

Qualicum Beach is a charming coastal village surrounded by rivers, forests and farmland in the shadow of Mount Arrowsmith. Our small-town character, walkability, and year-round access to recreational opportunities support a high quality of life for residents and an attractive destination for visitors. The Town will innovate in response to the social, economic and environmental challenges of the future while holding firm to those qualities that make Qualicum Beach a unique and highly desirable place to live.

- OCP Vision Statement

February 9, 2021

Media Release

Town of Qualicum Beach Council Operating in a ZOOM Cocoon

Ten grass-root community groups have signed an open letter to current members of Qualicum Beach's Town Council to alert and inform them of serious concerns shared by their electorate. It serves as an official request to open up communication with those they are elected to serve.

Covid has led to a significant loss of opportunities for citizens to have their voices heard.

- No Committee of the Whole meetings where dialogue and discussion are allowed since February 2020.
- No Mayor's Open Houses since February 2020.
- Amended Council Procedure Bylaw reducing allotted time for delegations from 10 to 5 minutes.
- Requests to appear before Council as a delegation have been refused.
- Not upholding a land use public consultation process when citizens were led to believe there would be an opportunity to be heard.
- Council motions to meet and/or consult with citizens are not being fulfilled.
- Unreasonable time limit imposed on public comment during public hearings.
- Individual members of Council are not acknowledging requests from citizen groups and/or individuals to meet with them.
- Citizen Select Committees essentially put on hold (with no ability for public observation) while Council meetings carry on with "business as usual".

Council is operating in a ZOOM cocoon.

"Is anyone listening?" Concerning are: the multitude of letters from citizens with questions, concerns and requests that go unanswered by the Town; Council voting contrary to the majority of community input as well as the number of in-camera meetings. Council has dismissed hundreds of emails, requests with broad community support, social media posts and thousands of names on petitions, ignoring the growing discontent with the lack of transparency and meaningful public consultation.

The ask? That Council prepare for the election of a seven member Council in the next general local government election; that Council follow the collective long-term vision as reflected in the OCP; a return to the "town's high-standard of public engagement" Mayor Wiese promised to maintain; and for a meaningful response to their letter along with a meeting with Council to discuss concerns.

The citizens of Qualicum Beach, want and deserve better.

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Signed by:

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Qualicum Woods Residents' Association

Doug MacKay-Dunn, President
Qualicum Beach Residents' Association

Stephen Smith on behalf of
West Ridge Neighbours

Jay Smith, on behalf of
Friends of the Qualicum Beach Forest

Michael Jessen
Arrowsmith Parks and Land Use Council

Sally Soanes, President
Arrowsmith Naturalists

Teresa Hitch, on behalf of
Oceanside For Safe Technology (O4ST)

Sarah Chezick, on behalf of
Arrowsmith GroundWater Alliance

Sheri Plummer, on behalf of
Communities Protecting Our Coasts

Fred and Carol Dowe, on behalf of
Concerned Citizens Opposed to the Telus
Cell Tower in QB