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# Grant better spent on path

May 28, 2008

Contrary to the PNR May 14th Good News and Bad News Report of infrastructure grants in Central Saanich, I believe that it is all bad news.

For more than 10 years, a small but persistent group of Senanus Drive residents have been lobbying the District of Central Saanich for a water main to their rural residential properties in the north-west corner of the District. Although a number of studies indicated that most of the water problems were aesthetic in nature and could be solved on-site, with additional on-site or local community solutions to address seasonal low water volumes, this intransigent group convinced a majority of Central Saanich council to apply for grants of more than one million dollars from the federal and provincial governments to build a water main. Further, in order to fully finance this project, it is estimated that their neighbours along Mt. Newton X Road may incur up to a 25 per cent increase in taxes for the next 15 years. I believe that this project is of limited public value and is a very poor use of our tax dollars. One of the properties on Senanus Drive is currently listed for sale and claims four bathrooms. A new private spa of another Senanus residence was recently featured in Western Living. It is difficult for me to believe that these properties suffer with serious water problems.

In the meantime, the grant for the cycling /pedestrian upgrade to East Saanich Road, that would allow students to walk or ride their bicycles safely to school, has been denied. It seems impossible that a questionable waterline to 20 residents would take priority over other public Central Saanich projects that require provincial and federal funding, including village sidewalks, youth programs, and affordable rental housing. This is a bad news story but to quote one of the proponents of the water main: with sufficient will, the impossible is possible.

Elizabeth Chambers,

Brentwood Bay

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