



# HORNBY ISLAND FIRE HALL PROJECT COMMUNITY CONSULTATION MEETINGS REVIEW

December 2013

## Community Consultation Meetings - Summer 2013

Over this past summer, the Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) and Hornby Island Fire Department (HIFR) conducted eight community consultation meetings on the Island to gather input in addressing the identified need of a new Hornby Island Fire Hall. Six meetings were held in each of the communities of Hornby Island and two meetings were held at New Horizons for those unable to attend either of the 6 meetings.

The meetings consisted of three main parts. Firstly, a video was presented

about the physical condition of the current fire hall building. The video was created by Dale Devost and the HIFR (see below). Secondly, there was a summary presentation of the new Hornby Island Fire Hall Project and the process involved in building a new fire hall including the time line, overall design, costs, and benefits. This information is still available on the CVRD web site at the following link: [www.comoxvalleyrd.com/hornbyislandfirehall](http://www.comoxvalleyrd.com/hornbyislandfirehall) or through a link at our own HIFR web site: [www.HIFR.org](http://www.HIFR.org). Lastly there was information presented concerning the Superior Tanker Shuttle Accreditation (STSA) Program and how it will affect our fire

protection rating and our residential home insurance premiums. This STSA program is being conducted separately but aligns itself well with the fire hall project due to the requirement of adequate housing of an additional tanker truck.

The discussions within these meetings were vibrant, informative, and sincere. Indeed, the feedback received was greatly appreciated by the HIFR and CVRD. Within this newsletter you will find information about the meetings, the results of the meetings and some detailed questions and answers concerning the many facets of the Hornby Island Fire Hall Project.

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## Hornby Island Fire Hall

With more than 45 years of service, the Hornby Island fire rescue department has identified a need to replace the aging and unsafe fire hall so as to better serve the citizens of Hornby Island with medical first responder, fire protection, technical rescue, and ambulance services.

The current fire hall was built in stages from 1968 to 1997. Since that time, a number of studies and inspections have confirmed that the building has a number of structural deficiencies, and is now functionally obsolete as a fire hall. Engineers, building inspectors, the Fire Commissioner, the fire fighters, the select committee and the CVRD board have recognized these deficiencies and are recommending that a new fire hall be constructed.

Based on the recommendations of the select committee, the regional district board has endorsed the option of building a new fire hall on Hornby Island and has directed that



## Hornby Island Fire Hall Video

Check out Deputy Chief Doug Chinnery at the following link:  
[www.comoxvalleyrd.com/hornbyislandfirehall](http://www.comoxvalleyrd.com/hornbyislandfirehall)

public consultations begin with the citizens of Hornby Island towards addressing the identified need.

As the development of a new fire hall is a major decision for the citizens of Hornby Island, an informed and forthright discussion is essential to

arrive at the best solution. Please join us in this discussion by participating in the upcoming meetings in Stage Two and Three of the process. Please contact Tor Nawrot at [tor@HIFR.org](mailto:tor@HIFR.org) or by telephone at 250-335-2214 for info on upcoming meetings and to join our email list.

## COMMUNITY CONSULTATION MEETINGS - COMMON THEMES

*"keep the design  
of the new fire hall  
simple, adequate,  
sufficient."*

The following discussion points or broad themes were consistent throughout all eight meetings:

- With the video that was created by the HIFR and Dale Devost, everyone understands that the current fire hall is aging and doesn't meet the current needs of the firefighters, according to safety, post-disaster, and Worksafe BC conditions.

- Overall, taxes are increasing on Hornby Island and we need to be conscious of this and keep the design of the fire hall simple, adequate, sufficient. Basically, function over form is preferred as is the need to look into alternate forms of construction or design to keep cost low such as steel structure, etc?

- Look into other fire hall designs to save costs. Find a design that would work and then adjust to our specific needs. Designs that we were asked to look at - Quadra Island, Lund, Garibaldi and Bowen Island Satellite Station.

- All attendees endorsed the Superior Tanker Shuttle Accreditation program which could provide insurance premium savings from \$150 - 500 per year, depending on your house size and your insurance provider. These savings would offset the net increase in taxes for the building of a new fire hall.

- There was overwhelming support for our volunteer firefighters. Include them in the design of the new hall - find out what is needed for them to do their job well.

- Explore areas in the design where residents could participate in some facet of the building of the fire hall. One option presented was to have a contractor build the hall for the vehicles and residents would build a separate 'clubhouse' building for their meetings, kitchen, social activities. Another option presented was a simply designed fire hall building with locally-built timber frame details and landscaping features.

- It was also suggested that, as the process develops, disclose all costs of the project including site development, septic, etc and any future costs that are planned.

These common themes will be presented to and discussed with the architect of the project.

## WHAT IS STSA?

*"Better fire protection,  
lower fire insurance  
premiums"*

Superior Tanker Shuttle Accreditation is a program of the Fire Underwriters Survey that recognizes a rural fire department's ability to supply water to a fire scene in sufficient volume equivalent to a hydrant water supply. This enhanced service is provided when a fire department is able to show through testing and documentation that it can "shuttle" water to a fire scene by way of tanker trucks in a volume equal to or greater than that of a municipal-type hydrant system. Simply put, the idea is that if the HIFR can show that they can deliver sufficient water from local tanks to pump a constant 200 gallons every minute for a full 2 hours to any location on the island, every household gets a saving on their insurance bill. It would be as though you lived on the same block as a fire hydrant.

### What are the benefits of STSA?

STSA means that residents of Hornby Island have a higher level of fire protection service for residential, commercial and forest protection.

Also, once accreditation is achieved, Hornby Island homeowners will see a **reduction of between \$150 and \$500** in their annual fire insurance premiums. Communities such as Saanich, Salt Spring Island, Errington, and Gabriola Island have already achieved STSA and have reduced insurance premiums.

### Where are we at with STSA?

(Excerpt from posting on HIFR.org web site)

On July 18th, 2013 the HIFR completed a small but important step in achieving this goal. Using one tanker truck, they did a full 2 hour cycle of delivering water to prove their calculations were in the ballpark, and they were! Also, the HIFR is working on the design requirements of a second tanker truck.



**How volunteer fire departments  
in five BC communities tackled  
the problem of home insurance  
for rural cottagers.**

By Sharon McInnes

Check out this article from Cottage Magazine 2009 about Superior Tanker Shuttle Accreditation.

Available at the bottom of this web page link:

<http://www.comoxvalleyrd.ca/>

[EN/main/departments/emergency-services/fire-services/hornby-island-fire/links.html](http://www.comoxvalleyrd.ca/EN/main/departments/emergency-services/fire-services/hornby-island-fire/links.html)

# CURRENT FIRE HALL DESIGNS - GARIBALDI, QUADRA ISLAND, BOWEN ISLAND, SATURNA ISLAND, MILL BAY , OYSTER RIVER

We've researched the fire halls that were discussed at the consultation meetings and added a few others for review. These are examples of other island communities that determined the needs of their community and built according to those needs. As mentioned previously at the meetings, the design of the new Hornby Island Fire Hall will be based on the needs of and supported by the Hornby Island community.



## GARIBALDI FIRE DEPT.

Budget for the building is \$750,000 (2013). Primarily wood frame construction and the building is post disaster secure. Nearest hall to Garibaldi is Whistler, 19k away. Have mutual aid with them. Houses three smaller vehicles. There is no SCBA compressor room, maintenance area, turnout gear facilities and multiple training areas.



## SATURNA ISLAND FIRE DEPT.

Budget for the building and satellite building - \$1,250,000 (2010). Both buildings are post-disaster certified, meet modern earthquake resistance standards and are built to efficiently house SIVFD, its equipment and a training facility; Saturna Island Rescue, its ambulance, equipment and a training facility; Parks Canada firefighting equipment; and Southern Gulf Islands Emergency Preparedness Program. Steel building designed to last 40 years. Size is 6712 sq ft and houses 5 vehicles.



## QUADRA ISLE FIRE HALL#1

The total budget was \$650,000 (2007) plus donated labour from community. Wood frame construction and the building is post disaster secure. Size is 7040 square feet with facilities and space that is similar to needs required by HIFR. Houses four vehicles.



## BOWEN ISLE SATELLITE FIRE HALL

Total budget is just over \$400K (2013). A pre-engineered steel 2700 sq ft building. A two bay structure with a kitchen area, laundry room, washroom, storage and office area all built separately inside the building. It is post disaster secure. Houses 3 vehicles and small equipment trailer. Prefab steel buildings have a typical life of 25-30 years.



## MILL BAY FIRE HALL #2

Total budget just under \$1,000,000 (presently under construction). It will house three pieces of fire apparatus with center bay being a drive through bay. This will be Mill Bay's 2nd fire hall. It is 4900 sq ft, wood frame construction and has a nice size training room, engineering room, storage room, dispatch room, kitchen, etc.



## OYSTER RIVER FIRE HALL

Total budget \$1,600,000 (2004). Building is 7000 sq ft - wood frame construction. It has 5 bays for 5 emergency vehicles.

# HORNBY ISLAND VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS

From our community meetings, we received overwhelming positive support for our volunteer firefighters with specific questions raised pertaining to what would our firefighters like to see in the design of a fire hall. Here is what they said:

## SASHA LEBARON

Would like to have a secure post disaster building to work from and help people in our community.

Safely, adequately and stylishly hold all the trucks.

Adequate proper storage for the still valuable apparatus that we have... current apparatus is getting trashed.

Breathing apparatus is expensive and hi tech. It would be great if there was a small dedicated room that would accommodate properly servicing this equipment.

Would like to have a front office that we would be proud to bring people to.

We need meeting space for ourselves and committees and ideally it would be big enough to hold special events.

We need proper shower and laundry facilities to wash our gear - keep firefighters at the fire hall for quicker response times.

Proper Hose storage.

We need a workout facility for our firefighters to keep fit according to Occupational health and safety standards. Proper testing for firefighter safety.

We need a paved drill ground for training.

## JULIAN LAFFIN

Functional fire hall that is not crawling with mice.

Adequate space for putting on turn out gear and for cleaning/drying the gear.

Adequate space for trucks.

## ALBINI LAPIERRE

We need better washing facilities that accommodate both males and females. Washing gear in a nice and efficient way so that we will finish earlier and will have decent clothes.

To have a safe way for having vehicles exit a bay and to ensure safe handling of vehicle exhaust.

Nice, clean, safe, dry place to put our clothes on. Not next to vehicles where we have exhaust in our clothes.

Fire hall would be an emergency centre that is ready to provide for the community in the event of a disaster.

## PAULA COURTEAU

Nice clean well lit room for first aid training - not in a bay or on very old carpet.

I would like a physical training facilities such as a climbing wall. Could be a multi purpose hose tower. As a woman, I need more upper body strength training and this could be a good multi-purpose area for high angle training, hose storage and fitness.

Comfortable living space and functional kitchen. The more time we spend at the hall, the sooner our response time is. After being up all night at a call out, this is a nice safe place to eat and debrief.

Adequate room for our trucks.. Right now it's a little tight.

Room to wash/dry our turnout gear.

## ROB ZIELINSKI

My vision of a new fire hall is a simple, functional building with design in mind for long term use and functionality. Look at including future needs into the present design so the building will continue to serve as Hornby Island's needs change.

It is not about opulence, its about energy efficiency and green building ideas. I am prepared to spend a little more in taxes to have a better building but not double so that the building is full of excess.

## AL CANNON

Earthquake safe. It seems a shame to have all the equipment and training, when we're housed in a building that won't survive the type of earthquake which would require our services.

Space. We're squeezed for space in pretty much every aspect right now. The truck bays are too small (to the point of being slightly dangerous), the parking lot is too small to accommodate all of the firefighters, we have no dedicated training spaces or workshop/service spaces, and our storage space is severely limited.

Enough features (whatever they are) to attract and retain members. I'm thinking things like exercise space, laundry/shower facilities.

Something built with a vision of the future. A building that will meet the department's needs for the long-term, rather than just barely meeting current requirements.



# QUESTIONS & ANSWERS - FIRE HALL PROJECT

Here are the Questions and Answers that resulted from the summer community consultation meetings. Further Q&A's are on the CVRD web site (see back cover for link).

## **Q. Do we need an architect?**

A. Yes. The BC Building Code requires architectural services for all post-disaster construction.

## **Q. What will be the tax rate on commercial property?**

A. The province sets the multiplier for the tax rate for classes other than residential. The current multiplier for commercial properties on Hornby Island is approximately 2.4 times the residential rate.

## **Q. Do commercial properties receive a fire insurance premium reduction with a successful Superior Tanker Shuttle Accreditation (STSA)?**

A. The Fire Underwriters Survey has recently developed the criteria for recognition of STSA for commercial insurance lines. Although there are currently no examples in BC of commercial properties having reduced insurance premiums, specific communities are planning to challenge the STSA for commercial properties based on the newly developed criteria.

## **Q. Is there a time in the future that the present building would be condemned?**

A. We are unable to provide an answer to this question at this time.

## **Q. Who votes in a referendum?**

A. Generally a person can participate in the electoral assent process if they:

- Are at least 18 years of age
- Are a Canadian citizen
- Have resided or owned property in the service area for 30 days prior to registration.

If you own property on Hornby Island and rent it out, both you the owner and the renter are eligible to vote in a referendum.

## **Q. Could design include space for emergency services storage?**

A. Emergency services storage space may be incorporated into the design of the new fire hall if the community indicates this as a priority.

## **Q. Are the water tanks large enough to be accredited under STSA?**

A. The tanks are large enough to supply the required amount of water for a successful STSA challenge.

## **Q. Can there be added communication for emergency events?**

A. Yes. Communications with off-island emergency services is a key aspect for consideration with the construction of a new fire hall.

## **Q. Can BC Ambulance financially contribute?**

A. The regional district is currently working with Provincial Health Services Authority staff in the development of a pilot project that would hopefully see contributions towards the cost of operating the Hornby Island Fire Rescue ambulance.

## **Q. Is the estimated net increase of \$45 in taxes affected by interest rates?**

A. Yes. A loan from the Municipal Finance Authority for the construction of a fire hall would have the rates revisited after 10 years. Of note: the estimated net tax increase of \$45 is based on the estimated cost of \$1.8m for the construction of a fire hall. The final design and the tenders received from construction firms will determine the actual net tax increase.

## **Q. Did Hornby Island community give approval to go ahead with the STSA?**

A. The STSA process began in 2004 and has had aspects of the program included in the financial plan for the fire protection and rescue services, as well as its annual proposed budget, have been supported by the residents at the HIRRA annual budget review public meetings.

## **Q. Does the fire department have a plan in the event of an earthquake?**

A. Each firefighter is expected to have a personal emergency preparedness plan to ensure that his or her family is safe while the firefighter responds to a major event such as an earthquake.

## **Q. What is the total amount of money raised for the fire service from property taxes at the current assessment of \$0.95 to \$1 per \$1,000 of assessed value?**

A. In 2013 the total requisition for this service was \$450,000

## **Q. What would happen if we went to referendum and result was no new fire hall?**

A. If electoral assent is not granted, the fire department would continue to provide the best service possible from the current fire hall.

## **Q. Can CVRD mandate a new fire hall?**

A. No. The CVRD requires electoral assent to borrow the funds required to build a new fire hall.

## **Q. How will a new fire hall improve the training/service level of the firefighters?**

A. Since 2003 all firefighters in BC are required to train to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards. A new fire hall would include a training room where the firefighters can receive the required classroom study and write their exams. A new fire hall would also include an outdoor training area specifically for their practical training and exams.

## **Q. [For High Salal] Would a ring road be acceptable to the Fire Underwriters Survey (FUS) in order to benefit from STSA?**

A. The CVRD and the HIFR department will work with the residents of High Salal and the Fire Underwriters Survey to determine the best plan for benefiting from STSA.

*continued on page 6*

# HORNBY ISLAND FIRE HALL PROJECT

## MORE QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

*continued from page 5*

**Q. What are the “big picture” costs of this project? Is septic included in estimate or not? What about the removal of the present building?**

A. The “big picture” costs will be estimated by the architect as we continue the public process into the design of a new fire hall. The final cost estimate will include the septic system and the removal of the present building.

**Q. Could we use the existing building for training, meeting, kitchen purposes?**

A. The development plan submitted to the province as part of the Crown land grant application includes the demolition of the old fire hall. The Hornby Island Residents and Ratepayers Association (HIRRA) has asked that the CVRD consider support of its possible application to the province to maintain the old fire hall building for community purposes

**Q. Can we just rebuild the old fire hall to be seismically safe?**

A. The engineer’s reports have indicated that rebuilding the old fire hall to meet post-disaster standards of the building code would not be economically practical.

**Q. We need to remember that we not only have the cost of a new fire hall but the cost of a new tanker. How much will a new tanker cost?**

A. The cost of a new tanker truck is estimated at \$170,000.

**Q. Will the firefighters be included in the designing process of the new fire hall?**

A. Yes. The firefighters will be involved with the designing of a new fire hall to ensure that it meets the space and operational requirements of the department.

**Q. Does the CVRD need a detailed engineering study to proceed with the project?**

A. Yes. To ensure that the project meets all aspects of the building code, normal engineering services will be engaged.

**Q. Can we get volunteers to complete parts of the project to bring down costs?**

A. Yes. Recognizing that WorkSafe regulations present a challenge, volunteer donations of labour or “in kind” may form part of the overall project plan.

**Q. What is the longevity of the new proposed fire hall in comparison to cheaper alternatives? What is the lifespan of a temporary building such as the Denman Island ambulance station?**

A. A new fire hall would be designed to serve the community for 50 years or more. “Cheaper” alternatives, such as the ambulance station on Denman, have a manufacturer-claimed lifespan of 20 years. Of note, the cost per square foot of erecting a structure such as the Denman Island ambulance station, including concrete, mechanical and electrical systems is slightly less than that of a purpose-built structure. Operating costs, such as energy used to heat, are higher.

**Q. What are the benefits to having a “post-disaster” fire hall?**

A. “Post-disaster” buildings are defined in the National Building Code as those buildings essential to the provision of services in the event of a disaster. The benefit of a “post-disaster” fire hall is that the emergency equipment, including fire trucks, ambulance, water supply trucks, and communication equipment will likely survive a disaster and be available to serve the community in a time of great need.



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**Web site Links:**

**Comox Valley Regional District - Hornby Island Fire Hall Project**  
[www.comoxvalleyrd.ca/hornbyislandfirehall](http://www.comoxvalleyrd.ca/hornbyislandfirehall)

**Hornby Island Fire Rescue Department**  
[www.HIFR.org](http://www.HIFR.org)

**Please email Tor Nawrot to join our email list and receive future information regarding the Hornby Island Fire Hall Project.**