

CITY OF KELOWNA

AUG 26 2010

ADMINISTRATION DEPARTMENT



Original to: ~~Communications~~
Copied: ~~Mayor~~
~~City Manager~~
Councillors

File Number: 0700-20
Initials: *jm* Date: *Aug 26/10*

Mayor Shepherd
City of Kelowna
1435 Water Street
Kelowna, BC V1Y 1J4

Thursday, August 26, 2010

Dear Mayor Shepherd,

Re: Bernard Avenue Streetscape

In response to our conversation on August 10, 2010 and your e-mail dated August 13, 2010, please consider this letter as the Association's official request for you and your Council to consider the requirement for any financial contribution from Property Owners for the Bernard Avenue Revit Project.

The Association acknowledges that the timing of this request appears to come out of order in the project chronology, a number of circumstances have changed since beginning our discussions as partners in this initiative more than a year ago. As such, we feel we would be doing our membership a disservice by not making this request at this time.

This project requires some very challenging design decisions and considerations for how we envision main street will be used over the next three decades. While a consultative public process has been successful in gathering the ideas and concerns from stakeholders, it hasn't been successful in coming to any conclusion of a final design which balances between the needs of tomorrow and the future as identified by the design consultants. We have concerns that the current stakeholder group is biased towards short term thinking in respect to a project which will have a multi-decade lifespan.

The process, as envisioned from the beginning, is to use a petition process (either negative or positive) to capture whether Bernard Avenue Property Owners are willing to financially contribute to this project. Through this process, should they choose not to fund it because of the design and parking strategy recommended by your staff and contractors, we have grave concerns that the worst possible alternative will then be recommended to your Council: replacement of the utilities and roadway without improvements to the pedestrian realm. This option would be catastrophic in our eyes on a number of fronts and send the wrong message to the community regarding the future of downtown.

Downtown Kelowna Association
200-287 Bernard Ave.
Kelowna BC, V1Y 6N2
Ph 250 862 3515
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DowntownKelowna.com

In our research, contribution strategies for similar projects in other BC communities have resulted in quite a range in funding strategies. In Maple Ridge, no contribution was required by their main street property owners because of the municipality's ability to leverage provincial and federal funding while Penticton's recent proposed project was scuttled by property owners because Council believed that property owners should contribute upwards of 40% to the project. Fully funding this project would eliminate many of the potential threats to this project's success while allowing the City to put the best design forward based on the neighbourhood's future needs.

We believe, and are supported in our thinking from a recent article in the Globe and Mail ('Mid-sized cities make progress in revitalizing downtown' by Chris Atchison, Saturday July 31, 2010) that three of the five outlined principles from the article are necessary for the future of Kelowna's downtown neighbourhood:

1. "Restrictive levies and bylaws no longer make sense" – many policies put into place to protect the neighbourhood previously are no longer relevant to the current and future investment climate.
2. "Improving downtown infrastructure is a must" – as an evolving urban neighbourhood, the City has made significant improvements to downtown parks, waterfront spaces, and cultural venues. Now, we should focus our efforts to public realm infrastructure improvements, like Bernard Avenue, in an effort to set the stage for private investment and establish the future direction of our neighbourhood.
3. "Development incentives are crucial" – despite market conditions over the past few years, private investments have continued in a number of other town centres, but not in ours. It's no longer simply about waiting for the market to find us, rather we need to give the marketplace a reason to invest in this neighbourhood.

The Association believes that the scale and scope of the Bernard Avenue revit project goes far and above a utility and esthetic upgrade that some consider it; we hope you and your Council members agree. This project will set an important tone by Council that downtown is ready for reinvestment and improvements in effort to help it reach its potential. We believe this project will show the community that Council has a vision for downtown and it begins with a focus on people as active pedestrian participants on Kelowna's main street.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Steve Stinson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Steve Stinson,
2010 Board Chair

Cc: Jim Paterson, General Manager Community Sustainability Division
Pat McCormick, Urban Design Planner

City of Kelowna



Office of the Mayor

August 31, 2010
File No. 0700-20

Steve Stinson
2010 Board Chair
Downtown Kelowna Association
200-287 Bernard Avenue
Kelowna, BC
V1Y 6N2

Dear Steve,

Thank you for your correspondence dated August 26th requesting City Council consider the requirement for the affected property owners to contribute to the Bernard Avenue Revitalization project through the Local Improvement process. It has been provided to City Council.

The Downtown Kelowna Association's request will be considered at the September 13, 2010 meeting. Since this request has just been received, any further design work will be put on hold at this time until this matter has been considered by Council.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sharon Shepherd".

Sharon Shepherd
MAYOR

CC: City Council
Ron Mattiussi, City Manager
Jim Paterson, GM, Community Sustainability
Pat McCormick, Project Planning & Technical Services

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