

***Regional Planning Society Comments to Central Saanich,  
September 8, 2008 - Vicky Husband***

***The quality of our individual lives, our communities, and the legacy we pass on to our children depends on the decisions we make about land use today.***

The Regional Planning Society of Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands (RPS) is committed to helping ensure that we make wise, sustainable long-term decisions about land use on these extraordinary Islands.

Notes for Central Saanich council

I speak on behalf of the Regional Planning Society.....

Central Saanich has shown exemplary planning in protecting your agricultural lands and your rural landscape, which is so important to the whole region, and it continues to be vitally important to strengthen not weaken your commitment to protection these lands and sticking to the urban containment boundaries established in your OCP and Regional Context Statement.

The Senanus proposal to extend the watermain beyond the boundaries of the Urban Containment Boundary is a serious challenge to your OCP and would necessitate changing your Regional Context Statement. I would submit that this is a serious enough change that it becomes an issue for the CRD board and for all municipalities in the CRD.

The issues are:

- No comprehensive study has been done on the health of the water in the Senanus area. Without that how can anyone claim health risks in the water supply. About eight years ago a report by the Chief Medical Officer concluded that there was no health hazard in the present system.

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- Recommendations to better manage the groundwater and the aquifer to increase flow have not been acted upon by the District of Central Saanich.
- No environmental assessment of this proposed watermain has been done. Without that you have no ability to measure the potential impacts or to make informed decisions.
- Clearly, there is a connection between increased water use and the potential for septic tank failure leading to the necessity for the installation of sewer systems in the future, with the attendant costs to the community and its residents. And increasing the threat of more development in a rural zone.
- With a watermain there would be serious concerns about piped and treated water, entering and impacting the marine environment from faulty septic systems. This is not an issue now as the properties are on wells.
- In an era of increasing climate change and the need for water conservation measures to be made mandatory, this proposal appears to be a step backwards.
- It is well understood that water is a controlling factor for development. Giving access to piped water could herald increased development in the area. Is that what this council wants to see? What controls would you propose to put in place to control those landowners who suddenly see the opportunity for subdivision of their lands? The Regional Planning Society would recommend a proviso put on the properties that would require third party covenant be placed on the lands to

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protect their natural values and to keep the properties intact and to prevent future subdivision.

- Clearly, that is an issue that would only arise if this proposal were to go ahead, presumably after a fair, open and transparent public process and referral to the CRD and municipalities.

Acceptance of third party covenants would clearly state that this issue is not about development and only about water supply.