

## President's Report Hwy 97 Task Force Society AGM June 23, 2016

- 1 Our Society has had a good year...lots of Press, lots of action.
- 2 The directors drafted a submission to the Peachland Council in August 2015 and director Chris Reniers presented it in power point, winning a unanimous resolution from Council asking MOTI to build a bypass around not 4 lane through our town.
- 3 A slogan was crafted: "*The single most important decision affecting the future of Peachland*"...and that slogan has appeared again and again in the Media and in Council publications.
- 4 Mayor Cindy Fortin and several councillors then met with the Premier and the result was the announcement and funding of the "Peachland Transportation Study", a two year study with full community and District participation focused on Peachland's transportation improvement options.
- 5 On Jan 13, 2016 the Peachland Transportation Study Public Forum was held and around 350 plus attended. About 72% expressed support for a bypass thru voting cards, with the rest either undecided or against. An election of community reps from the pro, anti and undecided groups ensued and Jeff MacDougal was elected for the Pro-bypass side and he has been working hard on the issue. Peter Warner was appointed by our Society to represent the Society. This Study will complete around December 2017.
- 6 My belief is that our Society and its board must focus on two things: increasing membership (848 now) to over 1,0000, and promoting the benefits of a bypass, not just the negative effects of the 4 laning option. John Abernethy, Bert Put, Terry Tanner and I met with Keith Funk of New Town Services on June 7 and that was his advice.
- 7 Keith said that Peachland is nearly out of flat/semi flat developable land for housing, apartments, commercial and industrial, but if a bypass is built, it would provide access to many acres of developable bench land above Peachland to expand housing, commercial and possibly industrial, adding to our tax base and providing Peachland with URBAN SUSTAINABILITY.
- 8 You all got your property tax notices, mine went up 15%. In most communities the commercial and industrial properties pay a larger portion of

the taxes, in Peachland that sector is a mere 5% and shrinking, so unless we attract such new developments you can expect big tax increases every year from now on. Peachland was the only community in the valley that lost population last year.

9 John Abernethy, Bert Put and Terry Tanner then crafted an excellent submission to the Peachland OCP public forum on June 7 which emphasized these and other arguments.

10 Many of you attended the Peachland Transportation Study public forum held June 21. Murray Tekano of the Ministry was quoted saying that 90% of thru traffic does not even stop in Peachland: Do we really want to build 4-6 lanes thru town in the hopes of attracting 10% of the traffic to stop? I think with a bypass the 90% will continue to avoid Peachland via a bypass, and the 10% who stop along a scenic/wine route will grow and grow for our businesses and create jobs for our children.

11 Yes, we can, and should strongly argue the safety, noise and dust issues in favour of a bypass, but so can every other highway-adjacent community in BC that wants public funds for improvements. Our other arguments around urban sustainability and four extra kilometres of developable lakefront are unique in BC and set us apart from other communities wanting transportation improvements, hopefully putting us nearer the top of the list.

11 I am guessing we are the only community in the world with 9 km of beautiful public lakefront, but no motel, hotel or resort. Our excellent restaurants and B&Bs do a great job attracting many visitors, but many others simply arrive, park on Beach Ave, swim, cook hotdogs and leave at 5:00, with little or no revenue or job creation for Peachland.

12 Again, we need urban sustainability/ a balanced and safer community. The main street of a town should not also be a freeway.

Peter Warner  
Interim President  
Hwy 97 Task Force Society