

SATURNA ISLAND FIRE PROTECTION SOCIETY

PRESIDENT'S YEAR-END REPORT - 2007

From: Lorne Bolton

The new Board of Directors has been very busy pursuing a number of priorities since its election in June and it is now time to report on our activities.

Main Fire Hall

The first and major priority is the finalization of new fire hall sites for the Main Hall (Firehall #1) and for the Secondary Hall (Firehall #2) at East Point. After reviewing the various sites which had previously been considered, the Board decided to reconsider the Recreation Centre as a possible site for Firehall #1. This site previously had been considered but rejected because of concerns about its suitability for foundations and heavy vehicles. However, given its many other advantages, it was decided to revisit the matter in order to get a professional opinion regarding the suitability of the site for a fire hall near to the corner of Harris Rd. and Narvaez Bay Rd. A consulting engineer was engaged and we were subsequently pleased to find that this site is suitable for our purposes.

As part of the process we also undertook an engineering review of three other sites to make certain we had all the information necessary to make an informed decision. The other three sites included another site on the Rec. Centre property at the western side up against the property line bordering on the Money orchard. The second site is at 164 East Point Rd, to the east of the Crooks property and, to make sure that we had not overlooked any benefits, we had the engineer consider the Old Dump site as well.

Consideration was given to the following factors:

1. Topography of the site
2. Parcel size
3. Drive through considerations
4. Lot development costs
5. Potability of water - availability
6. Bulk water availability
7. Bulk water storage in a dug pond or underground storage tanks
8. Septic Field Potential
9. Zoning issues
10. Road Access
11. Parcel location
12. Special considerations
13. Acquisition costs.
14. Noise and traffic impacts on neighbours

The four sites were compared and evaluated on these criteria. The Old Dumpsite was eliminated for two major reasons: first, because of its relative remoteness for a large majority of the residents to whom it must provide service. Second, there would be problems associated with the navigation of fire trucks up and down the missing link in winter where there is potential for hill icing, washouts, heavy snow blockages, or fallen trees, all of which could slow or delay the turnout time of fire fighters and the response time of emergency vehicles.

Both the Old dump site and the site to the west of the Crooks property would require a purchase cost in the \$100,000 range plus, thus increasing significantly the site costs.

The Rec. Centre site on the extreme west of the property requires a higher site development cost, approximately \$100,000 greater than the easterly Rec Centre site. These costs are attributed to the need to construct a bridge over Money creek and raise the ground level above the potential flood level of the creek.

The easterly Rec. Centre site behind the water treatment building at the corner of Harris and Narvaez Bay Rd appeared to be the best site with the lowest cost for site development, most central location, drive through availability, and was positive on most other attributes. The only challenge we foresee is the excess water and swampy nature of the site but this can be remediated during the site preparation process.

The bulk of the water draining onto the site is from the weekly 8,000 gallon filter flush from the water system, winter and summer, and drainage from the Recycle Centre site. The site engineer does not consider this a problem. The same geotechnical engineer that advised the Rec. Centre on their building site indicated that the proper control of the two main water sources mentioned above and proper drainage would solve the problem. After some digging and sampling of soils, he concluded that the site will require the removal of about 1.6 m of organics and the replacement of this soil with 2 m. of suitable shale and sand fill.

Access to the site is expected to be on Harris Rd. near where the White house is located and on Narvaez Bay/East Point Road near the junction.

Based on these engineering reports and a survey indicating that the site is large enough to accommodate the firehall building, aprons, volunteer parking, and driveways, the Board approved at our last meeting that we proceed to the next stage in the development. Negotiations have commenced with the Rec. Centre Board to use this site.

Concurrently, the Board is examining building footprints, design requirements and costs. Excavation of the Rec. Centre Site is expected to commence this year.

East Point Firehall #2 site

While there is an excellent site available in the East Point area, the Board has decided to expand its search for a site that may be more cost effective. To that end notices were posted at three locations on the island and a notice has been emailed to those who requested email notices from us, advertised on the SIPOA group mail system and as posted on Saturnacan website. We have also written to Parks Canada, the CRD and B.C. Highways to see if they have potential sites that would be available. There are a number of 66' wide unused road right of ways in the East Point area that may be suitable for siting a fire hall without restricting waterfront access, if Highways approves.

A response deadline of February 1st has been given in order to provide time for our Board to decide on a site as soon as possible. The East Point fire suppression equipment currently suffers badly from not being under cover and not having access to electricity to keep connections from freezing.

New Equipment

Due to aging of our pumper trucks and the impact of rust from salt exposure it will be necessary to replace one of the pumper trucks this summer and the second one as soon as cash flow permits.

Property Addresses.

2008 will see a major push to get as many lots identified as possible with a reflective street address.

911 calls for emergency response or fire suppression will only give street addresses. For example "the third driveway past the pump house on East Point Road" is not an acceptable description for our volunteers and could result in no one coming to your aid.

Reflective street address numbers and their cost will be announced shortly.

If you have any questions regarding your property address contact the Fire Chief John Wiznuk. There is a master map showing all property addresses at the fire hall.

Volunteers

Your hardworking volunteers continue to respond to 911 calls for fire suppression and first responder emergencies. There is a priority to continue to upgrade their firefighting skills and maintain our equipment. Earlier this year 15 of these volunteers were qualified in wildfire suppression after taking a course given by Parks Canada. This qualification is recognized across Canada and provides Saturna with the best qualified wildfire suppression firefighters in the Gulf Islands. I am sure you join me in congratulating these men and women for their contribution of personal time and their dedication to our safety and wellbeing. We all wish them and you a safe, happy and prosperous New Year.

Board of Directors

Lorne R. Bolton, President; Al Sewell, Vice President; Wayne Quinn, Secretary;

Michael Taylor, Treasurer; Jim Bavis, Hugh Grasswick, Tom Koochin

John McMillan, John Money, John Savage, Ian Smyth, John Wiznuk, Fire Chief.