Notes on Candidates Forum

About 80 people came out to hear what Current Director Rhona Martin and Candidates John Flynn and Norman Nelson had to say about the issues. The Moderator from the Sicamous Chamber of Commerce advised the Three that there would be five questions and each person would have two minutes to answer each question.

In addition, each person would have two minutes for an introduction and closing remarks, and at the end of the questions, there would be an opportunity to discuss the Referendum and questions from the audience.

Throughout the evening, Norm and John were both talking about the need to revisit the OCP, John gave some personal examples, Norm cited multiple businesses moving their operations - and their money - elsewhere. Rhona did not talk about the OCP at all.

John was very focused on the Referendum,

Rhona was equally focused on assuring those present that she has cultivated the professional relationships to make a difference going forward.

Norm's responses to the questions were more focused on what is good for the community, based on what people within the communities of Malakwa and Swansea Point have told him.

Infrastructure? Revise the OCP to make the area more livable. Increase tourism, invite filmmakers instead of discouraging them, encourage transportation and distribution companies, which will breathe new life into the area.

Taxes vs Services? Use the money we get wisely, eliminate waste and grow the tax BASE, not the tax RATE

Tourism? It's a multi-million-dollar industry. Make the area as tourist-friendly and FILM-FRIENDLY as possible

Emergency Preparedness? Put emergency generators in all the firehalls, which the CSRD **OWNS** and make charging stations for medical equipment, phones and computers available. Make the fire halls into warming stations during long power outages in the winter, and a source of potable water.

Closing Remarks: John spoke about personal experiences with the OCP, Rhona was very proud of the dollar amount attached to the 278 building applications received this year, (which 7 planners are working on) and Norm said, 'My commitment is clear: empower entrepreneurs, remove barriers, and open the door to new industries so families can move here, housing can be built, and our community can thrive once again.'

After the Planned Question Period came the subject of the Assent Vote, or Referendum?

John spoke passionately about it, suggesting that it was rushed.
Rhona is very much in favour of the Referendum she wrote.
Norm feels the Director needs to do as the People request. If the referendum passes, taxes increase and halls are funded. If the referendum fails, we need to look into replacing the halls with something we OWN

Questions from the audience included:
What do you intend to do about funding the Road Rescue Teams?

Norm would first incorporate Road Rescue with the Fire Departments, making funding available for training and equipment, then look to the Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure (MOTI) for funding. Since the dedicated individuals in the EVRR Teams work primarily on the MOTIs roads, and every community in the CSRD is served by a Highway, the MOTI should be contributing to keeping them in fuel, equipment and necessary supplies.

If the Referendum fails, what happens?

Norm has looked into alternatives to continuing to fund buildings we do not own. He has found for the Learning Center, we can get 4x50' Atco Trailers, place them on land the MCCA already owns and put the Post Office, Resource Center, Library and a meeting hall, potentially with a small kitchen, **IN A SPACE WE OWN**, He will continue looking into alternatives, bringing his ideas to the people, including where funding is coming from, until there is a majority agreement within the affected area, on the solution.

Personal note: The citizens of Malakwa and Cambie-Solsqua need to remain vigilant if the referendum fails, to ensure the CSRD doesn't try to push through something else that will cost us in the long run.