



MEDIA RELEASE

Summerland, BC
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For immediate release

District of Summerland's Response to Trout Creek School Closure

Mayor Waterman and council are deeply disappointed by the decision of the trustees of School District #67 to close Trout Creek Elementary school. Council maintains that the availability of education opportunities for all children in the community is imperative to the development of a vibrant community that is attractive to families.

"Despite our disappointment regarding this decision, Summerland council will continue to invest in the community to encourage growth and economic development," states Mayor Waterman. "In 2015, total building permits issued in Summerland increased by 40% and this trend is continuing in 2016. There is much interest in developing the former RCMP property as well as other potential development sites. Building permits are currently being processed for the Lighthouse Landing development and it is expected building permits will soon be issued for new subdivisions on Stonor Street and Johnson Street. Over 50 new lots have been developed in the Trout Creek neighbourhood with more on the way. Housing development is high at the moment."

Although the school trustees have reached their decision, Mayor Waterman and council will continue to request meetings with the Minister of Education to ensure the community's voice is heard at the provincial level. Adequate funding levels are required in recognition of the vital role that the availability of education within a community plays.

Other council initiatives illustrate the continued investment the District is making in the community. The Cultural Plan Task Force has been active over the past year and they have completed a significant community engagement process. Over 3,000 individual comments have been collected and analyzed. The plan is expected by late spring or early summer. The Mayor's Task Force on Economic Development, which includes a wide spectrum of representation from the community, is exploring ideas that will further support economic growth in the community.

Recently, the District has partnered with the Summerland Chamber to further the shop local initiative called "#discoverhome" including video vignettes. Summerland is also partnering with Naramata and Penticton for the "Chain of Events" cycling event occurring next month.

Mayor Waterman concludes by saying, *"While this decision will affect the community, it will not define us. Summerland is experiencing an active housing market and significant private development projects. Council continues to invest in our vibrant community culture and infrastructure projects including the Garnet Valley water separation project, and building our reserves for future generations. The closure of Trout Creek Elementary School will require us to adjust our future planning however council is optimistic that Summerland remains well positioned to take advantage of opportunities as they arise"*.

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