

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

The Judith Fisher Centre

On October 20 Lasquetians will decide whether the Judith Fisher health centre will sail into the future fuelled by the taxpayer's dime, or continue to drift in the uncertain breezes of being supported solely by volunteer donations.

It was determined by the voluntary board of the Last Resort Society, operators of the centre, that it will cost \$45,000 in annual maintenance and administration costs to keep the doors open. To that end they requested that the Regional District (qRD) initiate a referendum to raise the money. Should the referendum succeed, the rationalization is that it would free the board from being pre-occupied with constant fund-raising and instead focus on building a profitable and sustainable business model which—they hope—will eventually relieve the Society from being dependent on tax dollars.

The upcoming referendum is not without some controversy, not the least of which is the spectre of an ageing health centre becoming a bottomless pit to throw money at with no avenue for the community to extricate itself from ballooning taxation. However, regional director Merrick Anderson says that a service establishment bylaw can be rescinded if public funding is no longer required.

Some of the opposition is couched in idealism. For some the JFC represents creeping urbanization from which many people come here to escape. Health care involves government; government involves regulation; and regulation requires that local health care practitioners carry liability insurance to use the building. That effectively bars the door to many entry-level health care entrepreneurs who could otherwise use the centre to practice their skills.

Two public information meetings held in the past two months have delved into exploring ways to cut costs and brainstorm on how the centre can become self-supporting. Throughout the construction of the JFC it was assumed that the Vancouver Island Health Authority would step up to the plate and help out after it was built. Not so, it turns out.

Thousands of hours of volunteer labour and hundreds of thousands in cash have been donated to make the Judith Fisher Health Centre a reality. It's built. We own it. It's not going away. The plan is to make it work for everyone but it's not as easy as was thought. You can cast your vote October 20.

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The Road to Tucker Bay

By the time you read this Tucker Bay Holdings Ltd. will have been served the Statement of Claim which is the first step on the road to B. C. supreme court.

(Over)