

Purpose: to provide factual background information to inform residents

REFERENDUM (completely hosted by CVRD)

(**Most likely**-December 7, 2013 - location t.b.a.)

Q. 1. *What is the purpose of the Referendum?*

A. To allow eligible (see CVRD website) voters in the community to decide (Yes or No) on whether to raise the annual funding "cap" from \$40k to \$100k for the Thetis Island Solid Waste System, as a result of the May 11, 2013 TIRRA Special Meeting.

Q. 2. *So what was the purpose of the Alternative Approval Process (AAP)?*

A. The AAP is a cost- effective process the CVRD uses to potentially raise the cap without going to the more expensive referendum process.

Q. 3. *Were the CVRD's requirements of TIRRA for the AAP process fully met?*

A. TIRRA followed CVRD's protocol by: giving advance notification and convening the May 11, Special Meeting of TIRRA; recording the approved motion (36 Yes, one No and one abstention) to raise the cap to \$100k; posting the results on-line and at the ferry bulletin board; and writing an e-Spokes article to share information (which was not a requirement).

Q. 4. *Since the AAP process failed, then why are we going to Referendum?*

A. The CVRD Board approved Bylaw 3713 for going to Referendum because it believes that the majority of Thetis Islanders want to make their own decision on the necessary resources to operate the solid waste disposal and recycling program.

Q. 5. *What's the Referendum going to cost us and where will the money come from?*

A. The TIRRA Executive doesn't have an exact figure, but we estimate it will be between \$10k and \$12k. Unfortunately, this cost must be paid within our budget request for 2014.

Q. 6. *Why not ask CVRD to withdraw Bylaw 3713, thereby postponing the Referendum until the next Municipal Election in 2014?*

A. The Referendum could still cost \$3-5k. If the Question passes, we would not receive any new money until April 2015, and we don't have sufficient funds to operate in the meantime.

Q. 7. *It seems hard to fathom why we would need a new cap, which is over twice the present one. Why was this necessary?*

A. The \$100k number was moved as a motion at the May 11 Special Meeting, and approved by a significant majority. The intent was to ensure that our solid waste system is adequately funded for the next 5 years, without having to go back again for a raised cap. The reality is that we are dealing with constantly shifting ground (unpredictable costs, changing standards) and extra budget flexibility is beneficial. The Solid Waste Committee had originally proposed a cap rise to between \$60k and \$70k.

2013 BUDGET UPDATE

(See separate page with 2013 Budget Update details)

Q. 8. *Why isn't it possible to work within the existing \$40k cap?*

A. For 2014, we expect to carryover a \$4k budget deficit from 2013. Also, our \$40k cap will be reduced by the cost of the Referendum (approx. 10 – 12 K). This leaves potentially \$25k, which will be substantially below operating requirements. We will also continue to lack any funds for needed capital improvements and site maintenance.

Q. 9. *What efforts are being made to achieve greater efficiency?*

A. We are committed to restructuring site operations to get the best value for dollars spent. This includes better alignment of pay rates with complexity of duties and levels of responsibility. We also need to reassess the workability of the open site, and potentially go to a closed one with Wednesday and Saturday morning openings. Instituting some form of garbage user-pay system, above a certain minimum quantity, would introduce greater fairness and encourage recycling and composting. There would be a significant labour saving associated with moving recycling to a closed-site system. Also, we can always do with more volunteers!

5-YEAR BUDGET PROJECTION

(see separate page with Bar-chart; a detailed budget projection over 6 years is also available)

Q. 10. *If the referendum passes, will it mean that our budget increases by the same proportion as the cap increase (2.5 times)?*

A. Definitely not. The cap represents a spending limit and not the actual budget. The solid waste committee's 5-year budget projection shows the intent to operate well below the spending limit, while ensuring that we also pay off our debts and set aside some contingency for site infrastructure and maintenance.

FUTURE ANNUAL BUDGET APPROVAL PROCESS

Q. 11. *As a property tax payer, but not a TIRRA member, why shouldn't I be able to vote on matters concerning the solid waste system that I help pay for?*

A. TIRRA recognizes that it did not raise the solid waste funds itself, and agrees that all property owners should have an opportunity to have input and vote on each annual budget. In future, the proposed annual budget, along with explanatory notes, will be posted prior to the General Meeting, and efforts will also be made by the Committee to present a 5-year budget projection. The Solid Waste Committee's Annual Report will also:

- detail efforts to achieve ongoing efficiency, and solicit subsidies from the CVRD and grants, and,
- show volume trends in garbage, recycling, compost and commodities (scrap metal, cardboard).

Q. 12. *What are the criteria for receiving a parcel tax rebate?*

A. This will be re-visited at the next TIRRA AGM.

CVRD SYSTEM

Q. 13. *What happens if the Referendum results in a "No" vote?*

A. Thetis Islanders will not have sufficient resources to operate a solid waste system, and responsibility for this will shift to CVRD. Based on discussions with CVRD staff, our best estimate of the consequence is a rise in the parcel tax to \$200+ for curbside pickup, or to \$300+ for door-to-door, rising approximately 5% per annum. CVRD's system is based on totes, alternating bi-weekly garbage and recycling.

Possible concerns arising include:

- the feasibility of homeowners getting totes to the end of driveways, or CVRD trucks navigating narrow driveways,
- a safety issue of placing totes at the end of driveways without road shoulders,
- the need to store garbage and recyclables for 2 weeks,
- the aesthetics of totes on rural roads, and likelihood of upset totes and garbage dispersal, and,
- no control over CVRD costs.

EXPERIENCE OF OTHER JURISDICTIONS

(please note that these are snap-shots only, and do not reflect any comprehensive review)

Q. 14. *Surely we can learn from best practices in neighbouring jurisdictions?*

A. We have done significant checking with contacts for 9 depots in other areas (including Gabriola, Saltspring, Saltair, Mayne and Saturna). Some "common threads" were:

- TIRRA seems to have the cheapest and most cost-effective solid waste disposal depot within our Vancouver Island geographic area, in part due to our dependence on volunteers;
- we appear to have the least financially-supported depot in any regional district (which enables us to have local autonomy);
- no other depot operates an open (24/7) site;
- all other depots have up-service fees for garbage, and,
- we have been told that our contracting fees are a bargain, considering what is involved in our garbage and recycling system.

Q. 15. *What happens to the commercial/camp/corporate properties if the CVRD takes over the waste management system?*

A. Our understanding is that these properties will NOT be served by CVRD and they will be expected to care for their own solid waste.

Prepared by the Solid Waste Management Committee Version 1.0. October 20, 2013

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Questions, suggestions and any additional information are welcomed by Committee Members, for updating this Version.