From: [redacted]
To: District Public
Subject: Fw: Item 7(a) for September 11th council agenda
Date: Wednesday, September 11, 2024 11:08:10 AM

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[redacted]

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From "[redacted]>
To "district@lantzville.ca" <district@lan z i a>
Date 9/11/2024 11:06:00 AM
Subject Item 7(a) for September 11th council agenda

As a resident of Lantzville, I was very disappointed to see the petition for water to the Winds subdivision succeed and result in the failure to bring a safe, secure source of water to those neighborhoods. Without a doubt, this is shaping up to be the single biggest failure of a public works project for Lantzville and the potential to lose $5.7 million of "free" Grant money is unconscionable. I see the problem with this whole process was the lack of transparency and communication with the Winds residents. This was strictly a Council failing, not Staff. The reason Staff have no culpability in this process is that the 3 key positions that would have guided this process were vacant. CAO fired 10 months ago, CFO resigned and Director of Planning on paternity leave for months prior to the petition.

Why didn't council tell the residents that this was a Development Cost Charge (DCC) project and is clearly identified in the 2018 DCC report. In accordance with the policy identified in that report, DCC money should have been included to reduce the cost to the Winds local service area (LAS). If there wasn't a significant sum in the DCC reserves, then the $1.9 million Grant for infrastructure received from the Province could have been used and then paid back as DCC reserves built up. But no, that money was used to buy properties for a council vanity project, speculative property development. The Mayor supported the use of DCC money for this project, he said so in the July 27, 2020 council meeting.

The following are salient issues that should have been shared with residents and some could have been used to reduce the per connection price:

- The developers of the Medd property are obligated to install approximately 500 meters of 12 inch waterline exactly along the route of the Winds pipeline. This would result in a significant reduction in the overall cost of the project.

- Lantzville developers contributed $1 million to Phase 1 of the sewer petition back in 2006 in order to reduce the per connection cost to residents. This is an important precedent and could have easily been implemented for this petition against.There are two large groups in addition to the Winds residents that want to use this pipeline.

- Rezoning of the Superior Rd. properties has been a council priority since 2020. A economic study was prepared in May of 2022 at DOL's request and in a July 2022 letter from the Mayor, he said the OCP and rezoning amendments for the former Gee property would likely be brought to Council in September of 2022. These two amendments had bylaw numbers assigned (No.263 and No.264) and there is likely draft Staff reports for the amendments sitting in DOL's office. Rather than focus on getting this property rezoned which would have brought waterlines to the edge of Superior Rd, Council chose to pursue tree bylaws and FOG Zones. This was an incredible lost opportunity to essentially supply water to the Winds for free.

- There is no reason that if the project was completed for under the incredibly vague $9.2 million budget, that the difference couldn't be used to reduce the per connection cost. Unfortunately, this is not how the petition is worded or the direction given in the Q&A section on the District website. Can you imagine how angry residents would be if Lantzville kept $1 to $2 million of their money and put that bill on their property taxes? And if they weren't furious enough over that, they would then have to watch Lantzville charge the Superior Rd developer DCC fees for the same waterline they had already paid for. Municipal governance at its finest.

I read the staff recommendation in the Agenda package and can tell you that the Province is not going to let Lantzville use this Grant in another location or for another public works project. Let's not delude ourselves, the reason Lantzville got that Grant in the first place is because the Winds neighborhood is contiguous with the Snaw Naw As reserve and their vacant 50 acres, and the Grant had their support. Even the suggestion of not pursuing using this Grant money for a Winds pipeline is incredibly insulting to Snaw Naw As and will damage this Council's reputation with the Band.

What needs to happen immediately is for the 4 parties involved (DOL, Lantzville Projects, Snaw Naw As, and Water to the Winds committee representatives) in this pipeline to sit down as EQUAL partners and work out an agreement that will be acceptable to residents and get their vote of approval.

Given who has interests in this project, I sincerely feel the cost the Winds residents should be zero. Let's make that happen.