

Lasqueti Island Ratepayer's Association
Lasqueti Island, B. C. V0R 2J0

DREAM ON

If you read the Lasqueti email list on a regular basis you could get the impression that our island is under seige by the Powell River Regional District (PRRD). The crusaders come in the form of the Regional District's chief administrative officer Al Radke and Merrick Anderson, our defacto regional director. Both are determined to install 911 as our emergency response system and build a million-dollar-plus fire hall. Their dream, YOUR taxes. It is our position that the island can build a better response system for less and we don't need a million-dollar fire hall. Granted, the PRRD is in the messenger of provincial policy. On the other hand, regional government is the unwitting engine of urbanization on an island content with being a backwater in the expanding urban slough.

DETAILS, DETAILS, DETAILS

The point of good local government, we presume, is the astute management of community affairs. Here are some current details.

The fire chief used to be an officer of the PRRD board and reported directly to the board. On November 12, 2015 that board passed a resolution giving CAO Radke and his staff the powers of staffing regional fire departments including acquisitions and disposals. It appears from here that there is a conflict of interest when a regional district employee has complete control over personnel and equipment with little oversight.

Fire Insurance Underwriters will not accept a truck over 25 years old. Nevertheless, these trucks have often less than 30,000 kilometres and have been well maintained. Because a fire truck pumps through the transmission most of these miles are "pumping" miles while it is sitting parked and pumping water. Since we are a small fire department we buy elderly trucks and keep them operational.

We don't feel there is any need for a multi-million dollar firehall to house what the insurance underwriters don't accept.

Fire insurance underwriters require our fire department to have a chief and 15 trained firefighters on call and additional crew for

water delivery. Lasqueti can muster slightly more than a half-dozen on a good practice day, and in the winter often three. The problem is not with emergency dispatch or equipment. Lasqueti's population isn't sufficient to supply the personnel demanded by PRRD staff.

The local dispatch committee has now been chosen by the PRRD from local applicants. This group will be looking into practical alternatives to North Island 911 and dispatch contractor Ecomm Inc.

DELUXE DEMOLITION

There are current PRRD plans to install a \$65,000 washroom in the North end hall--which they are planning to tear down in 2018 to make way for the million-dollar fire palace. Also planned is a \$21,000 washroom at the Free Store, a building slated for relocation. Last year two residents said that they could supply a composting toilet, an on-demand water heater, and a sink for about \$2000. There was no response to this. The PRRD proposal also ignored the presence of the nearby health centre whose washroom facilities have been offered to the fire department.

The Regional District is implementing a 57% parcel tax increase which will cost you \$97 per \$100,000 of assessed value. We are looking into how we can set up a local board to oversee our fire department expenditures, as the staff at PRRD seem less than prudent with our tax dollars.

GOODBYE FERRY DOCK?

The Federal government is proceeding with trying to divest itself of False Bay dock. As this is our ferry landing you may wish to express your concerns directly to:

Marc Garneau
Minister of Transport
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON
K1A 0A6

His e-mail address: marc.garneau@parl.gc.ca Ph. 613-996-7267

Or contact: Lorraine Gill
 Regional Manager
 Property Divestiture
 Transport Canada
 800 Burrard Street
 Vancouver, B. C.
 V6Z 2J8

Her e-mail address: lorraine.gill@tc.gc.ca Ph. 604-666-5390

For more information: www.tc.gc.ca/ports-assets-transfer-program.

CRASHED AGAIN

When the 4.5 Richter scale earthquake occurred near Victoria on December 29th, 911 and Ecomm crashed again. Can you really believe that in a major incident these megalithic outfits will be anything but a poor joke on all small remote communities?

MERRICK WHO?

Our regional director Merrick Anderson stated recently on the Lasqueti e-mail list: "We always do our best to keep tax increases to a minimum, but if you think Lasqueti isn't growing and changing, open your eyes..."

Area E is Lasqueti

Electoral Area	EA Shared	Individual Services	Subtotal 2016	Subtotal 2015	Change over 2015
A	\$46.61	\$148.79	\$195.40	\$190.75	\$4.65
Savary Is	\$46.61	\$56.18	\$102.79	\$101.27	\$1.52
B	\$44.42	\$67.39	\$111.81	\$109.65	\$2.16
C	\$46.58	\$78.54	\$125.12	\$122.73	\$2.39
D	\$46.58	\$128.88	\$175.46	\$165.08	\$10.38
E	\$5.06	\$259.16	\$264.22	\$167.50	\$96.72

We think a by-election affirmation of his tenure is in order. There will be a by-election in area B soon. A by-election costs about \$5000-substantially less than \$2,000,000.

Mr. Anderson holds the position because no one ran against him. His advocacy of PRRD staff plans will put Lasqueti taxpayers two million dollars-plus in the hole. Should he win the theoretical by-election he will have the mandate he needs to ram these unpopular schemes down our throats.

LIRA SURVEY RESULTS

We sent out 370 questionnaires. Twenty-one came back as undeliverable. From the 118 we received (still trickling in) here are the results:

Are you in favour of building a new fire hall?

YES 8 NO 109 DON'T CARE 2

Are you in favour of the proposed 911 service?

YES 10 NO 105 DON'T CARE 74

Are you in favour of paving Kilometre One?

YES 47 NO 49 DON'T CARE 18

Are you in favour of renting guest cottages?

YES 56 NO 26 DON'T CARE 11

Would you like to join LIRA?

YES 56 NO 45 DON'T CARE 9

TO END ON A GRAVE NOTE...

Since the incorporation of Lasqueti as Area E in the mid-seventies we have been paying for a cemetery in Powell River in which no Lasquetian is resident. No regional director has ever noticed even though there are only 17 lines on the Lasqueti budget. There is a group here looking into getting these funds repatriated for the benefit of the living and the dead on Lasqueti.

Cheers. Karl Darwin, president