

MAYOR STONE'S COLUMN – JUNE EDITION OF TAKE 5

LADYSMITH HARBOUR –BOUNDLESS OPPORTUNITY

Ladysmith's harbour and the surrounding shores have provided a living to the area's residents for literally thousands of years. There is still great potential for the harbour to be the cornerstone of a green, sustainable economy for our community. The future vibrancy and healthy lifestyle opportunities offered by our natural setting provide untapped opportunities for further development while still retaining environmental preservation as a priority.

Between Transfer Beach and the Fisherman's Wharf lie some 100 acres of land and water lots. Unfortunately, for most of the last century, we took this precious natural resource too much for granted. Now we recognize that if Ladysmith Harbour is going to continue providing us with economic and recreational opportunities, we must all be stewards.

The Town is taking steps on several fronts to help ensure the ongoing health of our harbour and seize opportunities for economic growth.

We will soon have secondary treatment of our sewage when the new Waste Water Treatment Plant is finished in 2016. The upgraded plant will have innovative technology and a small footprint especially designed for a small coastal setting like ours, and will treat water to a standard that exceeds anticipated federal requirements.

We are working closely with other concerned organizations including Stz'uminus First Nation and the Ladysmith Maritime Society to address the issue of derelict and abandoned vessels in our harbour. We have supported the Private Members Bill introduced in Parliament by our local MP, Jean Crowder, and have enlisted the help of the federal minister responsible.

We all want our waterfront to be a people place. During much of the last century, Ladysmith's waterfront was dominated by heavy industry. For the last three decades, Council has worked hard to develop this area into a welcoming waterfront entrance to the community, establishing an outstanding recreation area, connecting the community to the sea, and creating a new economic generator.

An update of the Town's Waterfront Area Plan is planned for this year. When it is finished, the revised plan will reflect the community's desire for an accessible waterfront that includes natural areas, recreation opportunities, marinas and marine activity, waterfront development and services, celebration of our cultures, and a working waterfront of traditional industrial and related uses.

One of the most important keys to the future of our harbour in terms of its health and economic opportunity is working together with others who share our commitment. Council continues to build our strong partnerships with the Stz'uminus First Nation and the Ladysmith Maritime Society. Together, with those organizations and others, we work on projects to clean

up the harbour and develop marine tourism and other related industries. Investing in our local marinas for permanent moorage and to grow the marine tourism sector, and supporting the shellfish industry, can help to realize the potential for green and growing industry in our harbour.

Through the opportunity for dialogue and partnership opened up with the renewal of our Waterfront Area Plan, I believe we have the ideal launching point for developing a shared vision for our harbour and waterfront, and a focused plan to achieve that shared vision.

I look forward to creating that plan together.

Mayor Aaron Stone
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