



## TOWN OF QUALICUM BEACH

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November 4, 2020

Dear Councillors Westbroek, Walker, Harrison, and Filmer,

### **Open Letter – St. Andrews Lodge Building**

We are all aware of the public concern about our decision to remove the St. Andrews Lodge building.

I am writing this open letter to my fellow members of Council to remind you of the principles of the municipal democratic and decision-making process. Further, I wish to offer a future notice of motion in response to the feedback we have received.

When a decision is made, it is a decision of Council – whether you voted in favour or not has no impact on the strength or validity of the decision. As individual members of Council, we often receive pressure from various interest groups that don't agree with a decision made by Council. If we perpetually change our minds, and subsequently challenge or undermine the decisions we have already made, it will only serve to undermine our own authority, credibility and our collective accountability to the citizens that elected us. We are elected to make decisions, not to chase our tails in a circle of second-guesses.

As a reminder, the St. Andrews decision was based upon 16 months of public outreach, feasibility studies we requested, and a decision was made after all other avenues were exhausted. We received no viable responses to our requests to relocate the building. The one proposal we received for the re-use of the building would have required significant grant funding to be viable, and competed directly against several of our other strategic initiatives, including the roundabout and turf field upgrades. The proposal was also received days before the grant deadline, with much of the information necessary to apply for the grant missing.



The decision to demolish the building was made by Council, our entire Council, and the motion to rescind the decision to demolish failed on October 28, 2020. That reaffirmed the direction of Council – to demolish the lodge. Yet here we are, less than a week after that decision, and some members of Council are looking to reconsider the decision again. This is not how the democratic process works. We as a Council have made the decision and staff are following the direction of Council, as they are legally required to do. Our role as a Council is to make the hard decisions. This is a decision we have made, reviewed, and reaffirmed.

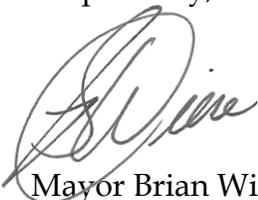
In terms of calling a special meeting, I need to remind you of the repeated attempts to call a meeting this week.

- I originally requested to schedule a meeting for 1:00 pm on Monday, November 2, 2020 which Councillor Filmer indicated was the only day he was available this week. Councillor Walker declined the meeting due to a scheduling conflict. The meeting was planned to go ahead with the four remaining members of Council.
- As staff were working on the agenda for the meeting, Councillor Filmer emailed staff and requested that the meeting be moved so that the entire Council could be present. In an effort to accommodate this, staff phoned Councillor Walker to find a time that would work for him, and he indicated he would be available on Monday, November 2, 2020 after 3:15 pm.
- Staff sent out a new meeting invitation to reschedule the meeting for 3:30 pm on Monday, November 2, 2020. Councillor Westbroek declined the meeting invite at 1:24 pm on October 30. With only four members of Council available, the new proposed meeting was cancelled.

At this time, and after much consideration, I would like to share that I do not intend to call a special meeting. This is a very difficult decision, however, I will offer this assurance to my fellow Councillors; I will propose a notice of motion at the next available opportunity, that the Town would support collaboratively working with a society to raise funds and to construct of a replica of the former St. Andrews Lodge on Town-owned land. Whether this compromise would be acceptable to my fellow members of Council remains to be seen.

Together we are a single Council, not five individual members. We depend on each other's support and must adhere to the structures of our democratic institution toward faithfully advancing the business of our community. The second half of our term will be crucial to the success of this Council, and I ask that we all maintain respect for each other and our processes so that we can find success together in the years to come.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brian Wiese", written in a cursive style.

Mayor Brian Wiese