

PERSONAL THOUGHTS ON THE INTERFOR BLOCK 350 PRESENTATION

The following are strictly personal observations of the Interfor presentation of March 6, 2002 and are not necessarily the views of the Sandy Hook Community Association Board or of any other residents. They are presented here since the Forum feature of the site is down for the moment and to, at least, convey some of the flavour of the meeting.

No matter where you stand on the issue the printed out overheads full of non-specific assurances did not do anymore than repeat clichés like 'looking after the public concerns', 'protecting jobs', etc. Why was there no clear plan to put forward; no map showing the areas proposed; no clear definitions of the areas to be protected; no offer of assistance to enhance the important heritage areas?

Why was there reference to (paraphrasing): 'after all there are lots of walking trails available in the Heritage Forest', 'we have gone far beyond what the regulations require', we can go ahead anytime by just applying', and the classic after all this time - 'we are still working on this or that part of our plan'?

When asked by a councillor for a map they advised that none really existed except some working drawings no one could understand but them.

When asked how many man days of work were involved they could not answer stating that they do not calculate such things. They did say that \$190,000 of wages would flow into Sechelt. At \$25.00 per hour (just my guess) that works out to 7600 hours – 950 8 hour days – which with what they thought would be a crew of 10 to 12, then they are talking of less than 3 months real employment in total.

One confusing issue was that if they could not log 350 then their contractor would be forced to go log another area up the inlet so 350 should go ahead. Yet in the same breath it was clear that at most only a few months work was involved so the same problem, presumably, will be there after that. 350 just a stopgap at what price to the community?

Not once did they suggest that the public could have or should have any input into the plans but rather that they just noted some resistance to the logging.

What I think they should have done?

They should have offered to negotiate their plans with the public in some format.

They should have had a full plan to present for adoption or negotiation. Such a plan would include clear and unequivocal layouts of the actual areas to be preserved along with clear maps showing those areas and those to be cut.

They should have suggested a tie in with Sechelt Heritage Forest rather than allude that it is close by and so satisfies the needs of all residents who want to go for a walk.

They should have clearly offered to volunteer some of their equipment and expertise to enhance any preserved areas making what might be preserved an even better experience.

They should have addressed site lines from the forest and Tuwanek and not just those from the inlet. They should have had a handout for the councillors and possibly the public to present all of the above. (The mayor had to ask for the overheads).

They should have made firm commitments so that an element of trust could begin on this issue rather than, by oblique reference, discounting any interest the community might have in the matter.

In my personal view, the presentation was an insult to the council and the residents. It showed a lack of any appreciation of the serious concerns and interest of the community both through the lack of a proper, complete presentation and the inordinate delays in making any presentation. The elephant laboured and gave birth to a mouse – but a mouse with big teeth.

While throughout this matter I have taken a position of compromise I now see that such a position is naïve and futile. Unless and until a full and negotiated plan addressing the concerns of the residents is cast in stone, I think that any logging in Block 350, in total, should be resisted by any and all means available.

The matter is now referred to council and committee to decide a course of action. I have no idea what they will decide. They should listen to their constituents who have made an effort to deal with the matter as opposed to Interfor who have made none.