

OPINION

OUR VIEW

Community vision must stay front, centre

There's always going to be a good reason to provide an exemption. But the reason not to is more important.

The Town of Lake Cowichan has been really forward-thinking in their zoning bylaws for the heart of their community, requiring that new buildings be at least two storeys in height.

This encourages the building of a mixed-use community, with shops and services running out of the bottom floor and the ability for people to live right in town on higher floors. This is optimal when it comes to community development, providing

plenty of commercial space, but also encouraging a vibrant, walkable town that isn't dead after hours. Most communities that care about the quality of life of their citizens are moving in this direction. Many of the most desirable neighbourhoods in towns and cities across Canada and around the world are built in this fashion.

It's a lot harder to do after the fact (see parts of Lake Cowichan, Chemainus, and Duncan), which is why it makes sense to require at least a second storey in new downtown builds. We're not talking skyscrapers, but it is absolutely key, especially in

the housing crisis we are in, to give people the chance to live in the heart of our communities.

Which is why it was so disappointing to hear Lake Cowichan council's decision to provide a zoning variance for a new business looking to build in town. The business sounds like it will be an amazing amenity to the community, there's no doubt about that. But council should have stuck to its own zoning bylaw and required a second storey be built.

The proponent cited both costs and the lack of a desire to be landlords in requesting they be able to build

just a single storey. These are both good and understandable reasons. However, they don't trump the importance of the overall vision for the community's future, which dovetails so nicely with addressing the desperate need for more housing. It's not about calling out any particular business or builder, it's about making sure the community becomes what we want it to be in the future.

One councillor argued that because other buildings in the area are single storey, one more won't hurt. But it will hurt. If you never make that first step and build that first multi-storey

building, you will never begin the process of changing the neighbourhood into what you want it to be.

We give the new business nothing but our best wishes, but we hope that council will have more determination going forward to look to the bigger picture, and not just stick with the same old, same old.

»We want to hear from you.

Send comments on this editorial to editor@lakecowichangazette.com. Letters must include daytime phone number and hometown.

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Lake Cowichan readers are thrilled that the library is fully open again after the strike and the on/off hours during the two years after COVID restrictions began. (Kathryn Swan photo)

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Letters to the editor are welcome, but writers are requested to keep their submissions to 350 words or less. We reserve the right to edit all submissions for clarity, grammar, length — attack the issue, not the individual.

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YOUR LETTERS

School's 'Grown Ups Who Love Us' day an attack on traditional family

Mother's Day has come and gone, and hopefully we paid our respects to our mothers for their love and self sacrifice. However, a new wrinkle has arrived on the holiday that we may not all be aware of.

Centennial Park Elementary School in Abbotsford B.C. cancelled Mother's Day and replaced it with "The Grown Ups Who Love Us" Day. Social media reaction to this was strong and immediate. It is not hard to see why. One reason the school gave for changing the name was "inclusion" a term used to justify a variety of actions these days. How-

ever, we need to look more closely at why the school did this and what it means.

First, there is not a single child in Centennial Park Elementary who did not come from a biological mother and, if for no other reason than that, gratitude and celebration should be given for birth and the gift of human life. Second, "Grown Ups Who Love Us" covers a lot of people, including those only incidentally in a child's life, distantly related or rarely seen. A mother has a unique role in her child's life a role not shared by others, including a "Grown Up Who Loves Them" whoever they may be.

For many people what constitutes a family has changed in the last three

decades, but the concept of motherhood has not. It should always be honoured and maintained. "Grown Ups Who Love Us" is a designation that is ridiculously vague, and it is impossible not to see this as an attack on the traditional concept of family, something that is by no means either extinct or irrelevant.

Incidentally, Father's Day will also be replaced at Centennial by the term "Grown Ups Who Love Us." We should not be surprised. This is part of the radically progressive social philosophy effecting every aspect of our lives, and it should concern all of us.

**Perry Foster
Duncan**