



Open Letter to the Mayor and Council for the District of West Kelowna

Dear Mayor Findlater and Council;

On behalf of the Historic Westbank Association, I am responding to the District's directive to their staff to start the process of meeting the requirements for the change from district to city.

The question needs to be asked: where is open and transparent dialogue between the citizens of our community and our local government on this very important issue? Why hasn't there been previous public input allowed through holding open houses or public forums, where citizens can ask staff important questions of their local government representatives and staff regarding this crucial juncture for our community?

I am sure there are poignant questions that our community would like to have the mayor and council address before going ahead with this proposal. A couple of the key questions on the minds of most of our residents are...."will my property taxes increase significantly due to the proposed change in status? What other costs will we incur?

The Historic Westbank Association has always stood behind the viable concept of our town of Westbank within the boundaries of the District of West Kelowna. Supporting and preserving Westbank's vibrant heritage and honouring our pioneers is paramount in uniting our community and promoting our downtown economic development for the future. Will our mayor and council continue to honour their commitment to promote Westbank as the cultural and economic center of our community?

The future includes working together with Westbank First Nation, also an integral and important part of our community and economic driver in the west side area. At this time the H.W.A. along with the Westbank Museum are working together on a couple of projects that would help increase tourism and consequently business and economic development for downtown Westbank, W.F.N. and the D.W.K.

The Historic Westbank Association requests that the Mayor, Council and staff of the District of West Kelowna hold public open houses and forums where the citizens of our community, as well as businesses and service organizations will have the opportunity to have their questions and concerns addressed. Staff could then bring those questions and concerns to council so they can be adequately addressed and answered frankly.

Finally, this issue deserves to have public approval through a referendum. Yes, it will be more costly, however, we should uphold our democratic rights as citizens of our community, and everyone should have the opportunity to vote on the proposal to change our District's status.

Sincerely yours,
Gordon Ficke
President, Historic Westbank Association