy letters to:

Honourable Ida Chong, Minister of Community Services at CS.minister@gov.bc.ca and PO Box 9056, Victoria BC V8W 9E2,

Honourable Stan Hagen, Minister of Tourism, stan.hagen.mla@leg.bc.ca and PO Box 028 Parliament Buildings, Victoria, BC V8V 1X4.

Claire Trevena at claire.Trevena.mla@leg.bc.ca and 908 Island Highway Campbell River, BC V9W 2C3.

Also, copy the CSRD Board at administration@rdcs.bc.ca

For local press contacts please refer to Director Jim Abrams Report found in this Discovery Islander.

Feel free to contact me about this or any other concerns at 935-6488 Monday through Friday 9:00 am to 4 pm. (No early morning, late night or weekend calls, please.) If you get the answering machine try my cell phone -- 202-6488. You can also email me at brijen@oberon.ark.com anytime.

Respectfully Submitted by Jenny Hiebert—Regional Director