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Courtenay, B.C.
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22 January 2024

To: Courtenay Mayor and Council
Via email: council@courtenay.ca

Re: Observations and Input on 24 January 2024 Council Agenda

This correspondence is in regards to two items:

- 4.2 Parks and Open Spaces Bylaw
- 9.1.3 2024-2028 Solid Waste Financial Plan and Bylaw

I have attached correspondence I submitted in June 2022 in regards to the proposed Official Community Plan. My comments focused on the absence of risk management and the need for a more prudent and thoughtful process for decision making than that advanced in the draft OCP and approved by Council.

Prior to submission of the 2022 correspondence, I had submitted a number of questions that raised the issues of risk (technical, economic, and social) in the draft OCP. City staff refused to address the vast majority of these questions. I presume you have access to both the questions submitted and the responses offered from City staff. If not, I can provide this information. With the exception of one member, Council supported the furtherance of the OCP without further consideration of the issues raised, and were dismissive of the risks raised.

The agenda items referenced are symptomatic of an escalating rate of failure on both policy and planning initiatives. Not only are housing and addictions issues increasing, but Council's address of these issues has managed to do little other than polarize the community. On the waste management front, the casual declaration of a 35-50% increase in the annual levy (effectively a tax) is outrageous.

While I've raised two items as the most egregious examples of a lack of concern for risk and consequence, the October 24 agenda contains numerous items (5.1, 5.2, 7.1, 7.4, 9.1) that exhibit cost escalations materially beyond inflation or economic and technical risks that do not appear to be addressed.

While acknowledgement is perhaps distressing, it is apparent that the current decision-making process is not meeting the needs of the City and its residents. I would suggest that Council and senior City staff review the structure and process resident in the setting and implementation of policy. There are a number of structured, considered processes available that could supplement or replace the process (or lack of process) you are currently reliant on.

While my comments are blunt, I would hope that you appreciate that rampant escalation of property taxes coupled with an ongoing decline in quality of life is neither an acceptable or sustainable path forward. I would suggest there are systemic issues in governance and administration that need to be addressed.

Fred Payne