

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Plan to attend hearings

The Jumbo Glacier Resort Master Plan (RMP) review is grinding right along after getting words from higher echelons recently to expedite the process, according to Psyche Brown, Manager of Major Projects under the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Sports. When the commitments that arose from the conditional approval of the Environmental Assessment Office are satisfactorily worked out with the proponent the RMP will be approved.

One of the commitments is to mitigate the negative impacts of the resort on grizzly bears and other wildlife. The government has again decided on vehicular closure of the whole Glacier and Howser drainages and various subdrainages of Toby, Horsethief, Brewer, Dutch and all but the resort road in the Jumbo drainage.

The legal contract between the proponent and the government, called the Master Development Agreement, follows the approval of the RMP. Brown guesstimates this by the end of Summer 2006.

It is anticipated that the proponent will then apply to the Regional District of East Kootenay for rezoning in to a Resort Municipality. Any rezoning (i.e. land redefinition change) requires public hearings. The date of those hearings is set by the regional district. There is a good chance there will be a by-election in September for a new Area F Director in the East Kootenay. It now looks like the public hearings will take place in Invermere after the election.

Plan to attend those hearings. It will be the last chance for public input. You will be given three to five minutes to make your presentation. Make it specific to one part of the issue like wildlife mitigation, sewage, avalanches, wildfire, water, local economy, social impacts, and such. One issue could be divided into several people to cover all the implications of the issue.

*Rowena Eloise,
Argenta for the West Kootenay Coalition for Jumbo Wild*

Mayor can't believe level of arrogance

I guess nothing should surprise me these days but I couldn't believe the level of arrogance and how truly misinformed Mr. Costello, the Vice-President of Jumbo Glacier Resorts, really is. Mr. Costello says that the Regional District of East Kootenay (RDEK) doesn't have the expertise to deal with the planning of the resort. Yet, that is what the RDEK does. I guess Mr. Costello hasn't heard of Femie Alpine Resort or Panorama Mountain Village.

Local government is responsible for land use planning and it doesn't matter what process the provincial government has undertaken, land use decisions come down to a three way discussion between the developer, the local government and its citizens. This is where people in favour or opposed to the resort will have the opportunity to discuss the local impacts, both positive and negative, with their locally elected officials. It does not matter whether this is Crown land or not, local government has a right to discuss the land use, otherwise the province could do whatever it wished on Crown land, everywhere, even within a municipality

Mr. Costello, also said "that further delaying the process will exacerbate existing problems in their constituencies by creating additional tax burdens for the electorate." This is an incredible statement considering that it was just over a year ago that our District of Invermere taxpayers had to fork over \$20,000 to the Ministry of Transportation for a study of the Athalmer corridor and the impacts of the proposed Jumbo Resort on traffic flows.

The resulting options are in the millions of dollars. At the time, I had asked Mr. Costello, the VP of the 450 million dollar proposed resort to contribute \$5,000, yes, five thousand dollars, to the study as a sign of good faith and he said no.

At this time, after many attempts, we still don't have a believable commitment from either Jumbo Resort or the province on who will pay for the absolutely necessary upgrades through our community. This is just one of the many reasons why this decision should stay with local government because whether people are for or against Jumbo, I am sure we all agree that it should not be the DOI and its taxpayers that should have to pay for millions of dollars' worth of upgrades to facilitate a 450 million dollar resort up the road.

Well, I guess we could just turn over to the decision to the province and just trust the developer and the province to do the right thing?

Mark Shmigelsky
Mayor of Invermere