

METRO VANCOUVER ELECTORAL AREA 'A'
OCCASIONAL BULLETIN NO. 1 – MAY 17, 2011
From Maria Harris – Electoral Area A Director

Dear Electoral Area 'A' Residents and Property Owners,

In an effort to better inform you of what's happening at Metro Vancouver, staff are developing an electronic list serve through which they and I can send you occasional bulletins.

Electoral Area Communications

Metro Vancouver staff recently updated the Electoral Area A website:
<http://www.metrovancouver.org/ABOUT/ELECTORALA/Pages/default.aspx>

It includes new community profiles, a description of local and regional services as well as building and zoning information. It also includes PDF maps and demographic information of the electoral area. Be sure to check it out when you get a chance.

Political representation in Electoral Area A

Governance of Electoral Area 'A' is unlike that of incorporated municipalities which have elected mayors and councils. The Electoral Area 'A' has one elected representative, a Director, who serves a three-year-term that coincides with municipal terms. Local government elections across British Columbia will next be held in November 2011.

As your representative, the Director serves on the Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD) Board (made up of mayors and councillors from the 22 municipalities and a director from the Tsawwassen First Nation). The GVRD Board is in many respects the equivalent to a municipal council for Electoral Area 'A'.

The GVRD Board receives information and recommendations on electoral area issues from the Electoral Area Committee, a political committee that meets on a quarterly basis.

Barnston Island Dike

The Province wishes to transfer responsibility for the Barnston Island Diking District to Metro Vancouver Electoral Area A by December 2012.

The dike, which surrounds Barnston Island, was built over 100 years ago to help protect the island from high water in the Fraser River. It was repaired in 1999 and 2008 under stewardship of the Barnston Island Diking Authority. In September 2010, the Diking Authority submitted a proposal to the Province for repairs, at a cost of approximately \$1.5 million over three years, to fix five locations where the dyke is starting to fail. At the time of writing, the Diking Authority had not heard back from the Province.

Metro Vancouver staff met with their provincial counterparts in recent months, with discussions focussed on developing terms of reference for an assessment study to collect baseline legal and technical information. A Metro Vancouver Staff report is being prepared for the June 10th Electoral Area Committee meeting. This report will appear online as part of the meeting agenda on June 3rd at: <http://www.metrovancouver.org/BOARDS/Pages/BoardsCommittees.aspx>

Passage Island Breakwater

Metro Vancouver staff met with representatives of the Passage Island Ratepayers Association on a number of occasions over the past six months to advance the proposed breakwater concept for safe boat access. Work to date includes two consultant reports which were reviewed by staff and residents, a meeting with myself in December, and a follow-up meeting in January with a representative of Department of Fisheries and Oceans. In March, Metro Vancouver staff prepared background materials for the Ratepayer's Association representatives for discussion among the Island's residents.

Zoning Bylaw Update

An update to the Electoral Area Zoning Bylaw is underway to address the new Provincial Riparian Area Regulation and issues that were identified in administering the current Electoral Area Zoning Bylaw. This particular bylaw applies to all parts of the Electoral Area except Bowyer and Passage Islands and UBC/UEL where zoning is the responsibility of the Islands Trust and the Minister of Community, Sport, and Cultural Development respectively.

Comments on proposed changes are being sought from Metro Vancouver staff and the Electoral Area Advisory Planning Commission (APC). The APC is made up of volunteers appointed by the GVRD Board on the recommendation of the Electoral Area Director and it includes representatives from each community within the electoral area except UBC and the University Endowment Lands. The APC meets when called upon by Metro Vancouver to advise the GVRD Board and/or the Electoral Area Director on matters respecting the preparation and adoption of community plans and land use bylaws within the GVRD Board's authority. More information is available at the following link:

<http://www.metrovancouver.org/ABOUT/ELECTORALA/Pages/default.aspx> or by contacting Manjit Sunner at Manjit.Sunner@metrovancouver.org or 604-432-6369.

Emergency Notification System

Metro Vancouver is introducing a computer based system to assist in notifying Electoral Area residents of emergencies. It is private, secure and hosted locally at Metro Vancouver. The system is designed to send a voice, text and email message to residents in the event of an emergency that may affect them.

Only those who request participation will be notified. The target residents are people who reside in all parts of the electoral area, other than UEL and UBC, as these areas are generally covered by a system that is operated by UBC.

Residents wishing to sign up can do so easily. The system will only be used for emergencies or other urgent communications, no “spam” type messages will be sent.

If you would like to be added to the emergency notification system please send an email to semsupport@metrovancouver.org with the following information:

- First Name
- Last Name
- Physical Address (Street Address or Lot #)
- Community Name (Strachan Point, Passage Island, Barnston Island, etc)
- Home Contact Phone Number
- Office Contact Phone Number (if desired)
- Cellular/Pager number (if desired)
- Up to 2 Email addresses (if desired)
- Text message address (if desired)

Property Taxes

Residents in Electoral Area ‘A’ often ask where their property taxes go. Based on 2010 information, and using properties on Howe Sound as an example, the proportional breakdown of property taxes paid was:

53% Provincial School Tax

21% Provincial Rural Tax

15% Greater Vancouver Transportation Authority

5% GVRD

3% Policing

3% BC Assessment Authority and Municipal Finance Authority.

MetroMAX Guide

Metro Arts Experience (www.maxguide.org) is Metro Vancouver's new online arts and culture guide that provides free listings of arts and culture events for arts organizations, individuals and selected arts and culture businesses. It features a clean design and easy-to-use interface, advanced search capabilities, image, video and social media. It provides easy access to links to tickets, reviews, professional associations, and volunteer opportunities and in the future will also host an archive of past events.

Closing

If you or your neighbours wish to receive these free bulletins in the future, I encourage you to advise Manjit Sunner, Metro Vancouver at Manjit.Sunner@metrovancouver.org or 604-432-6369.

I hope that you will find these bulletins useful and I welcome your comments and feedback.

With best wishes,

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