



Mayor and Council
City of Powell River
6910 Duncan Street
Powell River, BC
V8A 1V4

June 10, 2010

Re: Official Community Plan and Zoning Amendments Vacant City-Owned Land Corner of Marine and Abbotsford

Dear Mayor and Council,

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Powell River Regional Economic Development Society, I am responding to a request for comment on the Official Community Plan and Zoning Bylaw Amendments being considered by City Council for Lot B, DL450, BLK, NWD, GRP1, PL 7624EP (a.k.a Vacant City-Owned Lot on the corner of Marine Avenue and Abbotsford Street).

As Council is aware from past communications with our organization, PRREDS strongly supports the City moving forward on developing the property in question. Since 1989, there have been numerous studies and plans that have been produced which have identified that the 3.5 acre parcel of land is well suited for development in a number of forms...

- **1992 Waterfront Plan** – After public consultation, the plan identified the opportunity to construct an Amphitheatre with walkway close to the water.
- **1994 Waterfront Plan** – After public consultation, the plan identified the opportunity to establish a 20,000 square foot commercial marketplace building, civic square and public walkway close to the water.
- **2003 Cultural Master Plan** – After public consultation the consultants identified the opportunity to develop a ‘Discovery Centre’ on the property which would house the museum, art galleries, performance space, tourism information centre and interactive displays telling the stories of the community.
- **2004 Business Plan for Powell River Waterfront Development Corporation** – After public consultation and market analysis, the plan identified the opportunity to construct a multi storey condominium complex with commercial units, public facilities, civic square and public walkway close to the water.
- **2005 Waterfront Development Plan** – After public consultation, the plan identified the opportunity to develop a Cultural focus facility, restaurant, civic square and public walkway close to the water. This concept was later incorporated into the Official Community Plan.
- **2007/08 PRREDS Waterfront Development Committee** – The committee worked with approximately 10 stakeholder groups (e.g. Chamber of Commerce, Community Futures, Arts and

Cultural Organizations, Tla' Amin First Nation, Library, Museums, etc.) to identify the best way to develop the site. Ideas consisted of a multi-storey condominium development, public facilities, civic square and public walkway close to the water.

In regards to the work done by the PRREDS Waterfront Development Committee in 2007 and 2008, it is important to note that the efforts to secure detailed proposals on developing the site failed as Council at the time did not give enough authorization to show that it was serious about eventually moving forward. This is not to say that there wasn't interest shown in the property by development companies; in fact PRREDS has received many inquiries about the site, and believes that it is seen as very desirable property to develop. However, no company is prepared to spend time and money on building detailed proposals for development until the City shows that it is serious about the property. The two amendments being considered by Council will alleviate this issue.

Our Society is aware that concern has been expressed about maintaining public access to the property if it were to be opened up to development. PRREDS believes that by passing the OCP and Zoning Bylaw Amendments for this property does not mean that control on the type of development that occurs on the site is lost, in fact Council will still be able to control planning efforts through the development permit application process. Additionally, Council has already passed a resolution to seek further consultation which will help to establish guidelines for the development of the property in the future.

For many years now the above noted property has been vacant. Amending the Official Community Plan and Zoning Bylaw to change the designation of the parcel from Parks and Playing Fields to Mixed Use opens up a number of development possibilities for the City to explore. PRREDS believes that future development of the property could increase tax revenues, stimulate investment, create jobs, enhance the waterfront, attract visitors, support cultural activities and bring vibrancy to the Marine Avenue business district. However, none of these possibilities can be considered, nor proposals for development discussed until there is a clear direction from the City, and the best way of sending that message is to approve the amendments.

In closing, I would like to thank Council for taking steps to set a clear direction for the future of the vacant city-owned property at the corner of Marine Avenue and Abbotsford Street. PRREDS urges Council to pass the proposed amendments to the Official Community Plan and Zoning Bylaw to change the designation of the property from Parks and Playing Fields to Mixed Use. Our Society also offers its assistance in the public consultation process and development process that will follow. Please feel free to contact me or our Manager Scott Randolph if you would like to discuss this matter further.

Yours truly,

Jay Yule
President