



# TOWN OF SIDNEY

## PRESS RELEASE

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**DATE: February 24, 2009**

#### **NEW DIRECTIONS FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND VISITOR INFORMATION SERVICES**

At the meeting held February 23, 2009, Sidney Town Council agreed to a more comprehensive and inclusive approach in terms of community and economic development and the delivery of visitor information services.

Mayor Larry Cross stated that: "Council believes in the merits of looking at a more inclusive and comprehensive approach to community and economic development. In addition, Council has been aware of the concerns of the Sidney Business Association that managing the Town's visitor information services has been a strain on the Association's resources".

Council agreed to establish a Community Development Commission which will be mandated to work on community and economic development planning at a strategic level. The Commission will also oversee visitor and tourist information services and operation of the Sidney Information Centre on Beacon Avenue. It is anticipated that membership on the Commission will be drawn from stakeholder organizations such as the Sidney Business Association, the Saanich Peninsula Chamber of Commerce, Peninsula Celebrations Society, Memorial Park Society, the Community Arts Council of the Saanich Peninsula, Victoria Airport Authority, the New Marine Centre Society and Sidney Sister Cities Association. Other potential members will be identified as the terms of reference for the Commission are refined.

With regard to visitor and tourist information services, more specifically operation of the Sidney Information Centre, Council will be looking at alternative models for management of the centre and related services.

Of the changes, Mayor Cross observed that: "We are entering difficult times. We need to harness all our energies and resources to ensure the Town's economic and community development services are maximized. The new Community Development Commission will be well positioned to research best practices in managing community development and will also be able to form strategic partnerships and apply greater leverage in seeking grant funding. Further, the new arrangement for operation of the Sidney Information Centre will enable the Sidney Business Association to focus on its core function of membership support and development. It will also put to rest the concern that the task of operating the Town's visitor information services has been a burden on the staff and financial resources of the business association. It's a win-win situation all the way around".

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