

The Watchdog Bulletin



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Joint Venture Phase One:
logging of 800 acres in Powell River.

Will the Mill morph into a Coal-fired generating plant?

Here are the facts:

- The pulp and paper industry in Canada is in deep trouble, with over 10,000 jobs lost in the last five years. The industry is beyond saving.
- Catalyst Paper Company is close to \$1 billion in debt and reports substantial losses for three of the last four quarters reported. Catalyst states: "The Company's ability to pay interest on, and to satisfy, its debt or equity financing will depend upon the Company's future operating performance . . ." No kidding! (See Catalyst's discussion of its Risks and Uncertainties at <http://ourpowellriver.com>.)
- Catalyst Paper Company recently replaced former NorskeSkog directors on its Board with three experts in the energy business.
- Also on the Board is the former Minister of Finance, Gary Collins, who can ensure that Catalyst execs have the Premier's ear. Are tax breaks in the future, too? (Further information on the Catalyst Board of Directors at <http://ourpowellriver.com>.)
- BC Hydro admits it is planning new energy facilities that could be fired by coal. In an editorial extolling the

virtues of coal-fired generating plants, the *Vancouver Sun* states: "BC Hydro hasn't put up any roadblocks to coal-fired plants in its request for proposals . . ." (See <http://ourpowellriver.com> for recent *Vancouver Sun* articles of March 25th and March 30th on this issue.)

- There are abundant supplies of coal on Vancouver Island that could easily be shipped to Powell River.
- Catalyst mill management in both Powell River and Elk Falls (Campbell River) have advised that a paper machine in each facility will likely be shut down, with a consequent loss of jobs, within the next few months.
- Power boilers that currently burn hog fuel, as do those here in Powell River, can be converted to burn coal.
- In many ways, burning coal is easier than burning hog fuel due to coal being more consistent in its formulation.
- A coal-fired energy plant will need a dramatically smaller crew than the mill employs presently.
- Catalyst needs to find a way to make money!

Connect the dots and draw your own conclusions.

Important stories in our Community

- *Is Coal-burning in the Mill's future?*
- *BC Ombudsman to Investigate JV*
- *Bush-style politics in Powell River*

"Catalyst Paper Company is close to \$1 billion in debt and reports significant losses. . . ."



This month sees another addition to the Watchdog team: **Webmastiff.**

An expert in web design and support, he is responsible for our new Watchdog website: <http://ourpowellriver.com>.

Sniff it out! The site has lots of information on local issues as well as a "guestbook" where you can share information, post comments, or just bark your head off. The site is updated regularly with new items of interest.



SITINGS

Who was that man flying to Vancouver on Friday, March 31st to give a joint venture presentation, with Mayor Alsgard, to the Union of BC Municipalities.. Why, it was none other than Dave Formosa. Hey, boys, if you can talk to the UBCM about the joint venture, why can't you talk to us -- the citizens of Powell River?

Call the Mayor and ask him
604 485-6291

City Hall Blues with Lupo:

Problems in the Field

Greetings from the green pastures of city hall where your Watchdog correspondent is keeping both eyes on the Committee of the Whole (COW) gatherings.

This regular meeting was full of COW plops as the herd tried to navigate frigid waters. There were 3 separate unhappy developer delegations (including Starbucks), a nice lady selling Powell River calendars, and one pesky piece of correspondence re: Mobile Home Park Redevelopment Tenant Assistance Policy for which the COW chose the 'do nothing is safest' response.

While some of the COW members appear to be digesting the agenda material for the first time, they have had early warning that permit applications (and resulting revenue) have enjoyed significant increases. However, dealing with the 'patchwork' development and lengthy delays by the overwhelmed planning department appear to have just hit the ground, PLOP!

I wanted to pose a game for Watchdog readers, asking you to guess what the COW came up with as a solution to the backlog! But, I stopped . . . because I didn't think anyone would have gotten this one: **The COW has decided to restrict public access to the planning counter at city hall by closing it for half of each day (in the morning)!**

The COW, nervous about its decision, was easily comforted when the city's highest-paid employee, CAO Stan Westby, advised that he would monitor the situation and report back. Will he charge taxpayers more overtime or can he handle his monitor-duties during a regular shift?

Article censored due to the

lawsuit by Dave Formosa

against the Watchdog

CITIZENS FILE COMPLAINTS WITH BC OMBUDSMAN

Numerous Powell River citizens have filed complaints with the BC Ombudsman against the Mayor, Council and city officials regarding the lack of public information about the proposed joint venture between the city, the Sliammon Development Corporation, and the Catalyst Paper Corporation.

These complaints were filed as a 'last resort' after numerous requests for essential information -- on the structure of the joint venture, the cost to the City and taxpayers, the liabilities and risks the City would incur, and the management scheme and business plan -- were ignored by city officials.

The Ombudsman's office investigates complaints of unfairness by government organizations. If you would like to file your own complaint, forms and information are available on their website: www.ombud.gov.bc.ca

*When the Stranger says: "What is the meaning of this city?
Do you huddle close together because you love each other?"*

*What will you answer?
"We all dwell together to make money from each other?"
or "This is a community"?*

—T.S. Eliot - Choruses from 'The Rock'