Public Input. July 16, 2025.
Regular Council Meeting
Agenda Item 10 c) Costin Hall

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JUL 14 2025
DISTRICT OF LANTZVILLE

Mayor and councillors, District of Lantzville

7192 Lantzville Rd. Lantzville B.C. V0R 2H0

From: Brian Blood, 7075, Caillet Rd. Lantzville B.C. V0R 2H0

Re: Future of "north garden area" Costin Hall

July 14 2025

Dear mayor and council;

Please do not support a motion or any plan to replace the north gardens and lawn at Costin Hall with a parking lot. I am not aware of the discussions that led to this possibility but there are two issues that come to mind. Interestingly, they are the same ones that are problematic in the whole village centre: parking and grounds design/maintenance.

When addressing these issues council needs to address the public interest which is both utilitarian and financial. There are a number of factors to consider.

First, this is a public *recreation* centre. People come first, cars second. We have a district-owned, public parking lot on School Road, 100 metres from the hall itself. It is and always has been underutilised. It has never been indicated by any signage or information at the hall. Many residents do not know it exists and most would assume it belongs to the school district. I have never seen it full and I am talking about decades.

Secondly, there are regulatory requirements for a *minimum* number of handicapped parking spaces near the building based on a formula of total user numbers of the property. In addition, an easy access drop-off and pick-up zone, like the existing one, is needed. Excepting those with official handicapped stickers who drive themselves to the hall, every able-bodied driver who arrives by motor vehicle should be directed to use the above-mentioned district parking lot.

Third, Costin Hall and Huddlestone Park are recreation venues. The desire to park beside the hall by those who are capable of walking 100 metres is simple laziness. A recreation centre should not be in the business of enabling laziness; it should be

encouraging fitness. The same people who walk more than 100 metres from a mall parking space to the stores without thinking about it are surely capable of walking to and from the district parking lot on School Rd.....if they know about it! Signage please.

Balancing the use of the "north gardens" at the hall with their maintenance costs is more complex and needs a larger, more synergistic look at the municipal treasure that the combined "civic centre properties" of Huddlestone Park, former church property and Costin Hall and grounds represent. These three properties were hailed as the jewel in Lantzville's crown when the former church property was acquired in the 1980's which created a single, public-owned, stretch of recreational property from Tweedhope to Huddlestone Rds. Hopes were high 40 years ago that these properties would be integrated as a single, contiguous stretch of parkland with recreational facilities. Many progressive small communities would be envious of this asset in our village core. Instead, Lantzville has shown what not to do. The properties have remained separated and the problems that regularly occur are related to that separation; the current parking proposal is only the latest. Each property gets thought of without considering the whole and its connection to the village core. This has allowed ad-hoc bad planning to rule the day. The washrooms are in the wrong place for efficient use of the whole of the properties. The OAPO illegally constructed a raised parking lot that divided "their" Costin Hall and grounds from the district's park. It should be removed and all regular parking transferred to the School Rd lot. The most iconic symbols of the misuse of these properties are the institutional chain-link fences that separate these civic centre lands from the community and separate each portion from the others. It looks like a minimum -security prison facility. The blame lies with all of the councils since incorporation and even with the LID boards before that. I don't know if any of our planning staff over the years have attempted to come up with a more integrative and human-friendly use of these lands, but the process must begin with council. All of the councils since incorporation have demonstrated a lack of interest and imagination when it comes to these civic-centre properties. We, the public, have also grown so accustomed to the status quo with the civic centre lands that we (like past and present councils), have difficulty seeing the whole which is so much greater than the sum of its parts.

Before you commit another compounding mistake with this wonderful asset, take some time to imagine the possibilities that these properties could represent for this community. Walk around, take a look. We don't have to buy them. We already own them. I have previously suggested to you the removal of the former church building which was built by volunteers 90 years ago, all of whom would be astonished that the wooden, maintenance nightmare and public safety risk, was still standing. Please read that letter again.

I suggest asking the planning staff to walk around these properties and do some simple sketches of a re-imagined, citizen-friendly use of them as a single integrated swath of recreational land seamlessly connected to the village core and then take it to the public. If not now, when? Another 40 years?

Sincerely, Brian Blood



From: Susan Cormie [redacted]
Sent: July 16, 2025 9:32 AM
To: Mayor Swain <mayor.swain@lantzville.ca>; Councillor Savage <ISavage@lantzville.ca>; Councillor Jones <councillor.jones@lantzville.ca>; Councillor Mundell <councillor.mundell@lantzville.ca>; Councillor Lerner <councillor.lerner@lantzville.ca>; District <district@lantzville.ca>
Subject: Proposed Parking Lot at Costin Hall

Mayor and Council

I am concerned with this proposal to pave the public garden and open space area at Costin Hall in order to add additional parking spaces. Removing this garden which provides green space would be a shame. Access to this green space should be enhanced by providing a pedestrian path from Tweedhope Road. While I realize parking is an issue at times, perhaps Hall users could be directed by signage to the public parking area located adjacent to the school.

Sincerely

Susan Cormie
7130 Sebastion Road