

VALLEY NEWS

BLENKINSOP VALLEY COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

OUR PURPOSE:

to "provide input on all community matters in the Blenkinsop Valley including but not limited to agriculture, other land uses, transportation, environmental issues, safety, heritage and culture".

Annual General Meeting

Friday April 4 2008

Cordova Bay School Gymnasium

5238 Cordova Bay Road

7:00 PM: Displays on Emergency Preparedness

and American Bullfrog Identification

7:30 PM: Emergency Preparedness;

Councillor Vic Derman:

The Role of Community Associations;

Business Meeting

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About the BVCA By Barry Loucks, BVCA President

The BVCA was created at a meeting of eight people on November 23, 2006. The inaugural members were Roy and Mary Bennett, Nathalie Chambers, Suzie and Ed Polinsky, Darlene McCue, and Dawn and Barry Loucks. Many community associations have been created in response to a single community concern such as a new subdivision but this was not the case for the BVCA. The inaugural members all felt the need for a community association for the residents of the Blenkinsop Valley (as had been said at Saanich Council meetings) but they each brought different concerns to the meeting. Some of those concerns included traffic on Blenkinsop Rd., development pressures, and the competition which local farmers are facing from inexpensive imports (at that time there had been a large shipment of off-shore carrots flooding the local market so that local carrots could not be sold). ...Continued page 2 Founding Members

BVCA Directors 2007

Suzie Polinsky	Dale Leeuw
Ed Polinsky	Annette Barclay
Darlene McCue	Ken Babcock
Nathalie Chambers	Linda Cirella
Dave Charlebois	Dawn Loucks
Barry Loucks, President	

From 1 **Founding Members** At that first meeting, we decided to form the BVCA, created a purpose statement, approved the by-laws and selected the officers. The members incorporated the BVCA as a non-profit society, and obtained recognition from Saanich as a community association. Three and a half months after the first meeting, the BVCA held its first AGM and election of directors. The association now has approximately 90 members.

Traffic & Road Safety

In May 2007, Barry Loucks, Ed Polinsky and myself met with Mike Lai, Manager, Transportation for Saanich, to ensure the municipality was aware of the concerns brought forward by BVCA members. We specifically mentioned the following concerns:

- Traffic speed, wildlife and dangerous driving along Blenkinsop Road
- Signage at McKenzie and Royal Oak intersections with Blenkinsop to promote the Blenkinsop Valley and its unique characteristics (slow-moving farm vehicles, markets and roadside stands, wildlife, and bicycle traffic)
- Increased roadside parking at the western entrance to Mt Doug Park (across from Galey Eggs)
- Enforcement of the 50 km/h posted speed limit along Blenkinsop Road

During this meeting, we learned (although perhaps not what we wished to learn) that Blenkinsop Road is considered a major north/south artery for vehicular traffic through Saanich. While oversized traffic (buses and large trucks that are not making local deliveries) is prohibited from using Blenkinsop Road, it is a major artery for morning and afternoon commuter traffic heading to/from downtown and UVic.

One direct result of our meeting has been an increased police presence along Blenkinsop Road. In June Saanich Police placed a speed-monitoring camera that flashes vehicle speeds when approaching the camera. We have asked for this camera to be a frequent visitor to Blenkinsop Road. The intersections of Pearce Crescent and Blenkinsop continue to be popular spots for Saanich Police monitoring traffic with radar.

Last autumn, the BVCA made a request to Saanich to have a pedestrian crosswalk installed at Blenkinsop and Pearce Crescent. Mr. Larry Crawford, the Traffic Safety Engineer for Saanich, provided a response outlining several reasons for not having a crosswalk at this location. After giving his responses careful consideration, the Directors have not pursued this initiative.

As traffic issues will continue to be very top-of-mind, we ask all BVCA members to please respect the posted speed limit of 50 km/hour along Blenkinsop Road. Together, by slowing down, we will force other commuters to do likewise and will help make Blenkinsop Road a safer route for everyone.

Dave Charlebois

*BVCA Director
1269 Pearce Crescent
dave1269@shaw.ca*

Correspondence and Municipal Affairs

On reviewing our correspondence and our involvement with municipal affairs, I was surprised at the number of issues the BVCA has addressed in the last year, which included the following:

- We wrote letters on two subdivision proposals. We opposed the proposal for an eight-home subdivision on Lochside Dr., across the road from the Lochside school. We also encouraged a limit on house size and a generous setback for a subdivision proposal on Royal Oak which borders the Outerbridge Park. This latter subdivision did not require rezoning.
- We hosted four municipal officials at our directors' meetings including discussions with a planner, and two by-law enforcement officers as well as a presentation from the Saanich Emergency Preparedness Program.
- We met with the Engineering and Planning Departments to discuss traffic safety, traffic planning and the fill-deposit bylaw.
- In collaboration with the Broadmead Residents' Association and the North Quadra Land Use Protection Association we met separately with David Cubberly, Vic Derman, Frank Leonard, Saanich Planning and a representative from the Provincial Government about our mutual concerns regarding the Beckwith U-Farm proposal.
- We wrote a letter to Saanich Council supporting urban farm markets.
- We wrote to the Saanich Police about Blenkinsop Rd. traffic concerns and this resulted in the meter board being placed on Blenkinsop Rd. for one week.
- We responded to Councillor Gillespie's request for our input about a by-law proposal to limit property line hedge heights.
- We wrote to Saanich Council and communicated with Mrs. Joanne Outerbridge's representative about plans for Outerbridge Park at 1211 Royal Oak, now open .

- We wrote to Saanich Council voicing opposition to a CRD proposal to alter the Urban Containment Boundary in the Highlands.
 - We wrote to comment on the draft Official Community Plan.
 - We met with neighbour groups about concerns regarding night lighting and fill deposit. Saanich referred both of these groups to the BVCA.
 - We communicated with the BVCA membership about the presence of the American Bull Frog in the Blenkinsop Valley.
 - Saanich asked for our input on the division of a farm within a family (which we supported) and to a sewer extension on Blenkinsop for health reasons from which we withheld support since the documentation provided did not appear to confirm a failing septic field or a health risk
- As you can see, we have considered many interesting issues.

Barry Loucks

Emergency Preparedness

A member of the Saanich Emergency Preparedness Program gave a talk at one of the directors' meetings (this is also planned for the AGM on April 4). The primary goal of this program is to have as many households as possible trained to be self sufficient in the event of a major disaster. In disasters elsewhere, it is common for people to have to fend for themselves for up to seven days before outside help arrives. Until that time, our main source of help will be from our neighbours. Once individual households are trained, it is preferable for neighbourhoods to organize as well. This could involve a list of skills available (e.g. electricians, plumbers, medical personnel etc), a list of shut-ins or the elderly and a list of available equipment (e.g. generator, water valve turn off "T" wrench). Come to our AGM and learn much more, such as whether or not you should turn off your natural gas valve if you don't smell leaking gas (the answer is no).

Agriculture: Food Security and Climate Change

By Nathalie Chambers

The Agricultural Sub-committee of the BVCA was formed to facilitate conversations with farmers and increase awareness of sustainable agricultural practices. Climate Change challenges us to think of ways to strengthen our food security right here in the Valley by expanding the amount of local food production and direct farm marketing.

Dr. Richard Hebda, Curator of Botany and Earth History at the Royal British Columbia Museum, has this advice to reduce the impact of climate change: “reduce emissions; travel less; restructure cities and urban areas into self-reliant communities; restore ‘the forest’ on every lot (e.g. replace lawns with forest and garden); restore natural wetlands, ponds, and riparian areas; end the conversion of natural lands—humans have already taken enough; ensure food security: protect the Agriculture Land Reserve; experiment to diversify crops; evaluate projects based on carbon emissions; stop needless consumption: Empty consumerism = CO2 emissions; embrace the Slow Movement (www.slowmovement.com);

foster wise individual choices; work close to home, thereby gaining time, and saving money to reinvest in BC. Don’t believe in a ‘techno-fix’—there are no easy solutions.”

We hope to encourage the availability of locally produced food in the Valley by linking landless farmers with suitable farm land. We hope to produce a list of landowners that would be willing to lease lands in the Valley to food-producing farmers. If you are interested in this proposition please contact the BVCA.

Valley News edited by John Lawler

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**Renew your Membership Mail to:
Blenkinsop Valley Community Association
PO Box 30063, 3989 Quadra St.
Victoria BC, V8X 5E1**

Surname: _____ First Name: _____

Phone: _____

Address: _____

Postal Code: _____

E-mail: _____

Amount enclosed (\$10.00/person/yr): _____

Skills or desire to contribute? _____