



Children's Charity Disappointed By Surprise Land Amendment

Boys & Girls Club Remains Committed To Enhancing Service To Children and Youth

VICTORIA, B.C. – The Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Victoria Foundation is deeply disappointed in the sudden decision by Metchosin Council to seek a land use change of its property in Metchosin and yet remains committed to serving the best interests of children, youth and families in our region.

On Wednesday, the District of Metchosin Council held a special meeting at which it unanimously agreed to fast track a bylaw that would devalue land owned by the Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Victoria Foundation, land that was to be sold to support the children's charity. The not-for-profit society learned of this special meeting on social media and did not receive any direct notification, did not receive a copy of the planning report and had no advance knowledge of the site-specific planning amendment.

"For more than 35 years, we have done our utmost to support our community and remain good neighbours but today we feel blindsided," said Foundation Board spokesman Wayne Jensen. "Earlier this month, we made a sincere effort to communicate with council and yet we received no response. This isn't the kind of transparency or openness citizens expect from our council."

The land use amendment, which received first and second reading on Wednesday, would restrict future usage of the property and thereby significantly devalue it. The Foundation will now be forced to consider the restricted options within council's new parameters to preserve the value of the land.

The zoning change will also significantly reduce the amount of time available for potential purchasers, community groups, municipal/regional governments and others who have already expressed interest in preserving the land for conservation purposes.

"We had previously stated that a future sale was a long way from being realized, thereby allowing sufficient time for interested parties to consider their purchasing options, while preserving the value of the land," Jensen said.

The non-profit organization has operated nature, wilderness and educational programs on the 98-acre property in Metchosin for more than 35 years, providing life-changing experiences to thousands of young people. Early on, the property was critical to serving significant youth justice needs but since then, changes in young offender laws and an evolution in youth needs have reshaped community priorities.

More than a year ago, the non-profit charity decided to sell a 40-acre parcel of the property. It was a thoughtful, considered decision aimed at meeting the increasing challenges of today's children, youth and families across southern Vancouver Island. In early 2020, the Foundation made formal application to divide the property. This was followed by widespread communication with the community, municipal council and staff, supporters, donors and the media.



Boys & Girls Club
of Greater Victoria

The needs of children, youth and families across our region continue to expand. Whether it's responding with quality out-of-school care and summer camps or providing homelessness prevention, youth outreach, substance abuse and mental health programming, Boys & Girls Club of Greater Victoria remains committed to being there.

"The eventual sale of this property will ensure more services for more young people," Jensen said. "Hurdles may be placed in our way but we are steadfast in placing the needs of the region's young people first."

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