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### **SOCIAL PLANNING COWICHAN HIRES EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

Social Planning Cowichan has hired its first Executive Director, Board Chair Candace Spilsbury announced today. Diane Kennedy starts her new position on May 22. She will work out of the organization's offices on Third Street in Duncan.

Kennedy is a graduate of UVic with a degree in Social Work. She has worked for the Community Council of Greater Victoria and was a ministerial assistant to ministers including the Minister of Human Resources and Children and Families. In addition, she has worked as a communications officer for the BC Government and operated her own businesses. Most recently, she served as Manager, South Cowichan Chamber of Commerce.

"On behalf of the Social Planning Board, I'd like to say how pleased we are to have Diane join us," said Board Chair Candace Spilsbury. "She brings with her considerable experience, as well as an understanding of community issues and strong leadership skills."

Kennedy's first priority will be to work with the Board to carry out the recommendations of two Social Planning Cowichan reports: Inadequate Shelter in the Cowichan Valley and the Status of the Community Report. One of her first tasks on the job will be to establish a local Affordable Housing Council. Members of the council will oversee and manage affordable housing issues in the Cowichan region. "It's no secret that housing is a critical issue. Now that we have a detailed report and a blue print for action, we're anxious to get going," Spilsbury said.

"Serving as the first Executive Director of Social Planning Cowichan is quite an honour," said Kennedy. I am looking forward to working with individuals and community agencies and groups who are actively involved in addressing issues like homelessness, child care, support for the working poor, mental health issues and addictions. There's no shortage of dedication and commitment within our communities - together, we can make great strides."

Social Planning Cowichan is a non-profit organization dedicated to improving the quality of life for people in the Cowichan Valley. For more information, please call 746-1004 or check the web site at [www.socialplanningcowichan.ca](http://www.socialplanningcowichan.ca).

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