

## December 14 2009 Regular General Meeting December 14, 2009

*Executive Present: Andrew Scruton, Liz Johnston, Patti Willis, Moira Webster, Doug Wright, Derek Hood,*

*Regrets: Perri Gorrara, Max Campill-Wedges*

*Members Present: 16*

Despite rapidly accumulating snow, sixteen hardy members attended the December 14th DIRA meeting. They were rewarded with hot apple cider steeping on the woodstove, cookies, and a festive Christmas tree brought in just for a one-time appearance. With no quorum present, those assembled settled in for a short informational meeting at which no official business was conducted, to be brought forward to January 11, 2010.

On December 7th, DIRA Executive members met with Debra Oakman (Chief Administrative Officer) and Ian Smith (General Manager,, Community Services Branch) of the Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD). The purpose of the meeting was to gain clarity on DIRA's relationship to Denman's tax-supported services/functions (Fire Department, Waste Management, Economic Enhancement, Bill Mee Park), all of which submit budgets and report regularly to DIRA. Though CVRD considers DIRA's current role to be informal in nature, Ms. Oakman suggested that the time has probably come to formalize CVRD's relationship to DIRA in order to clarify roles and responsibilities regarding management and oversight of the tax-supported functions. The meeting also included discussion of property taxes and whether Denman Islanders are receiving good value for taxes paid. The CVRD will prepare a detailed accounting for DIRA and will hold a public meeting to explain 2010 budgets. A full report on the CVRD/DIRA meeting will be available at the January DIRA meeting.

Fire Department Chief, Don Luckett, reported that he expects to receive a letter of intent from Emergency Health Services regarding the new ambulance station by the end of February 2010. He noted that Denman is among three priority communities for a facility. Should the current lease need to be extended, it will be brought to the DIRA Executive and membership for approval. He also addressed the issue of emergency access in the event of trees down on electrical lines during high volume events, a BC-wide problem. The Fire Chiefs' Association and BC Hydro met to address this problem following the particularly nasty 2006/07 winter storm season. The DIVFD will inform the community about the report that resulted from this meeting. Don confirmed that if there is a down live power line and Hydro cannot attend immediately, the DIVFD will not leave the site. Should emergency access be required, the DIVFD will do everything in its ability to ensure this, including calling out a helicopter if necessary.

Andrew Scruton reported on the proposed Raven Coal Mine to be located 4 miles west of Buckley Bay. He discussed the serious human health risks of living near (within 30 miles) of a coal mine as reported in the *American Journal of Public Health*. Look for his article – coming soon, as well as more information on the mine project in the January *Flagstone*.

Parks Committee chairperson, Peter Karsten, reported that the committee submitted referral comments and observations to the Islands Trust on just the park component of "The

Point” application, noting that the committee did not approve/disapprove the application as a whole. The Adopt-A-Park project is in the CVRD budget, though approval of the budget is not expected until the end of December, with word to the committee in January.

Island Trustee, David Graham, reported on a recent meeting between the Islands Trust and the CVRD. Among topics discussed: The Natural Area Protection Taxation Exemption Program (NAPTEP) is coming to Denman. The CVRD was asked of their interest in accepting the donation of the proposed park that is part of “The Point” application. Islands Trust was advised that a formal request should be made to the CVRD Board for consideration. In response to complaints about shell-fish aquaculture activities in Baynes Sound, the Islands Trust has volunteered to coordinate a public meeting for local, provincial and federal agencies, aquaculture companies and the CVRD. Islands Trustees shared their concern on the lack of consultation with the Trust of the Raven Coal project. CVRD staff suggested that the Islands Trust contact the Ministry of Energy and Mines and/or the Compliance Coal Corporation to advise them that the Islands Trust requests to be included on referral matters. CVRD staff confirmed that the Denman Island Parks and Greenway Plan project has been on hold. There was an update on a water service for Denman Island, noting that a water license was approved by the province in mid-November. The service, once fully implemented, will service 23 properties with a capacity for additional 14. A public meeting will be coordinated in early 2010 for future users. Trust Council met on Salt Spring in early December and discussed the 1010/11 budget; a preliminary budget increase in the 5-6% range is being considered.

The DIRA Executive would like to thank all the volunteers who support the work of DIRA and extend our warm wish for a peaceful and restful winter holiday season to all.