

## **Davis Bay – Wilson Creek – Selma Park Community Association Oct 12 2022**

**Q1: Do you feel that based on our water issues in Sechelt, that we can proceed as planned with a development that is proposing 212 dwelling units, with 522 bathrooms? How can this be explained to a community that, in 2022, will spend at least ¼ of the year in stage 3 & stage 4 water restrictions?**

If you believe some of the comments online, these homes will sit empty most of the time anyways. I don't personally believe that, as I know of local people who are interested in buying homes up there. However this time, the District of Sechelt has no method by which we can regulate the number of bathrooms built in a home, or the number of water consuming fixtures installed.

The BC Climate Action Toolkit makes reference to water conservation measures, as well as make suggestions for things like the Merton rule around energy generation, or requiring cisterns under driveways. These are new concepts that could come through an OCP update and incentivizing builders.

I do want to say that I did vote against the form and character development permit for this particular project. I would have much rather seen more compact townhouses with additional green space around the project, but the developer chose to go with what the zoning and OCP allowed for, rather than make any attempts to innovate.

**Q2: Have you read the entire OCP? And what are the values or priorities you would like to see embedded into the next Official Community Plan for Sechelt?**

I have read the entire OCP, but I admit that I don't have it committed to memory. In addition to climate change considerations, one of the things that we know needs improvement, is that currently our density talks about units per hectare, which rewards fewer, larger, more expensive units, rather than a floor space ratio, which rewards smaller, more sustainable units.

However, our updated OCP also needs to include additional gentle density outside of our downtown. Carriage houses, tiny homes, laneway housing, just generally smaller more creative forms of secondary units.

Speaking personally, I'm just under a half acre, and can't build a second dwelling of any size. Everyone on my street is in the exact same situation, and it's leading to people in our community living illegal in RV's in driveways or up our forest service roads. We have to be willing to allow for some growth in our neighbourhoods. It doesn't mean high rises on every street.

**Q3: In your opinion, what is the role of community engagement in the work of local government? What do you see as the role of a community association? How do you plan to engage with the community if you are elected?**

I was on the executive of the SDBA, so I know that the community associations are the most effective method for us to engage with our residents. I know that Covid threw a bit of a wrench into things for the last two years, but it's important that the community associations and the District of Sechelt work more closely together that we have been to ensure that the concerns are being heard as projects and ideas are brought forward.

During the last term, we tried 'Council Conversations' where Council would chat with any members of the public that wanted to show up, and we very rarely had more than two or three people show up, so I don't know that that was an effective means of engagement, but I am willing to try it again.

I'm actually more interested in hearing how the community wants to be engaged with by Council. Is it mail outs? Is it an open house in the mall? Is it a monthly Council newsletter? I don't have the answer to that question yet. But if you want to talk to me more about it, I'll be at the Village Restaurant tomorrow (Oct 13) from 11am to noon. Come have a coffee with me.

**Q4: What will you do to ensure that taxes do not continue to climb for residential property owners, and how will you act on behalf of taxpayers to monitor the spending of the SCRD and the District of Sechelt?**

So much of our infrastructure is nearing end of life, and it's more costly, and requires more engineering, and more permits to replace it than it ever was to put it in the ground in the first place. On top of that we have people wanting more and more services, faster response times to requests, and more, which doesn't come without a cost.

Credit where credit's due, Mayor Milne's Council approved an annual 3% tax increase that goes towards capital renewal, and we've kept that up, and I would hope that the next Council sees the value in continuing that fund. Infrastructure renewal was cheaper 15 years ago, so why wasn't anything done about it then?

A 1% tax increase raises just over \$100,000 for Sechelt, and costs the average homeowner about \$16.20. That being said, Sechelt has a way higher percentage of residential tax base than most communities, so every tax increase hits homeowners. If we want to work towards keeping things manageable for homeowners, we're going to need more commercial and industrial development. Light manufacturing, tech jobs, even aircraft schools and airplane repair centres could go a long ways towards diversifying that tax base. If that isn't acceptable, then the community is going to have to start to have a conversation about what services they're willing to do without.

**Q5: What is your position on the Highway 101 bypass study, ending on Havies? Would you prioritise the Highway 101 improvements, and how would you approach working with the shishalh and Squamish Nations, and MOTI on this issue as our next Mayor and Council?**

The highway study as currently consulted on by MOTI is a farce, plain and simple. It's an expensive feel good attempt to placate the residents of Sechelt who asked for this. Anyone who has spent any amount of time in our community knows that Havies Rd is not a viable alternative, not to mention that it does nothing towards improving conditions through the rest of Selma Park into Sechelt. On the other hand, MOTI did us a favor and replaced all the reflectors a couple years ago and they didn't even last the winter.....yea.

The MOTI team still will not share the scoring matrix, or talk about other options that were removed from consideration, and why they were removed. We need to start there.

Any possible plan needs to work for all of our whole community, settler and indigenous alike. It's impossible to promise some solution or other options at this time without working through those with the Sechelt and Squamish Nations.

**CLOSING:**

Thank you to everyone for coming out tonight, and thank you to the community association for putting this event together. On October 15<sup>th</sup>, I would obviously appreciate your support and your vote, but if not that's ok too. Just think about who you want shaping Sechelt over the next four years, and remember that a protest vote doesn't help shape our community. Also, please remind your friends to get out and vote. For more information about me and the issues as I see them, visit [altontoth.info](http://altontoth.info).