

Mayne Island Residents and Ratepayers Association

September 2009 Newsletter

“We Have Nothing To Fear But Fear Itself”

The referendum issue on Mayne has resulted in lively discussion and debate. At times, both sides have taken some liberty with facts and figures and potential outcomes.

However, when you cast your vote you should do so with the firm belief that you are voting for what you want. Voting out of fear or misunderstanding is not the foundation of true democracy and certainly not what makes our Island and our country one of the finest places to live in the world.

There have been some points that are not substantiated by fact or common sense that you, the voter, should be aware of:

- Myth #1. A no vote will result in the closure of the Health Centre.** The Health Centre is in no way shape or form tied to the fire hall referendum.
- Myth #2. A no vote will result in CRD taking over governance of the island.** Any potential change of governance would be citizen driven. When the dust settles, islanders may wish to explore the option of an Island Municipality or CRD governance (One of these two options will occur in the next few years in any event as Improvement Districts will be dissolved as per Provincial Policy). The referendum outcome will not influence any change in governance.
- Myth #3. A no vote will result in WorkSafe BC closing down the fire hall.** We have found no instance wherein a fire hall has been shut down in BC or Canada under these circumstances. We are aware of fire halls in more questionable condition that still are operating in BC. As a community we need to show a willingness to replace the hall, voting no is not saying no to the hall replacement, it is saying no to the current proposal and will trigger a new proposal.

Myth #4. A no vote will result in the resignation of the entire fire department. We believe in and respect the strong professionalism of our firefighters. They serve our community out of concern for their fellow citizens, a general willingness to serve and the strong bonds of a fraternal type organization. As a community, we support our firefighters and in no way would voting no lessen that support. Again, voting no will initiate a new planning process for replacement of the hall ASAP. Voters would be voting against the expenditure of \$4.21 million dollars (Plus Interest), not against the firefighters or their need for a new hall. **As such, a no vote should not cause any firefighter to feel the need to resign due to a perceived lack of community support.**

Myth #5. A no vote will increase insurance costs. On September 20, the fire hall will still stand, the equipment will still be on the island and the sun will still come up. Unless someone demolishes the fire hall, removes the equipment from the island and closes down fire services – your insurance rates will remain unchanged. Voting no is not voting to shut down fire services; this is the only way that your insurance could be negatively impacted.

Myth #6. A no vote would force the resignation of some or all of the Improvement District Board of Trustees, resulting in a collapse of the organization and its services. It has been stated by some MIID board members that they would feel a no vote would be a non-confidence vote to the Trustees, forcing them to resign. This is certainly the right of any individual Board member. In case of that event, our organization has canvassed the community and have found several well qualified individuals who are willing to sit as MIID Trustees to work diligently for the community and to replace the fire hall in an effective and efficient manner.

Myth #7. A no vote will result in the Trustees of the Improvement District and ultimately all island property owners potentially facing criminal charges, imprisonment and personal liability under Bill C-45 of the criminal code of Canada. At the time the law was being discussed in parliament, the government commented on its intentions for the Bill stating that: ***"the criminal law must be reserved for the most serious offences, those that involve grave moral faults... the Government does not intend to use the federal criminal law power to supplant or interfere with the provincial regulatory role in workplace health and safety"***. No Government body, community or property owner has been prosecuted under this act since introduced in Parliament in 2004. One cannot imagine what circumstances would bring such charges. Mayne Islanders are working towards replacement of the hall; the referendum is part of the process. If rejected, the process of replacement will

continue. These threats of criminal charges and liability are unprofessional and fear mongering of the lowest caliber.

Myth #8. We are all going to die. Please calmly and rationally review the stated “consequences” of a no vote as given by the Improvement District and the ‘yes committee’. If things were that dire and the consequences so extreme why are we being given the choice in the referendum? We are being given a choice because we have one. Voting no means voting no to the expenditure of \$4.21 million. That is the referendum question, nothing more, nothing less.

The only reason to vote yes is if you support the required large tax increase and the design of the fire hall as presented. We do support our firefighters; please remember we pay more per capita for fire services than any other Gulf Island. If you have doubts as to the costs, design or the process as presented you should vote no. Islanders need to vote out of comfort, not fear.

Submitted to Islanders by the MIRRA executive on behalf of it's 150+ members:

Richard Brown

Jon Hoff

David Maude

Colleen Ming

Peter Sara

Barry Wilks