

Water already approved for KIP houses; Union Bay Improvement District trustees grant application to draw from Langley Lake

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The Union Bay Improvement District says it's already approved Kensington Island Properties application for water from Langley Lake.

The approval happened about two months ago and is for less than 100 houses and does not include a hotel or commercial development.

The improvement district announced the approval in a press release Thursday, in a statement that reinforces their right to do so.

"All landowners of Union Bay - including developers - are entitled to consideration for water supply," reads the release.

However, Karen Hurley the spokesperson for the Baynes Sound Area Society for Sustainability, argues the improvement district acted too fast on incomplete information.

"Mr McDowell says that each phase will be considered separately and then goes on to say that they have approved the application - without providing any details of what these phases are, or an indication that the KIP approval will read accordingly," she said. The society stressed the Supreme Court recommendations for "detailed, scientifically supported data on water before approvals be given." The Lake's ability to provide water is under debate at the Comox Valley Regional District, with some directors asking for an independent study into the project before the district approves the development. Area A director Bruce Jolliffe says staff are working on getting more information on water. He noted that UBID's approval doesn't match Kensington's application to the Comox Valley Regional District.

"The way this was submitted to us is for a comprehensive development request for land use changes," said Jolliffe. "We have to act accordingly." Unlike its application at UBID, that development isn't broken up into phases, requiring the district to ensure there is enough water for a projected 3,354 homes. UBID believes there is enough water in the lake to service at least the initial stages of development and uses a 2004 engineering report as proof. The report was done before water meters were installed in 2004 to 2006, and the district expects there is two thirds more water available after metering.

However a 2009 update of the study, done by the same engineering firm shows the lake could have

enough water for 3,000 to 6,000 people and stresses a number of unknowns, including daily use rates, how much of the new development will be required to use low flow taps and toilets and the amount of water that continues to run in and out of Langley Lake.

The application to the Regional District could eventually see up to 3,354 units created.

The 2009 update makes no mention of higher water consuming hotel development and calls for better examination of the lake's bottom - saying original estimates were simplified and need to be redone.

"We recommend the total estimated service population as derived herein be revisited and adjusted on the basis of further, more detailed hydrologic and hydro-geologic analysis, as such becomes available," reads the report.

Hurley says UBID put Union Bay taxpayers at risk.

"What will happen now if Langley Lake is deemed to be inadequate to supply the KIP development after a more detailed hydrologic assessment is conducted?" she asks. "Will KIP turn around and sue UBID for not providing the water that UBID promised and KIP made plans accordingly?"

The update also says that the existing dam will not provide full water for Kensington's full build out and that the dam will eventually have to be raised by three metres.

The estimated cost of that upgrading in 2006 was \$4.9 million.

Author Ian Whitehead says it unsure whether the improvement district has the approvals from the province to do that yet.

The 845-acre project is still going through the approval stage at the regional district, and has yet to have a public hearing.

Sufficient water quality is one of the issues being

debated at the regional district table.

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