



# VILLAGE OF LUMBY

As the Mayor of Lumby, I am writing this letter to ensure that Lumby goes to the referendum for the Correctional Facility fully informed; not only about the Correctional Facility but the process and the ongoing projects which Mayor and Council have been undergoing. I would also like to take this opportunity to address a couple of the concerns that have been brought to my attention.

A letter, written to the Premier requested a detailed analysis to determine what would be the socio-economic outcome of locating a correction facility in a small urban/rural community. The pilot project referred to was not to locate but what would the effect be of locating a correctional facility in a community such as Lumby.

Whether this issue is divisive for Lumby, it is up to each and every one of us as individuals to respect each and every point of view. Democracy is based, and thrives, upon opinion, and there have been strong opinions on both sides of the debate. Healthy debate is a very necessary part of this process as it creates critical thinking and challenges everyone to look at ideas from all sides. However, bullying serves only to create an atmosphere for poor decision making. I view a person, not solely by their opinion but, by their behaviour and the actions which define who they are. Please keep debate with friends, family and fellow residents, kind, factual and with compassion.

As the Village of Lumby elected officials, we have been totally transparent throughout this process. I know there are some frustrations surrounding questions that have been asked. However a lot of questions cannot be answered until we sit down and negotiate with the Province. No design or location has been picked. Actual costs and grants in lieu cannot be determined until a business plan is completed by the Province and negotiations with the Village are worked out. With four Solicitor Generals and two Premiers being in place since our initial inquiry, it has been a challenge to get the information in a timely manner however, Mayor and Council have provided as much factual and honest information as has been available to us.

The Province recently sent two very professional, and knowledgeable, representatives from B.C. Corrections who addressed residents' questions. During the public open house they shared information about ideas for a newly proposed Correctional Facility in the Okanagan. It was stated that the new facility would be built to Gold LEED Standards (minimal light pollution (use of infra-red technology), minimal noise pollution, and minimum use of energy; with the infrastructure being as environmentally friendly as possible and built to blend in with its surroundings.

One concern raised by residents has been security and the possibility of increased criminal activity in the communities housing jails. As part of the research that was carried out, Mayor and Council, along with a small group of interested community members, toured the Kamloops Correctional Facility and met with the Principal (and some parents) of the elementary school located less than one half kilometres away. By the end of our visit it became very clear that security is not an issue. Drugs and gangs, as we are aware, are a problem in prisons. But with no direct contact with visitors, and with inmates regularly rotated within the correctional system, local communities have not noted an increase in criminal activity or inmates families and friends relocating to the area.

Lumby residents have expressed concern over real estate prices. Effects on house prices have not been proven either way to my knowledge. According to sources, in the case of the Kamloops, whose facility is located near some beautiful homes, the impact on real estate has not been affected.

We can confirm that recreational activities which involve using the Lumby airspace will not be affected by the jail nor will the site of the wildlife club be an issue.

We have been informed that employment valued at 17 million dollars, of which an average of 40% will be available to local people, comes with having a Correctional Facility. We know that Correctional Officers do not receive a travel allowance, as has been suggested, and that many of them will choose to make Lumby their home. We know there is great potential for employment spin offs from housing such a facility.

Work Programs that could be undertaken by the inmate population could be useful to us. Highly supervised, tightly screened inmates could carry out work around the village and learn life skills that will help with their rehabilitation. Many of the great ideas that have come out of our community forums could find some roots in the funding that Corrections uses to give inmates a chance to learn. The Province has stated that a community group would be started to direct the action of the off facility programs.

All of the concerns raised to date have been fully investigated by Mayor, Council and Village staff and I realize that we are not Kamloops or Grande Cache and the effects will be different for Lumby as it would be for any individual community. The one thing that I can guarantee is change. Council believes this change will be positive.

We know that some residents will be impacted by the introduction of such a facility. Their concerns have not gone unheard. As elected officials, we are dedicated to obtaining information for opportunity and presenting it to our constituents. We are governed by public opinion. But be sure when you cast your vote you are basing your decision on facts, not fear.

We would be fool hearted to hang our hats on just the Correctional Facility (or anything Government funded) it is but one pebble in the pond, but we must rebuild Lumby's economic base and it is imperative that we have vision. The need for new facilities, land acquisition, public works buildings and machinery, roads and infrastructure all have to be taken into account; we have to plan for the future.

As part of our economic development strategy, Mayor and Council are currently working on a partnership for a community forest, a deal for a 46 unit seniors housing complex, the road to Silver Star is still on the books and is constantly worked on at every opportunity. We are planting and working hard on diversifying and beautifying Lumby The Village of Lumby is participating in the North Okanagan Regional Growth Strategy and is in the process of developing an economic development committee.

So what of change? Is it preferable to entice a super mill with co gens and chipping machines? Could Lumby be supported solely by small businesses; Home based or otherwise? Could we sustain our community solely on agriculture; Mass or organic? Are tourists likely to be flooding in? I don't believe so. I feel, it would be prudent to take a diverse mix of all of the above.

So if we look at a small mill, an expansion of tourism, some home based businesses, a thriving downtown core, developing our light industrial area and yes house a government institution; well regulated and controlled, this would be the type of plan that could keep our village safe from fiscal disaster in almost any storm. If we are truly talking vision and future then it is prudent that we look at all viable options and weigh their merit.

Sincerely

Mayor Kevin Acton