

CRD Community Safety Funding Proposal: A Community Conversation

**Salt Spring Community Alliance
Monday, October 28, 2019
Lions Hall, 7-9pm**

The Facts:

Recently, incidents of vandalism and aggressive behaviour in Ganges have generated concerns among some residents, who report feeling fear in our village. Efforts to address these concerns have prompted a series of meetings involving groups such as the Chamber of Commerce, the Library, United Church, Copper Kettle, PARC, Community Services, and the RCMP.

In response to these concerns, CRD Director Gary Holman has proposed a new service, initially funded at \$68,000, to support a wide-range of yet-to-be determined activities. This proposal is intended to assist, administer, promote, organize, implement and monitor community safety initiatives and programs on Salt Spring. An initial tax requisition of about half of the maximum allowed will cost the average household about 40 cents a month.

The CRD Director is proposing a counter petition process which is a more affordable option than a referendum. It will offer voters 30 days to register their opposition by signing petitions in posted locations. (Dates are yet to be announced.) If over 10% of voters (approximately 885 people) register their opposition, the initiative will fail.

The following comments reflect some support and also some concerns reflected to date, to help give some background to this proposal.

Support:

- Without this new service, the CRD can only provide very marginal support for organizations that are primarily responsible for the safety and wellbeing of all members of our community.
- Approval of this service would provide the structure and funding for all involved parties to work together collaboratively.
- With the regular contact with RCMP by partner groups, police presence could be enhanced in Ganges due to increased information sharing and collaboration.

- This is an opportunity for non-profit groups to get funding to enhance outreach and support services for those without homes as well as those battling mental health and addiction challenges.
- This is not a business-driven initiative - we all use and enjoy our village.
- Most of us enjoy the benefits of a Neighbourhood Watch Program. This could deliver the same benefits for our downtown core.
- Cameras in strategic locations would be the smartest move. We are a small enough community that anyone doing something bad would be easy to identify.
- Having a 'citizens on patrol' may help to alleviate some concerns. These people may also get to know some of the people without homes, which could increase trust and potential support.

Concerns:

- This proposal increases the enforcement of rules, an approach that can have an opposite effect to the one intended. Real security comes from an understanding of community and mutual trust; safety is the result of a forgiving, accountable and trusting community.
- Why are we seeking a solution when the problem has not been adequately defined? Have the folks who hang out in town most of the time, as well as staff and volunteers of the various community organizations, been consulted? Together, they would be the best source for defining the 'problem' and 'solutions.'
- It appears that stances have been solidified between business owners and those living in homelessness, leading us towards a toxic division. Instead, we should seek to embrace the dynamics of deep collaboration which emphasizes that all community voices must be heard.
- Taxes are already high. Why should all Salt Springers have to pay for security concerns of downtown businesses?
- Would we be supporting a group of vigilantes?
- A 'citizens on patrol' would not have stopped the broken windows and the burning boat, and hassling the folks in the meadow may only make things worse.
- Is there an adequate RCMP presence in Ganges? Some people feel that their response could be improved.

Your Thoughts: On October 28, you will have an opportunity to share your perspective on this issue in a safe and respectful circle conversation. Bring your thoughts to share and your listening skills to appreciate the opinions of others.