

Democracy loses

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If democracy manifests the will of the majority, then what has happened with the Kensington Island Properties proposal is most undemocratic.

It's been obvious for some time that a clear majority of Union Bay residents approved of KIP's 342-hectare development proposal called Kensington Coastal Pointe.

After an agonizing decade-long process culminating in Kensington meeting more than 20 conditions insisted upon by the Comox Strathcona Regional District (CSRD), KIP finally appeared to have a green light late last year.

That's when a small group of dissidents calling themselves the Baynes Sound Area Society for Sustainability (BSASS) appealed at the 11th hour to some skilful development-killers from Victoria.

In short order, a lawsuit was filed and the K'omoks Band adopted a hard-line stance absent in previous discussions with Kensington.

With new demands from the local native band and a predictable complaint about lack of consultation, the provincial government withheld approval of bylaws necessary for the project to proceed.

Kensington vice-president Brian McMahon could not be blamed for throwing up his hands and walking away.

Valley residents should be vigilant to protect their interests and way of life in the face of major developments proposed for the area -- and that is not meant to criticize the Trilogy project in Cumberland.

But Coastal Pointe is a responsible development that even includes provision for Habitat for Humanity housing. Kensington improved salmon habitat in Washer Creek and was prepared to pay a significant part of the cost for a badly needed water filtration system, sewage treatment system and a new fire hall.

If Kensington walks away, how will the 1,000 residents of Union Bay pay for that?

God help the people in Union Bay who helped to kill the project if they're ever overheard complaining about having to pay their share.

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