

REGIONAL DISTRICT OF NANAIMO  
REGIONAL PARKS AND TRAILS SELECT COMMITTEE  
ADDENDUM

Tuesday, May 15, 2018

12:00 P.M.

Board Chambers

*This meeting will be recorded*

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**Delegation:** Randal J. O'Donnell, Benson View Rd. Resident, re: Decommissioning of Witchcraft Lake Parking Area

**Summary:**

- Benson View Rd. residents front directly onto the current parking area of Mt. Benson Regional Park
- Resident's complaints to the RDN, resulting from increasing usage, have spanned nearly a decade.
- Social media and ever increasing population has meant that park usage/parking has expanded tremendously over that time.
- Large groups, dog walkers, off road motorcycles and late night partiers are noisy, leave debris and are often inconsiderate of residents desire to maintain a rural lifestyle
- Nearly all residents have owned their properties for twenty years or more and feel they have been ill served by the Regional District of Nanaimo.
- Property values have been severely impacted by the massive increase in traffic and parking problem as it can now no longer be considered a rural area.

**Action Requested:** We respectfully request that (a) the current parking area adjacent to Witchcraft Lake be decommissioned upon the opening of the new parking area for Mt. Benson Regional Park and (b) the floating bridge over Witchcraft Lake be removed to ensure the new parking area is used as intended.

Preventing continued use of the existing 'trailhead' access will (a) resolve the long standing neighbourhood problem and (b) ensure the valuable tax resources expended for the new parking area are properly utilized by the public.

\*\* Mr. O'Donnell will also be reading the attached letter from L. Lemmon, Benson View Rd. resident.

**From:** [Harvey, Ann-Marie](mailto:Harvey.Ann-Marie)  
**To:** [Harvey, Ann-Marie](mailto:Harvey.Ann-Marie)  
**Subject:** FW: Lemmon Letter: Tues meeting  
**Date:** Monday, May 14, 2018 10:30:21 AM

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**From:** larry lemmon [<mailto:biglarr1@live.com>]  
**Sent:** May 13, 2018 10:57 PM  
**To:** Randy O'Donnell  
**Subject:** Tues meeting

Hello Randy,

I have sent a letter to the delegations board at RDN letting them know that you are going to read a letter from me at the meeting on Tues since I cannot be there in person.

Thank you in advance for doing this.

Hello RDN. I appreciate the opportunity to voice my opinion on this very sensitive and frustrating matter of the decommissioning of the parking lot and bridge at the mount Benson Regional Park.

We have lived directly across the street from the park since 1991. Our approximate street frontage of 300' borders the parking lot and entrance. Not many parks border successfully on residential street frontage---- and this one is no exception.

We had to leave our house and rent it out for 2 and a half yrs because it was emotionally exasperating watching the neighbourhood deteriorate due to an influx of large groups of people, large amounts of garbage dumped, excessive noise and the inability on many occasions to access our driveway due to vehicles parking too close.

It feels like our neighbourhood voices have fallen on deaf ears with the RDN-----creating a park trumped over preserving the natural habitat and neighbourhood. Property values have plummeted, and life as we knew it before the park no longer exists.

We were ecstatic to learn the RDN had purchased property to create a parking lot, but it doesn't take a rocket scientist to see that if the existing parking lot and bridge is not decommissioned, people will still use that instead of the new parking lot because the entrance to the trailhead is closer.

I propose that as soon as the new parking lot is opened, the bridge be decommissioned, as well as the existing parking lot.

I can't stress this enough. Do it right the first time and don't let the thousands of dollars spent on the new parking lot be wasted by keeping the existing one open.

Thank You,

Larry Lemmon

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-----Original Message-----

From: Tom Holmes [mailto:tom.holmes@mtb.org]  
Sent: Saturday, May 12, 2018 7:50 PM  
To: Cramer, Kelsey  
Subject: trailhead meeting Mount Benson affected residents

Mr Cramer,  
We were surprised to receive from a neighbour news today of the upcoming meeting regarding Mount Benson Park.

Very little notice was allowed for us to prepare.  
As we leave for Spain in 4 days, we will not be present to voice our concerns at the upcoming meeting. I am writing to you now, and plan to speak to you on Monday.

It was VERY telling to me when I dropped off our residents' questionnaire following the street meeting for residents only last fall. The woman at the desk at the Regional District said to me and I quote "Oh I feel so sorry for those people whose homes are right at the floating bridge parking area where I park my car" I did not encourage her response she just spoke up. I neither asked for her opinion of the congestion at the end of the cul de sac but she showed empathy for us who are the end 4 families who put up with dog noise, security car horns going off, and garbage etc etc.

The new parking lot needs to be THE parking lot. It is such common sense to do this right (having ONE parking area only), and having one entrance to the trailhead ONLY... after spending a heap of money to get the parking lot approved. Now we hear someone has decided that we, the residents wait another year or more before the second access to the trailhead via the floating bridge may be addressed.

There is a saying that common sense is not that common and here is a perfect example of such an instance.

If you keep the bridge then tell us now exactly which towing company we will call immediately to have cars towed who are in our neighbourhood as habits are not altered by a sign or two. Expect we residents to be calling you too Mr Cramer to voice our frustration when cars continue to park in our neighbourhood amid signs that go unread or unheeded. Trailhead users who have been accustomed to parking absolutely anywhere they please will continue to do so, thus we, tax paying residents will have continued disruption.

Can no one see what needs to be done??

ALL and I mean ALL parking for any public use of Mount Benson Regional Park must be at the new parking lot and NOT anywhere north of the lot by Gow's home (Gow sold part of his land for the parking lot) Gow gets 1/2 million for his land and we will still get parking congestion and noise if the floating bridge is left and no monetary compensation whatsoever. But a definite reduction in the assessment or appraised value of our properties. Or a definite lack of saleability of such properties.

We bought our property on Dec 23 2003. Winter.... clear, but not cold enough to skate on the lake and no hikers. Quiet and lovely!!! We would not dream of buying here now  
This problem must be addressed fairly and promptly. I am hoping you can help us, Mr. Cramer.

The current angled parking lot needs to be removed and all users warned right at the new to be built parking lot that NO Road Parking is allowed beyond this sign or you will be towed AND this needs to be

enforced. Resident vehicles only beyond this parking lot.

So just tell us who we can call when the dozens of park users want to continue to use the floating bridge and feel it is their right to park anywhere they darn well please as they have been doing so for over a decade. We will be bothered very early in the morning to late when dark. We will be bothered week days and week ends. Can we call you..or other district staff???

We have been residents for 15 years now. Why may I ask you that three of my neighbours nearest to the floating bridge have decided to not live here?? Why?? Because it is intolerable to do so. Randy O'Donnell has rented out his home and moved to a condo in hopes of selling once already. I believe he is planning on doing so again. The Lemons next door to the O'Donnells have moved out last year and bought a condo and now reside downtown. Mr. Lemon was never able to bring his 26 foot boat home due to his driveway access being blocked. People are not lining up to purchase these homes that the residents have vacated, and we know why. No one else wants to inherit the noise and nuisance of this end of Mt Benson Road. So no residences with cars parking all around have had any but lowball offers about 40% less than assessment. We do not wish to sell this year but we are 65 and 68 so in the future we may wish to sell and I do not think it is fair to get a bad price for our life savings invested in our homes due to the parking issue as stated above.

Why can't anyone of "authority" see this problem and try to end it by having NOTHING for park users to DO and NO trailhead access for them to use at all at the end of the street?

This means the current parking lot AND floating bridge need to be removed as soon as the new parking lot is complete. Who, may I ask decided for us residents that next year this old parking lot/floating bridge problem will be addressed. Did anyone ask us to that meeting so we could intelligently say that next year is not in good faith for us to wait wait wait. The new parking lot will be done in the near future and folks who are not having to live with the parking problems decide for us that well 2019 may be a good date to readdress the floating bridge. Not good enough and not timely enough.

ONLY when the parking area, floating bridge AND any trailhead access at the end of Benson View Road ceases, will a degree of normalcy return to us the 4 to 5 resident properties who currently live the nightmare of the thousands of cars on our doorstep.

My husband and I have been forced this month to get constructed a security fence because park users feel it is their right to park absolutely anywhere they wish but also then to explore to their heart's content, our properties, traipsing all through our yards and gardens like it is an open field. When told they are on private property they seem to think we are a bother, and are very reluctant to leave.

A sign or two will not keep them from parking very close to the floating bridge. This is not a guess. I assure you, this will be a fact.

I have just finished a teaching career from 1974 to 2014 and I do know human nature. Habits die hard. You build it.. they will come.

YOU LEAVE IT (the floating bridge) . THEY WILL CONTINUE TO COME AND PARK AS THEY ALWAYS HAVE DONE, AND THE STATUS QUO WILL NOT BE ALTERED OR IMPROVED FOR OUR NEIGHBOURHOOD ONE BIT.

I will be calling you on Monday May 14th to discuss this matter in further detail due to my husband Tom, and my inability to attend the upcoming meeting regarding this serious and long overdue problem. We, and our neighbours have been patient for many, many years, but time is up for solving this problem, and the current plan of leaving the floating bridge and thus a second trailhead access point will not fix the problem.

Shelley Holmes  
2880 Benson View Road 714 0667