

JUN / 9 2017

VILLAGE OF LYTTON

To the Trustees of Gold Trail School District #74**June 8th, 2017**

I understand that you are considering changes that will bring K to Grade 12 together into one school. There is a broad concern among our community as to what your decisions may include regarding the location.

I would like to offer some thoughts that may be of help to you. I am quite familiar with both schools and was employed as a teacher and a principal for 35 years during the time that the Elementary and Kumsheen Schools were built.

The Elementary School was opened in 1951. It was designed to be a junior-senior high school with Home Economics, Industrial Shop, and science lab to name a few of the services. The Grades 1 to 6 students attended classes in the "annex", which had been in use for many years.

The gymnasium and library were later additions, following the removal of the annex.

The first Kumsheen Secondary School was built in the new location and opened in 1962. It had a larger Home Economics and Workshop, art room, gymnasium, and other areas. This school burned down in 1972.

The second Kumsheen School was built at the same location and opened in 1974. Unlike the first school, which was built almost entirely of wood, the present school is built with concrete blocks. In the past, it was rumoured that there was some concern of it surviving any earthquake activity.

The location recommended by the community, at the Elementary school site, brings some thoughts to mind:

- The present elementary school is well-situated for access to the community activities and centrally located for convenience.
- There is a gymnasium with a stage, which encourages public performances to assist in the development of students' various talents, building self-confidence as they grow.
- Being in the village core, it is much more accessible to families, seniors, and friends.
- The grounds are designed to protect the children with fencing that helps to keep them safe.
- Being near to other services, such as police and health care is also a benefit.

Kumsheen is not designed for younger students. The site has some problems:

- It is very near the Trans-Canada Highway on the east side.
- The access of Highway #12 meeting the TCH here is a concern because the people that are not familiar with the area, particularly truck drivers, have been known to turn into the driveway of the school, thinking that this is the access to Highway #1 – scary!
- On the west side, there is a steep drop off to the CP Rail line
- It would require safety fence to enclose this narrow space to include the whole school area. Presently there is an open driveway which is not gated.
- The area around the school is designed for parking and delivery by vehicles. There is no play area which is directly accessible close to the school.

The sidewalk beside Highway #12 is unsafe for young children walking to school. It is raised slightly above the pavement with no protection from the traffic.

Highway #12, at the entrance to Lytton, has a steep grade, several sharp turns, and limited visibility of the road ahead, putting any pedestrian at greater risk. During tourist season, the traffic increases and overflow parking from a business on this stretch to the village causes more risk. Students walk over to the Service Station where there are convenience foods – crossing Hwy #12.

If money problems are a concern, I would like to offer some ideas, supposing that a life expectancy of a school building is 60 years:

- Elementary School is about 67 years old
- Kumsheen would have 17 years left.
- A new building would have 60 years or more.

The question arises as to the best use of available funds. When one looks at the above – the cost of adapting Kumsheen is for a relatively short time. The amount for renovations could be put towards the cost of a new building and would give many more years of usability.

A new building – on the location that the community has requested – would be your dollars well-spent.

The question arises as to what to do with the Kumsheen facility. One thought that comes to mind is that the forestry service, which is looking for an expanded space, may be interested in examining the school as a possible site. This building could provide many advantages such as:

- Converting some classrooms into living quarters,
- A full kitchen and lunch room facility
- Full showers which have been recently upgraded
- Gym for training and recreation
- Recreation and outdoor training on grounds
- Possibility of a helipad on the large playing field
- Easy access to Highway #1 and Highway #12
- Space for parking and storage of equipment, access through large doors for vehicles
- The village core, with its services, is nearby

If the property was sold to the Ministry of Forests, Lands, & Natural Resources– that money could be added to available funds from the proposed renovation and could provide a good base for the new school construction.

The Elementary School may have further trouble with its roof which is poorly designed. The shape of the roof is designed so that the roof sides form a “V” shape (which is known as a “butterfly” roof). Any water falling on the roof goes to the drain opening at the centre. This has caused much of the past troubles, including flooding.

As Lytton is situated in a canyon, winds from the south are often quite strong. On several occasions, the sheeting on the south end of the roof has been raised by the wind and folded back on itself, leaving a bare space to be repaired. This occurred during my time at the Elementary School and has occurred since then.

I am writing as one of the taxpayers in this area that support your operations and decisions. There is a strong feeling in Lytton that adapting Kumsheen is not the right solution to your problem.

Our community needs to be heard so that concerns can be expressed. The general feeling is that a new school should be built in the central area of the community. Please work with present partners, such as N'Zen'man Child and Family Development Society so that services can be continued and/or expanded upon.

Sources of funding may be available for "green" initiatives such as solar power, geothermal heat exchange models and other environmental friendly initiatives. This school could become an example of using newer solutions which would enhance our community's initiatives to move ahead.

I request that copies of these observations be supplied to all the Trustees of the Gold Trail School District #74 for their consideration. I also hope that everyone in the Lytton area has opportunities to discuss major decisions with you before any action takes place.

Very Sincerely,



Joseph A. Chute, Box 86, Lytton, BC, V0K 1Z0

cc. MLA Jackie Tegart, Fraser-Nicola Constituency

MP Jati Sidhu, Mission-Matsqui Fraser Canyon Constituency

Local organizations