



Whistler Community Church – Building Project

Dear Mayor and Council,

Further to my letter that was reviewed at the August 18, 2020 Council Meeting, I am writing again to ask Council to review the Building and Development Fees charged for this project.

Following the last letter, Council referred this matter to the Chief Administrators Office for review. In January I received a reply from Ms Cullen indicating that although it is without doubt that this facility will “provide significant value to our community”, the program that provided relief to the Catholic Church & Millennium Place (the “grant-in-aid program) no longer exists, therefore the only available avenue for support is the CEP program.

The issue is that CEP is not intended to cover large development fees on real estate projects, rather it is intended to help Non-Profits with their operations. None of the Non-Profits benefitting from the CEP are providing Community Real Estate like Whistler Community Church will be providing, therefore our request is not comparable to the other CEP requests.

The only precedent that I have been able to find of Non-Profits building physical real estate with “Community Usage” covenant restrictions are the projects that I referenced in my previous letter, The Catholic Church and Millennium Place. Both of those projects benefited from Grant-In-Aid requests that equated to the amounts of their building and development permit fees. We are simply asking that the RMOW treat the Whistler Community Church project with the same treatment that was provided to these other Non-Profit Real Estate projects.

In Ms Cullen’s response, she compared this project to Affordable housing projects who are charged development fees, however that is not a reasonable comparison as those projects are selling or renting out all the real estate to cover their costs. The Whistler Community Church will make some space available for rentals, however as a Non-Profit we are prohibited to generate more than 1/3rd of our operating budget in rental

revenue, so to compare our “Non-Profit” Community project to “for profit” Affordable Housing Project is not an “apples to apples” comparison.

Ms Cullen also referenced that when Council approved the Development Permit for this project on 21st April 2020, we had indicated that the project budget would cover the development permit fees. That was my mistake, at that time I naively thought the RMOW would treat our project the same way that the Catholic Church and Millennium Place had been treated, it is only after the ~\$80K in development fees were charged (and paid by us) that I contacted Council to review why we were being treated differently to these equivalent projects and found out about the Grant-In-Aid process and it being discontinued.

The Whistler Community Church is investing over \$4M into the local economy, using local builders to construct this building during the pandemic. We are investing in the long-term future of Whistler, to provide a space that can be used by the Community as well as by the Church.

As a requirement of the RMOW rezoning process, the Church built a Bus Shelter in Alpine Meadows, in addition we have paid property tax on this vacant block of land for 20 years. We have followed every process the RMOW has requested and in the Fall of 2021 we look forward to welcoming Whistler into the Whistler Community Church building.

Our request is that Council treat this project the same way that the Catholic Church and Millennium place Real Estate projects were treated and that you provide relief on the ~\$80K in RMOW development permit fees that were charged to us.

We appreciate your review and consideration to this request. If you have any questions, please contact me on [REDACTED]

Kind regards,

Craig Allars

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