



Bowen Island *Undercurrent*

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Many people still undecided about park

MARTHA PERKINS
EDITOR

Thirty-four per cent of Bowen Islanders like the idea of a national park on the island. Twenty-five per cent don't like it. And the remaining 40 per cent want to have a bit more information before they make up their minds.

That was what Angus McAllister and his team of phone surveyors discovered when they asked 300 Bowen Island residents to share their opinion about the park.

Only one of those 300 people hadn't heard of the possibility of creating a national park using the island's Crown and park lands.

The other 299 people had lots of opinions, McAllister said with a smile when he presented his findings to council on Monday night.

Often the respondents were only allowed one answer but they spent "many, many minutes" giving it.

McAllister said public engagement in the process is obviously high. Thirty-six per cent of respondents have read about or attended meetings about Parks Canada's draft preliminary concept.

The results show that whether you read the concept plan or not, you were just as likely to think the park is a bad idea. If you attended a workshop, more people were in favour of it.

"A lot of people want more information," McAllister said. "They're still thinking this through."

It took about 6,000 calls to get the 300 respondents from all across the island, McAllister said. His company used a computer-generated random sample of listed and unlisted numbers. The results are plus or minus 5.3 per cent 19 times out of 20. "The more you go away from 50/50 the more accurate the actual number."

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PROVIDING SHELTER - Ai Kanezaki and Yaeko Watanabe were moved by the outpouring of support for the Bowen Island Rotary Club's shelter box fundraising blitz over the weekend. Both women work with Rotarian Piers Hayes at the Snug Café. Over \$12,000 was donated to buy these tent kits which will be sent to Japan to help people left homeless by the earthquake. Ai's family live in Tokyo so they have not suffered any loss or damage. Yaeko's family also escaped and are well and thankfully have not suffered losses. Their co-worker Masami, not pictured, couldn't locate her family for a few days. Her extended family is from the north of Japan close to where the tsunami hit. Their homes suffered damage but thankfully escaped injury. Please see page 9 for a story about the shelter box program. *John Hazell photo*

Belterra proposal takes another step forward

MARTHA PERKINS
EDITOR

Cohousing is a timely and fitting idea for Bowen Island, municipal councillors said on Monday night, and while there are many details still to be worked out, they agreed to circulate the Belterra cohousing project's rezoning application to various agencies and ministries for comment.

Mayor Bob Turner said, "This is a

really exciting proposal. It's a big material advance towards building community. We need to see it fleshed out and we'll be inspired by it."

He said that its land-use principles reminded him of Artisan Square - tight density surrounded by green. "It's an efficient use of space, and very compact style."

"I think it's a great idea," Councillor Nerys Poole said. "The concept is really timely for Bowen to consider. I think

cohousing fits really well for Bowen Island."

Councillor Peter Frinton, while asking the most questions about the proposal, also said "I think this is a great idea. The cohousing form is a terrific one; I just have some site concerns that it may not be possible to provide all the proposed amenities."

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Belterra cohousing proposal continued

Many planning issues ‘on the radar’

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Belterra is slated for 10 acres of land owned by Roger McGillivray and Stepanie Legg next to Island Pacific School on Carter Road. Cohousing is similar to but not the same as condominium ownership. The plan at present - unit owners will be working together to come up with the final concept - is to have 30 units of 500 to 1,200 square feet each. Twenty-five will sell in the range of \$300,000 to \$400,000. Five of them will be restricted to about \$175,000 each, which is strictly the cost of construction.

Half of the 10 acres, including all the frontage along Terminal Creek, will be donated to the municipality.

Michael Rosen, the planner who’s been hired by the municipality to work on the application, says the Belterra project is already at a high level of planning. He suggested going ahead with the rezoning application before the official community plan update is formally adopted. Although Belterra is not recognized in the existing OCP map, the update mentions it. As well, several guiding principles support it.

The multi-family format is con-

sidered to have less of an environmental impact because the housing units are not spread out, he said. Affordability, securing lands in public ownership, and sustainability are all tenets set out in the OCP update.

However, he said, “Providing affordable housing and land for the creek shouldn’t be the reason to support something. When you look at the island as a whole, the location seems to be good for this type of proposal. There is a planning rationale to support this. Their vision for the Carter Road neighbourhood reinforces the use of this land for this purpose.

“We’re looking at a huge increase in density, going from one to 30, but this kind of density is appropriate for the site.”

Various issues that arise “can be dealt with by good site planning.”

It’s possible to move ahead and make changes to the OCP update before it’s approved. He noted that council still maintains a lot of control through the land use bylaw. Moving ahead now “doesn’t obligate you to rezone the plan unless you are satisfied.”

Andy Beaird, the Bowen Island planner working on the Belterra project, said that as council makes its decisions about

“Cohousing’s focus is on the enhancement of the human spirit and challenging conventional ways of the way we dwell.”

Andy Beaird
Belterra planner

Belterra, they should remember that human beings must be as much a part of our concept of sustainability as the environment.

“Cohousing’s focus is on the enhancement of the human spirit, and challenging conventional ways of the way we dwell,” he said. “Human beings are ultimately responsible for the resilience of our communities. We have to look at the emotional needs of human beings. Ultimately, cohousing looks at economic, social and environment but one of the strengths is the human spirit rises to the top and it’s timely for Bowen Island to consider it.... We feel there’s a rationale that’s in the best inter-

ests in the community. This proposal suggests we not let perfect get in the way of progress. “

Councillor Frinton was the first to comment. He noted that when Belterra first came up, he excused himself from the debate because he lives next to the property. He got legal advice which outlined a litmus test to decide if he had a pecuniary (monetary) interest in the outcome. “It’s very different than being interested in the outcome,” he said. “If it becomes difficult and I feel I’m compromised, I will declare an interest.”

Until such time, he’s going to pretend he’s not a neighbour and deal with it just as he would any other proposal.

He had several questions, such as the assumption that Belterra would be hooked into Snug Cove water. This might not be possible. (Belterra will work with the municipality’s engineering department on this issue.)

The proposal calls for 45 parking units; he wondered if it could be reduced to one per unit and some for visitors and suppliers.

Carter Road is the primary access and yet a bridge on the road leading to the property will not accept heavy machinery and trucks. He noted that the children’s centre across the street

has a lot more traffic than it used to and the road’s become a short cut to recycling depot and gas station.

Michael Rosen said many of those issues will be identified during the referral process. “Many if not all of the points you raised are on their radar,” Rosen said. “Their answers will be reflected in covenants and zoning.”

He said he’s thought of one concern that Frinton missed - what will the visual impact be from key public points since Belterra will be on a hill.

Beaird said, “I agree with Michael. That one-inch binder, we did a good job in identifying some of the key issues that will come up. The level of detail you’ve brought up, I expect will come up when it goes out for referral. We will together as a team address those things as we move forward.”

Director of planning Hap Stelling was asked if the OCP update would have to go back to first reading if there are too many changes precipitated by Belterra. Stelling said, “The advice from the solicitor is that until we get to a public hearing there are no issues as to significant change. There have already been lots of other changes to text and maps.”

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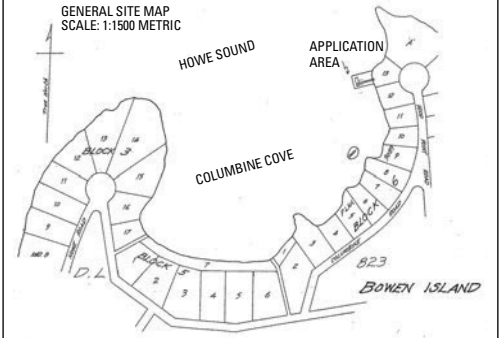
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The Land File Number is 2410608. Comments on this application may be submitted in two ways:

- 1) Online via the Applications and Reasons for Decision Database website at www.afrd.gov.bc.ca/ApplicationPosting/Index.jsp where details of this application, including maps can also be found.
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