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## September/October 2007 Newsletter

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### New website address

Please note we have a new website address: [www.socialplanningcowicha.org](http://www.socialplanningcowicha.org) and everything is up and running at that site.

Our apologies to those who have encountered problems accessing our website recently.

### Message from the Chair

September and October have been busy for Social Planning Cowichan. Among other things, we held the first meeting of the Affordable Housing Directorate and released the draft of the Regional Child Care Report prepared by our executive director, Diane Kennedy and research assistant Kylynn Peerens.

The Child Care Report has generated considerable community interest and was well covered by our local media. The report emphasizes that child care in the Cowichan Region is in critical condition and, like the rest of the province, the Cowichan Valley is plagued by a lack of quality licensed child care.

We were delighted to see many child care advocates and stakeholders attend a community forum on October 2nd to discuss the report, provide recommendations and strategize for the future. As a result, plans are underway to form a Regional Child Care Council which will join with other provincial groups providing input to all levels of government.

Our second important event was the inaugural meeting of the Affordable Housing Directorate on October 18th. This group includes local planners, social service agency representatives, elected officials and others associated with affordable housing. I would particularly like to thank Langford Councillor Lanny Seaton, Chair Affordable Housing Council, and Emilie Adin, Deputy City Planner, for braving the rain and wind to tell us about Langford's award winning affordable housing program.

On behalf of the Board, I would like to pay special tribute to all those who took part in our regional child care forum and those who have volunteered to participate in the Affordable Housing Directorate. By working together, I believe we can make a significant difference in the lives of so many people – and ultimately for us all.

*Candace Spilsbury*

Candace Spilsbury, Chair  
Social Planning Cowichan

## **Social Planning Cowichan:**

### **Who are we and what do we do?**

**S**ocial Planning Cowichan is a registered society founded in 2004. We provide leadership that brings the community together to help improve quality of life for all.

We have a 13-member volunteer Board of Directors representing community organizations, local government, First Nations, education and the community at large.

Social Planning Cowichan is an affiliate of the Social Planning and Research Council of BC, the Community Social Planning Network and the Vancouver Island Social Planning Network.

### **Our mandate is to:**

- **Conduct research** about the social health of the Cowichan Region.
- **Educate and inform** the Cowichan Region community about social planning issues.
- **Facilitate partnerships** and community consensus on issues and action plans.
- **Recommend action plans** and short and long term strategies to improve the quality of life in the Cowichan Region.

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## **Words of Wisdom from Langford's (Award Winning) Affordable Housing Presentation**

- Be persistent and persevere toward the goal of affordable housing.
- Don't copy other housing programs. It's best for the Cowichan Region to have a program tailored to its unique needs.
- It's all about partnerships, a team effort between local government, developers and other key stakeholders.
- When designed properly, affordable housing is indistinguishable from neighbouring market value housing.

## **Highlights of the Cowichan Valley Region Child Care Report**

- Currently there is a critical lack of licensed child care spaces in the Cowichan Region with enough spaces to serve only 48 percent of the estimated 4,862 children under the age of 12 who need child care.
- For the estimated 1,047 children aged three and under who need child care, there are only 165 licensed spaces.
- If families can't find child care they can't work or attend training programs. In the end, this impacts us all.
- Three main causes of the child care crisis are: lack of spaces; inadequate funding of child care services; low wages impacting staff recruitment and retention.

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## **SPC Working with Community Partners**

### **Community Dialogue on Multiculturalism**

SPC Director Mike Coleman is serving as a member of the Cowichan Intercultural Society's steering committee planning a 'Community Dialogue on Multiculturalism' event for the Spring of 2008. This initiative is supported by the Ministry of the Attorney General and the Wosk Centre for Dialogue of SFU.

### **Community Food Action Initiative**

SPC Executive Director Diane Kennedy is serving as a member of the Cowichan Green Community Society's 'Community Food Action Initiative', the goal of which is the development of a Community Food Action Plan. This project is building on the two community food security capacity building meetings held in early 2006 and is funded by VIHA.

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## **Watch for...**

### **Formation of a Regional Child Care Council**

Invitations to participating members of the Regional Child Care Council will be mailed out mid-November with the first meeting scheduled to take place during the first week of December.

### **Cross Cultural Relations Initiative**

Social Planning Cowichan is planning to create a cross-cultural relations partnership building on the work of the Intercultural Society, NAIG and other organizations. The goal is to celebrate multiculturalism in the Cowichan Region. Watch for more information in the new year.