

Victoria BC
January 5, 2009

Section Head, Crown Land Adjudication
Integrated Land Management Bureau
Suite 142, 2080 Labieux Rd.
Nanaimo BC V9T 6J9

Subject: Your File No. 1405848

Dear Sir or Madam:

Pursuant to a notice placed in the Victoria Times Colonist on December 30, 2008 and further to my letter of August 29, 2005 (then as president of the Royal Quays condominium Strata Council) to Mr. Ron Creber, Manager, Land and Water BC Inc., I wish to renew and restate my objections to the prospect of a marina on the north shore of Victoria Harbour and, together with my wife, to urge you not to approve the application of Community Marine Concepts Ltd. to develop a marina on a part of Lot 1, District 119 (Esquimalt District Plan 44757) on the basis that such approval is not in the public interest.

A marina in this location will have a severe detrimental impact on not only the approximately 150 residents of the Royal Quays condominiums and on the residents of other nearby condominiums, but also on users of the Westsong Walkway, paddlers on the harbour, marine and aircraft operations and the local environment. These concerns, which are shared by most local residents and which are more fully set out in the attachment, include:

- environmental issues,
- incompatibility of the project with the nearby residential neighbourhood,
- detrimental impact of Westsong Walkway users,
- severely constrained and dangerous passage for kayaks, canoes and other non-motor craft,
- increased traffic and congestion on neighbourhood streets, and
- the marina becoming a haven of last resort, falling into disrepair and, eventually, being abandoned,

not to mention the impact of marine safety due to increased conflict between floatplanes and marina traffic which, we trust, is being evaluated by Transport Canada.

The proposed marina is unneeded. The number of boats visiting Victoria, Sidney and Gulf Island ports has been in steady decline since 2002, due largely to the political and economic situation in the United States - a situation unlikely to change in the foreseeable future. Indeed, for most of the past summer, the city docks were seldom more than half full.

We fail to see any significant economic benefit to the City arising from a marina in the Songhees, save perhaps for a short term increase in the tax base – which may be more than offset by a decrease in the values of surrounding residential properties that become less-

desirable due to the very-close proximity of the marina. (There seems to be a consensus that Victoria is a boating center. As boaters ourselves, we think Victoria is better described as a “visitor-boating center”. What’s the difference? Visiting boaters bring their own beds, their own food and their own fuel. While they grudgingly pay mooring fees, they generally contribute little else to the local economy.) While the Province may also benefit in the near-term from payments under the arrangement with Community Marine Concepts, the longer term benefits seems less certain. We respectfully suggest you review the major-project completion record of the main proponent of the marina and consider the costs of clean-up should the project fail – either during construction or later.

We appreciate that a marina in this location has been a component of the Victoria Harbour Plan for some time. However, the nature of the area has changed significantly since prospect was first envisaged over twenty years ago. A marina is no longer an appropriate use of the Songhees shoreline. Victoria is defined by its harbour. The Westsong Walkway is a jewel that most cities can only envy. We believe and, based on the views expressed at various community meetings, are certain that the vast majority of residents of the Songhees concur, that the marina should not proceed. It seems the sentiments of local residents has changed little since the 6000+ name petition opposing the proponent’s previous attempt to develop the area in front of Royal Quays.

Yours truly,

Donald G. Grovestine

Wendy S. Grovestine

Attachment to January 5, 2009 Letter to the Integrated Land Management Bureau

1. Environmental Issues

- (a) Dredging - The developer acknowledges that significant dredging will be necessary. It has been estimated by a well-known local environmental expert that in the order of 5000 truckloads of material will have to be removed to accommodate vessels of the size contemplated. (While a lower estimate has been given by/on behalf of the developer, we believe that latter estimate is erroneous.) Aside from the disposal issues, this same expert also raises significant concerns about the detrimental effects on the harbour of the removal of so much material – the composition of which is largely unknown.
- (b) Waste Disposal – The developer is proposing a “sanitary connection” at each dock. However, many boats (large and small) plying the BC coast are still plumbed only for overboard discharge of sewage. While the foregoing concern is minimal with respect to “mega-yachts”, it would be naive to expect the marina to turn away smaller craft when space is available. Virtually all pleasure boats have an automatic bilge pump. Fluids that collect in the bilge (the deepest part of the hull of the boat) such as engine oil, diesel fuel and other contaminants may be pumped directly into the harbour by such systems. Regarding “grey water” (discharge from sinks/showers/etc.), few pleasure boats, even “mega-yachts”, are plumbed to collect and retain grey water. So, for most, there is no practical method of discharge of grey water except directly into our harbour.
- (c) Wildlife - The Lime Bay area is the winter home for large flocks of several varieties of waterfowl, including Widgeons, Buffleheads, Goldeneyes and Merganzers. The marina will cover much of the area frequented by the birds, which will be further disrupted by traffic in and out of the marina. And, much to the pleasure of Westsong Walkway patrons and local residents, the shoreline is also frequented year-round by otters, mink, oyster catchers, herons and other wildlife, none of which are likely to be seen again should the marina proceed.

- 2. Incompatibility with nearby residential areas - The noise and odours from boat operation (especially diesel exhaust fumes from extended running of engines), restaurant operation and the activities of the patrons of the marina and restaurant and of staff and service personnel will be carried, unabated, into nearby residences, many of which at Royal Quays are separated from the proposed facility by only the 35 ft. wide Westsong Walkway. (Noise from Spinnakers Pub is highly disruptive to many residents of nearby Ocean/Park Towers, and they are separated from the source of that noise by over 100 meters – more than ten times the distance separating the marina from Royal Quays.) Even when the boats are unattended, strong winds through the marina will result in noise from “clanging” halyards, “flapping” canvas and dock movement at a disturbing level in nearby residential areas. Other marine facilities on Victoria Harbour are generally downwind of, and separated by a far greater distance from, residential areas.

- 3. Congestion on the Westsong Walkway - The Westsong Walkway currently offers peace and solitude appreciated by most of its users. That will no longer be the case over a goodly distance should the marina become a reality. Walkway patrons will have to

contend with significant congestion due to marina patron and service personnel traffic and their vehicles while loading and unloading – especially at the foot of Cooperage and Paul Kane Places. In addition, vehicles crossing the Westsong Walkway to the dedicated parking area(s) (as shown in at least one version of the developer plans) will constitute a significant hazard to walkway users. The superstructure of large power boats often towers eight to ten meters (“mega-yachts even higher) above the water and, thus, will impede the otherwise unobstructed view of the harbour by users of the walkway. And, finally, powerboats typically idle their engines for lengthy periods prior to departure. This will result in high levels of odour, smoke and noise pollution along the walkway.

4. Severely constrained passage for kayaks, canoes and other non-motor craft on the north side of the harbour, of which there are routinely a hundred or more per day. In an attempt to alleviate this situation, this developer has made several proposals for a channel through the marina for non-motorized craft. But, this channel is to be used also by large motor vessels. The likelihood of collisions between the two classes of watercraft and resultant serious injury to paddlers is high since the skippers of motor craft entering and leaving the marina will have their attentions focused on floatplanes and other motor boats. Paddlers and other non-motor craft diverting around a marina in this location will come into close and potentially dangerous proximity to taxiing floatplanes.
5. Increased traffic and congestion on nearby streets - The developer has made various claims about the availability of parking for patrons and staff of the facility. All seem grossly overstated. Admittedly, the developer has access to some indoor parking at Royal Quays, but that parking is not suitable for short-term use due to the need to maintain security for the residents. One quarter to one-third of the on-street parking is already routinely used in the summer by walkway patrons and other visitors to the area. Thus, should the marina proceed, on-street parking will be fully-consumed and the two streets leading to the facility (both dead-end) will see significantly increased traffic due to patrons futilely looking for a place to leave their vehicles.
6. A marina in this location would be a haven-of-last-resort and possibly allowed to fall into disrepair - with all that implies. The area in front of Royal Quays is the most exposed location on the harbour. Not only does it suffer from severe southeast winter-storm winds, but the frequent, year-round, strong-to-gale-force winds and high waves from the Straits of Juan de Fuca bear directly down upon it. (Four-foot seas in the location where the marina is to be built are not unusual. While the proposed wave-attenuator will abate these somewhat, boaters will still have to contend with the full effects of the wind while mooring and maneuvering. Boaters typically expect to find shelter in a marina. It's no accident that all the pleasure boat moorage facilities on Victoria Harbour are on the sheltered south and east sides.) Consequently, and due to its distance from the downtown area and the almost complete lack of other local enterprise, the proposed facility will likely be the marina-of-last-resort for visiting boaters. This could lead to a gradual decline in the level of services available and, hence, what might have been built as a “world-class” facility would quickly fall into disrepair and become an eye-sore on our precious waterfront. Who will be responsible for it then?