

PARKSVILLE QUALICUM BEACH NEWS

Input sought on Despard plans

Published: March 02, 2009 4:00 PM

InSight Developments is looking for public input into what they should do with their 26-acre property at the corner of Despard Avenue and the Old Alberni Highway in Parksville.

“We inherited a development plan from the previous owners,” said InSight Development Manager George Hanson, on their purchase of the property around six months ago.

“We could begin developing immediately but we think we can be much more creative than the existing plans.”

The Nanaimo-based company has built or is developing several large residential projects in the central island and Lower Mainland areas and according to Hanson they like to put their own unique stamp on each.

“These are kind of cookie cutter plans,” he said of the approved plans they received from the last owner.

They held an open house recently at the Parksville Community and Conference Centre to inform people of their intentions and to solicit feedback on what people want to see in the area.

Hanson said the lot is perfect for any number of development possibilities but he thinks “Parksville is ready for something with a lot more creativity.”

He said they will be looking to use as much of the natural topography and character of the area as possible. The preliminary plan they are starting from includes about 50 single family lots, 135 multi-family units and some neighbourhood commercial space, but Hanson said they are looking at doing more.

“The city is asking for more density so we’re looking at various ways, whether that’s through single family homes with secondary suites and carriage houses or larger developments, we believe we can come up with some more imaginative uses.”

Parksville Mayor Ed Mayne agreed that the city is looking for much more dense development than a typical subdivision and he thinks the company is doing a nice job of involving the community in the process.

Mayne said it is more cost effective for the city to service more than one family on a property not to mention it is more environmentally friendly to be more densely populated.

Hanson said that while they are technically ready to go, with working plans and city approval — meaning they could start building tomorrow — they are more likely about a year away from beginning work while they refine their plans and continue to consult with the public and city.

You can find more details on the plans at www.insightdevelopments.ca.