

Published February 5, 2010
LOCAL NEWS

Dozens of ideas presented for Gibsons
Brent Richter/Staff Writer

The future of parks in the Town of Gibsons is starting to take shape as the parks master plan is nearing its completion.

A small, but keen group of residents gathered for the last public input meeting at municipal hall on Wednesday, Jan. 27 to help guide consulting firm Lees and Associates in writing a list of priorities.

Consultant Erik Lees presented more than 30 specific priorities and projects to get feedback on and include in the final report. The recommendations come from a survey conducted in the summer and an open house meeting in October, 2009.

One of the firm's strongest recommendations, based on community input, is for the Town to create a new waterfront park and make an improved sea walk that traces the shoreline in Gibsons from Marina Park to Armour's Beach.

"Parks should reflect what the community is about and in Gibsons, this is the waterfront," said Heidi Redman, a landscape architect for Lees and Associates.

Other ideas in Lees' presentation included constructing an improved performance venue in Winegarden Park, a less steep trail linking Upper and Lower Gibsons, children's play areas at Dougall Park and Brothers Park, new tennis courts for Dougall, a multi-use hard court at Brothers, a mini soccer pitch at Aurora Park, creating two new parks un Upper Gibsons, enhancing conservation areas and biodiversity, creating an urban tree strategy, monitoring the need for a possible Gibsons cemetery and working to eliminate invasive plant species.

Though nothing to do with the design of parks, Lees said council should immediately explore passing a bylaw that would add a development cost charge to all new developments in town that can go directly to future park improvements — ensuring Gibsons will have the resources to keep park development on pace with residential development.

Attendees at the meeting were not shy to reinforce some priorities, many of them along environmental lines including maintaining some parkland in a wild state to prevent "nature deficiency disorder." Others suggested the potential for a cemetery that allows green burials — burials without embalming and biodegradable caskets.

Lees said he appreciated all the community feedback and will work the ideas into his final report.

"The fact that green burials emerged unsolicited from this group was refreshing," Lees said. "It was nice to see there may be some fertile ground for that kind of enhanced type of cemetery."

Lees he is aiming to present his final report to Gibsons council by mid-March. From there, council can adopt the parks master plan and use it as a guiding document for parks planning over the next 10 years.

© Copyright 2010, Coast Reporter

Story URL: <http://www.coastreporter.net/article/20100205/SECHELT0101/302059983/-1/sechelt/dozens-of-ideas-presented-for-gibsons>