



District of North Saanich

Corporate Review

FINAL REPORT

Executive Summary

George B. Cuff & Associates Ltd.

Management Consultants

February 2004

February 9th 2004
Mayor Ted Daly and Councillors
District of North Saanich
Municipal Office
1620 Mills Road,
North Saanich, BC V8L 5S9

Dear Mayor Daly and Councillors:

We are pleased to enclose the Executive Summary of our **Final Report** of our **Corporate Review**. This Summary provides the reader with a background on some of the key municipal governance concepts, an overview of the key issues and our views on how an effective local government is intended to function, and our recommendations for action by Council and management.

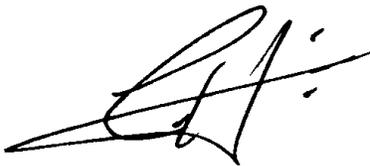
The "background" material will allow the reader to be acquainted with and understand these key municipal governance concepts as this is essential to moving forward as an organization. The balance of this Report summarizes our findings and observations based on the comprehensive overview of your system.

We have been encouraged by the willingness of everyone to contribute their thoughts and observations to our Review. As requested by Council, we not only interviewed all members of Council and senior staff, we have also interviewed a thorough cross-section of all employees. As well, we met approximately 30 members of the public to hear their perspectives on how the system has been functioning to date. While we do not suggest that this reflects the full body of public opinion, we have sought to distil their comments into general observations.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide our Report on the legislative and administrative functioning of the District of North Saanich. We believe that we have identified how the District needs to improve and the tools required to do so. The required action is up to Council to approve and the Chief Administrative Officer (and Council) to implement.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide this assistance to the District.

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President

c.c. Doug Plamping, Senior Associate
Ted Brown, Associate

An Executive Summary of Recommended Actions

While this is not intended to replace our recommendations which are included herein, we are providing this summary of recommended actions up front so that both Council and the administration are clear as to what actions we as organizational consultants believe are absolutely central to the success of this Corporate Review. It is essential that Council not become bogged down in the details of this Report but that it focus on the broader picture and those areas wherein some real progress can be achieved.

1. **Accept this Report and commit to putting it into action.** Direct the CAO to provide Council with a detailed Action Plan within 30 days.
2. **Publicize what you are doing and ensure that the public has an up-to-date message** of what actions are happening and those which are planned.
3. **Make decisions based on what Council as a whole believes to be in the will of the community** and not in the interests of segments of the whole or in deference to those with the most organized voices. Council is elected to govern for the entire District. This principle is central to everything else. Engage in a

process of corporate and community strategic planning in order to identify the priorities of the public.

4. **Change your behaviour towards one another in the Chambers; learn to treat each other with respect; keep your private and public roles separate.** Accept the enforcement of this by the Mayor. Expect him to pursue a higher standard of behaviour by all of Council. Meet as a group in camera from time to time and discuss your behaviour towards one another. Assess how it might continue to improve.
5. **Allow your new CAO to manage and keep him accountable to Council as the legal corporate body.** Give him your confidence; accept his suggestions for improving the way this system is being managed. Expect all administrative advice to flow through the CAO and hold him accountable for its quality.
6. **Focus on your role as policy governors;** review the existing policy bank. Put in place a new process for developing new policies. Elevate your aim.
7. **Determine YOUR philosophy** regarding new development and utility standards and expect your

CAO to pursue that course. Ensure that your decisions ensure the sustainability of the District over the longer term.

8. **Seek ways by which your governance can be streamlined** and yet be publicly-transparent and open; accept our advice regarding a new approach to committee of the whole meetings; make the process changes we have recommended which will address a number of longstanding issues.
9. **Endorse the new organizational structure with the new “service umbrellas”** and direct the CAO to take those steps to make the necessary changes; hold the CAO accountable for improved performance and better use of resources by the administration. Allow him to retain the necessary resources to get the job done.
10. **Make the necessary physical changes to District Hall and its environs.**

Our Purpose

Based upon an initial contact with the District of North Saanich, we submitted our proposal to conduct a full-scale review of the basic components of the District. Our proposal was accepted by Council and has been useful in guiding our work.

Purpose

As stated in our proposal, we were engaged to “undertake a comprehensive Corporate Review in order to provide Council and senior management with a report which provides clear recommendations on the most efficient and effective organizational structure, legislative decision-making processes, senior management performance, as well as organizational and system requirements”.

District Administration Accomplishments

As a part of our work and in an attempt to ensure a degree of balance relative to how the District has been doing over the past few years, we asked the District to provide an outline of what might be considered as fairly recent accomplishments. The following was provided to us by the administration.

1. “Involvement in issues relating to preparation of a Saanich Peninsula Liquid Waste Management Plan, including:
 - debate over location of both the new Saanich Peninsula Wastewater Treatment Plant and the outfall. This issue was very controversial, because the treatment plant was to serve not only North

Saanich, but also Central Saanich and Sidney;

- road access through residential areas to the treatment plant and then other issues which arose during its subsequent construction;
- determination of the amount of capacity in the treatment plant that was to be reserved for DNS, and the associated cost-sharing formula. This discussion centred on identification of sewage disposal problems in the municipality and whether these problems should be addressed through upgrading of onsite sewage treatment and disposal or by constructing a conventional sewage collection system. As the sewage treatment plant capacity was designed for a 15-year period, it was necessary to predict the District's growth and whether the density would require conventional sewers.

2. Change of jurisdiction of the Victoria Airport from Transport Canada to **Victoria Airport Authority**. This led to lengthy negotiations and agreement with the Victoria Airport Authority on their Airport Master Plan, the Land Use Plan, and the examination of tax and municipal servicing implications.

3. **Vancouver Island Regional Library referendum**. The three Peninsula Councils decided to ask their residents whether they wished to change their library service provider from the current Vancouver Island Regional Library (VIRL) to the Greater Victoria Public Library (GVPL). Changing library jurisdictions requires a referendum. There was considerable coordination required among the three Peninsula administrators to prepare the relevant background information, communicate this to the public, and hold the referendum. North Saanich and Sidney share the same library branch. North Saanich voted to join the GVPL and Sidney voted to remain with the VIRL. As a result, North Saanich was required to further consider its options. The ultimate decision of Council was to remain with VIRL.

4. **First Responder service by Fire Department**. The North Saanich Volunteer Fire Department indicated a willingness to provide First Responder services in the municipality. First Responder services involve the department attending at ambulance calls to assist at incidents. Because the closest ambulance service is located in Sidney, the Fire Department is often able to respond more quickly than the ambulance service to certain areas of the community. Fire

personnel are able to secure the scene and stabilize or comfort an ill or injured person until the ambulance arrives.

As a result of the District providing this service, we were advised by our dispatch service (provided by Central Saanich) that they would no longer be able to dispatch our calls due to the anticipated increase in emergency calls which they did not have the resources to handle. As a result, the District had to obtain dispatch services from another provider, involving time, effort and additional costs.

5. Conversion of a volunteer to **paid Fire Chief** and eventual relocation of Fire Department offices from Municipal Hall to Wain Road Fire Hall.
6. **Official Community Plan review and rewrite** – 1996-1998.
7. **Dominion Brook Park**. What is now known as Dominion Brook Park is a 10 acre area of land located within the Federal Centre for Plant Health property. This area was once maintained as an arboretum by the federal government and contains ponds, trails, rock walls, a picnic area and many rare species of plants and trees. With a severe reduction in federal government funding, the area was neglected and poorly maintained. A group of local residents initiated a proposal

whereby this area would be leased by the federal government to the municipality, and would then be maintained by the “Friends of Dominion Brook Park”. After lengthy negotiations with the federal government, North Saanich was successful in obtaining the lease and the “Friends” are gradually restoring the park to its former state.

8. **SE Quadrant Sewer Project**. The Southeast Quadrant of the municipality was identified as one of the areas requiring a permanent solution to onsite sewage disposal problems. The District engaged a consultant to prepare a report evaluating the constraints to onsite disposal and comparing the costs of repairing and replacing onsite systems with the costs of installing a conventional sewage collection system. A referendum was held, and the residents affected voted in favour of the collection system. The District applied for and received an infrastructure grant, and the system was constructed. About 700 properties were provided with sewer service.
9. **Deep Cove/Patricia Bay sewage disposal problems**. The Deep Cove/Patricia Bay area was also identified as one of the areas requiring a permanent solution to onsite sewage disposal problems. The District engaged the same consultant who prepared the

Southeast Quadrant reports to prepare a report evaluating the constraints to onsite disposal. The studies of this area had an added complication in that the residents requested the municipality to compare costs of local treatment and disposal options with the regional (Saanich Peninsula Wastewater Treatment Plant) option. The studies included review of options for another outfall as well as utilization of alternative sewer treatment technologies.

Expressions of interest were then requested from providers of these alternative technologies. They were evaluated and compared with the regional option. After reviewing these reports, Council selected the regional option of utilizing the Saanich Peninsula Wastewater Treatment Plant. The District applied for an infrastructure grant for this project (value of grant requested is approximately \$5,770,000) in March 2001.

10. Onsite system monitoring and maintenance. Even with new sewer services, about half of the municipality will remain on onsite systems. The District has been working with the CRD and other municipalities who still have onsite sewer systems to establish a monitoring and maintenance program. The program is presently on hold and awaiting commitments

from the Vancouver Island Health Authority and the Province on cost-sharing.

11. Major computer system upgrades.

The District has done two major computer system upgrades since 1996.

12. Dunsmuir Lodge taxation and expansion issue.

The Dunsmuir Lodge taxation issue came to the fore when Dunsmuir Lodge, which is owned by the University of Victoria, made application to expand its education, training and conference facility. It was intended to add both teaching & conference facilities and accommodation. University properties are exempt from taxation under provincial legislation. Peninsula restaurant, hotel and motel businesses expressed their objection, stating it to be unfair competition with them, since Dunsmuir is not required to pay taxes. Attempts to change the tax-exempt status of Dunsmuir failed, but the municipality entered into an agreement with Dunsmuir Lodge to limit its competition with local businesses. It now restricts its advertising to educational and conference events. The originally-planned expansion was cancelled because of the objections of local businesses.

13. Lillian Hoffar Park. Lillian Hoffar Park is a beautiful five-acre waterfront property that was given to

the District as a bequest. Over the past several years, the District has gradually converted the property from a residential property to a park.

14. Mary Winspear Centre. The Mary Winspear Centre was formerly known as Sanscha Hall. It has recently undergone a massive renovation, which was initiated and completed by the Society which owns and maintains it. North Saanich's involvement was to provide a \$500,000 contribution to the refurbishing of the Hall, as well as \$55,000 a year toward operating costs. While the District's involvement in actual planning and construction was minimal, Council was involved in a very fractious debate over whether the District should contribute, and to what extent, since the building is actually in Sidney. It was argued by some that the Town of Sidney stood to benefit much more than North Saanich, and therefore North Saanich should not be required to provide an equal amount.

15. Job Evaluation/Pay Equity process. The Job Evaluation/Pay Equity (JEPE) project, initiated by the Greater Victoria Labour Relations Association and CUPE was finalized. In order to conclude this process, it was necessary to completely revise the pay schedules for all bargaining unit employees and involved negotiations with CUPE.

16. Job Description Project. After the JEPE project was concluded a complete revision of all job descriptions in the bargaining unit was undertaken, as well as review of the point ratings for each position. This work was completed with the assistance of a consultant.

17. Major labour relations issues. There were 36 grievances filed by CUPE between September 1998 and October 2002. This degree of activity appeared to be related to internal union difficulties. Resolving these grievances consumed much time and energy.

18. Negotiation of Collective Agreements. Two four-year collective agreements were successfully negotiated during the period 1996 to 2003.

19. Establishment of Work Superintendent position. In late 1997, the position of Work Superintendent was established. This position has greatly enhanced the coordination of resources of public works and utilities personnel and equipment.

20. Website project. The District of North Saanich does not have its own website, but development is well underway in conjunction with the District of Central Saanich and the Town of Sidney.

A Summary of Comments/Observations

Our process included a wide range of interviews with members of Council, the administration and 30-40 members of the public. The following abbreviated summary reflects what we heard:

- Council members represent quite distinctly different backgrounds and thus bring diverse skills to the table. All members need to recognize that it is Council as a whole which has the power to make decisions and to commit the District.
- Whereas most members of Council appear to respect the separate roles of administration, there has been frequent encounters where that has not been the case.
- A new Mayor has been elected this term. He believed that the public expected considerable change (based on comments to him during the campaign) in how the municipality was to be governed and managed. While there has been considerable areas of disagreement, most members of Council respect the leadership and work ethic of the Mayor and view him as being very busy and keen to do a good job.
- Council needs to learn how to debate issues in a healthy manner; the calibre of the debate needs to improve and attacks on personalities needs to stop.
- The public senses that there is limited trust on Council; Councillors and staff alike need to know that they can trust the word of each other.
- There appears to be instances of at least perceived conflict of interest due to the personal and business interests of individual members of Council; this situation needs to be closely monitored by the Mayor.
- There seems to be a constant sense of tension in the District between those who want some degree of change and those who are adamant that little or no change is satisfactory.
- Some members of the senior administration have not been willing to view public issues and concerns as important. Residents complain that they have to pursue matters at some length before the administration is prepared to do more than just listen.
- The administration needs to afford the public respect and a willingness to hear their concerns. All too often, the administration has only appeared

interested in putting up barriers with little to no explanation of the right approval process. Minor infractions are not tolerated and historical practice is given little credence.

- There is a need for print material available to the public explaining the process, the bylaw or ruling on which the decisions are based.
- Some members of the public complained that the processes to approve building permits is slower by far in North Saanich than elsewhere (e.g. building permits in Sidney processed in 4-5 days; in North Saanich 4-5 weeks; 2 building inspectors in Sidney, 3 in North Saanich). Often house-builders sense that they are viewed as developers and face processes which might fit with the development of a new subdivision. The attitudes expressed particularly by engineering staff are often viewed as intimidating.
- The administration is viewed by most of those who provided an opinion as generally unfriendly to the public, unapproachable and inflexible (with some notable exceptions to this assessment). There is obviously no District protocol with regard to the responsiveness of staff to calls, letters and e-mails.

- Council is asked to make decisions on all matters regardless of how small they might appear to be. The staff often appear ill-prepared to make decisions and may lack the authority to do so.
- Concern expressed that the public has a right to expect their administration to advise them of infrastructure plans in their neighbourhood and the anticipated financial repercussions.
- The administration as a whole feels that there has been a limited degree of “esprit de corps” within the office and between outside departments. While employees enjoy their own positions for the most part, they feel that considerable improvement could be made to how the District functions.
- Members of commissions and boards have generally enjoyed the opportunity to become involved. Members express the view that Council needs to be more clear regarding its expectations of Council if the commissions are to be of added value to the residents and Council.

Key Issues

Clarity of Vision and Leadership

According to the new Community Charter, the fundamental purposes of a municipality are:

Municipal purposes

7 The purposes of a municipality include

(a) providing for good government of its community,

(b) providing for services, laws and other matters for community benefit,

(c) providing for stewardship of the public assets of its community, and

(d) fostering the economic, social and environmental well-being of its community.

These purposes require that an elected Council provide a real sense of leadership to the key issues facing their municipality. Given that the responsibility for managing the day-to-day affairs of the District has been delegated by bylaw and contract to the Chief Administrative Officer, the focus of the elected body should be that of future vision, goals and objectives. The essence of such leadership addresses the following types of issues and questions:

- What are the keys to the future of this community?
- What are the key elements of this community which we cherish?
- How will we be assured of the sustainability of our future?

- How will we know whether or not we are successful in the future?
- What will be our new (or continuing) targets?
- How will we continue to be relevant?
- What tools and mechanisms do we need to have in place which will assure us that we are governing in an effective manner?

Without such a future sense to the affairs of any organization, a sense of complacency or drift is likely to occur. Further, decisions are made which may or may not support the future vision because it has yet to be articulated.

This appears to be the situation facing the District of North Saanich. Generally speaking, the election of a new Mayor (and the defeat of someone who was respected as a strong incumbent) indicates significant winds of change. Taken together with other new members of Council, this past election was obviously about at least some degree of change.

Regardless of this, we were unable to determine clear evidence that a new set of priorities or a new "Council agenda" had taken shape. There is talk of changes to be sure but the substance of what is intended is left to the imagination. The District has embarked on a review of its Official Community Plan and was recently involved in the development of a Regional Growth Strategy, coordinated by the Capital Regional District. While both of these documents (and particularly the former)

provide a sense of planning principles and objectives, it is still the mandate of Council to determine the way by which sustainability, growth and development issues will be tackled.

As important as the Official Community Plan may be, there does not appear to be any sense of the key issues facing the District nor any real strategy to resolve these in a coherent fashion. The issue most frequently referred to is the Deep Cove, Patricia Bay and MacDonald Park Wastewater Collection, Treatment and Disposal Project which may be eligible for funding via the Canada/BC Infrastructure Program. This has also been the most divisive issue faced by this Council. Regardless of the application for funding, there still seems to be within both Council and the administration an element of uncertainty as to “where to from here?”

Treatment of the Public

The majority of complaints and comments we received pertained to the perceived treatment of the public by the administration of the District. This has been so overwhelming we cannot recall any instance wherein we heard more consistent focus on this single issue. Almost all of the members of the public whom we interviewed (and who were recommended to us by the members of Council) complained of the unresponsive attitude of the administration with regard to concerns and questions voiced by the public. Many spoke of the delays and the

apparent disregard for the schedules of others when making decisions respecting proposed building and development projects. Others pointed to the rudeness of staff at the counter or in the field and the seeming inability to assist the public in finding solutions to either concerns or a desire to improve or change their properties.

Information that was made available to the public relative to timing of their actions or expected approvals was perceived as vague and/or unfounded by subsequent action. Those who have worked in other jurisdictions spoke uniformly of the delays and roadblocks in North Saanich by comparison to the others.

A number of the public made the point that they are quickly and sometimes unfairly labelled as “pro or anti-development” based on a point being made or a candidate supported during the election. This perception, if it is true and we saw enough evidence to believe that it is, is very unfortunate and results in the input of well-meaning public being tainted before it is even reviewed.

Further, we find that members of Council have tended to associate the number of people in the live audience to be indicative of the support for an issue in the community. There does not appear to be any credit given to the people who stay at home and who elect a Council and presume that it will attempt to act in the best interests of all the residents.

While the foregoing paints an unfair picture of the staff who are anxious to serve the public in a spirit of helpfulness, it is apparent that there are sufficient issues here which require a clear organizational response.

Respect for Council Members for Each Other

Council members lack the willingness and perhaps the strategies to become a cohesive team, which treats each other with respect. While we expect to find on any Council members with differing opinions on the issues, it is very unfortunate when members of Council are unable or unwilling to “cut each other some slack” in their debates on the issues. The focus has become far more personal than healthy with the snide remarks, gestures and smirks doing little to build respect either within Council or by the public of Council.

For whatever reason, and we trust that this is still reversible, Council members appear to have decided that their views and those of the others are so divergent that any attempt at understanding the opinions of each other is an unproductive use of time. While we noted that members of Council appeared to have the ability to listen to each other during the sessions of Council when we were in attendance, this obviously has been the exception rather than the rule.

It has been our assessment that all of the members of Council are sincerely interested in serving this District. At the

same time, however, we noted the inability of these same members to accept the differences of their colleagues in terms of their views on certain issues.

Respect for Confidentiality

When a member of the public assumes public office they also take on the obligations, duties and responsibilities associated with that step. Inherent in this willingness to act as a representative of the public is the willingness to accept the strictures of the office as well.

We have noted that one of the most significant and lasting ways that a member of Council can isolate themselves from their peers is to break the oath of confidentiality that each member takes in assuming public office. Such an act essentially conveys the following attitude “any information which I become the possessor of will be used by me in whatever way I deem best so as to further my personal and selfish ambitions.” Now, that is never what is said of course, but rather, implied to all others. The actual wording may sound more like “I felt that it was in the public’s interest to have this information as quickly as possible so that the public (i.e. my friends and confidants) can decide for themselves whether or not our proposed actions are in their best interests”.

We note that there have been several instances of reported breaches in confidentiality within the term of this

Council. These “leaks” are concerning to all members as there still appears to be a desire to work cooperatively and to treat each other with at least a measure of respect.

No one on this Council “owes” it to any individual or residents group to divulge confidential information. Those in receipt of such information could not be faulted for questioning the integrity of their source nor in further circulating the information. Council is after all elected by the residents as a whole, not by a group of “concerned” residents who have their own agenda which may or may not be shared by the community as a whole. This is not to disparage such groups as they often play a role in the well-being of a community. It is simply a reflection that the only legitimate body who represents the District as a whole is the Council whom the residents have elected.

This Council needs to agree, perhaps again and without pointing fingers, that it will operate on the basis of respect for the provisions of confidentiality that are adopted by Council. Such a code will be presented to Council by its legal counsel and, if necessary, will be spelled out to all members so as to ensure that no one is operating from a position of faulty understanding.

Expectations of the Administration

It is our sense that there has been considerable misunderstanding as to the

Council’s expectations of its administration. It is our view that there has been an underlying assumption that the administration is expected to carry out the wishes of Council which is one of its major tasks but not the only one. Indeed, we would argue that the value which is added by a well-trained administration lies more in its potential to provide good advice to the policy makers than simply to be those charged with discharging the decisions of Council.

If Council is to address the way it makes decisions and the manner by which they are carried out, then a new Council-management interface and relationship is essential. The timing for making these changes is now given the arrival recently of a new and experienced CAO who has been charged with managing the administrative resources in a competent and efficient fashion. He will need to be given time to assemble his own team and assure himself that the members of his senior staff can fulfill his expectations of their roles.

Council as the representatives of the public should be able to expect from its CAO and the administration that:

- First rate advice on all policy decisions of Council will be made available to Council in writing prior to any such issue being considered
- The public will be accorded the best service that the administration can offer

- ❑ Concerns expressed by the public will be considered seriously and responded to as quickly as possible
- ❑ The CAO will work towards the development of a committed management and administrative team who are able to work collaboratively and share resources effectively
- ❑ The direction of Council will be communicated throughout the organization as clearly and quickly as possible with the opportunity available to all members of the administration to provide input which is heard and valued
- ❑ There will be a healthy degree of separation between Council and its administration given the distinct roles which each is expected to play
- ❑ Members of the administration will respect their organization's structure and will ensure that the department heads are well-briefed and that the CAO is accorded sufficient information and time to make quality decisions.

There is also a need for Council members to be clear as to which hat (i.e. Council member or citizen) they are wearing when they appear at the counter. Council members need to be sure in their own minds whether or not the nature of their inquiry is based on their role as a citizen of the District, a member of Council, a real estate agent, a proponent of a charitable organization, a developer, or someone interested in

helping out a neighbour who has experienced problems with the District.

Council Preparedness

There are two significant keys to preparedness. One lies in the ability of the administration to assemble a well-documented report that contains all of the salient information and a clear indication of what the administration expects the Council to decide. Thus, the background facts of the matter would be included; any relevant timeline cited; the options outlined; the budget and policy implications defined; and a recommendation stated by the CAO (Administrator).

The second aspect of preparedness is the responsibility of the Council. When the Council packages are delivered or picked up, the onus is on each member to read the materials carefully and give some thought to the type of governance questions he/she might ask. If there are questions which lie more in the realm of not understanding the gist of the report, then a call should be made to the CAO who should be asked to provide the necessary clarification.

We believe that Council as a whole certainly tries hard to be well-informed and prepared for its meetings. That is, the members appear to have read their agenda materials and seem aware of the issues under discussion.

Managerial Leadership

The timing of this Report has been impacted by the arrival of a new CAO. The CAO recognizes that there are considerable expectations of him to change the way by which the District does its business. This will require that the CAO clearly communicate his expectations to his senior staff of:

- Quality advice on all matters
- Responsiveness to new ideas
- Willingness to take on added responsibilities
- Improved communication up, down and across this organization
- Regular management and department meetings
- Shared information and resources
- Performance feedback to all direct reports
- Planned approach to training
- New strategies to break down the barriers between the two “wings” of the Hall and between the outside work forces.

Lack of Adequate Resources and Training

In our discussions with both members of Council and the administration, there were repeated references to the absence of certain skill sets within the present administration and the apparent belief by some members of Council that their staff were expected to “make do”. While this may sound politically astute, or may be necessary in a very small

community with few financial resources, it does not appear to fit with the needs of a community like North Saanich.

While many of the most difficult issues facing the District pertain to planning, the District has not perceived the need to retain anyone on a full-time basis with that type of background. Perhaps ironically, the District has, however, retained building inspectors and bylaw enforcement officers. Throughout our discussions with both Council and members of the administration, there were repeated references made to the impact of not having a qualified planner on board.

Further, the District has no internal resource to deal with personnel problems. This has fallen largely to the former Administrator and somewhat to the Clerk, and individual department heads, although, in most instances, it becomes apparent that many of the personnel issues were expected to be resolved through a team collaborative process (and thus no one had any sense of final authority).

Public Involvement with the Administration

We were not made aware of any formal protocol with regard to how Council manages its contacts with the public. This may have the tendency to create a vacuum in Council’s guidance of what is to be shared with the public; how information which is gathered confidentially is to be protected; and

may create the impression in the minds of the public that their representation will result in Council making a decision deemed favourable to their position on the matter.

We note that:

- ❑ the public is quite involved in Council's business through a "public participation period" on the Council meeting agendas; the public can use that time to raise an issue or speak to an issue on the agenda;
- ❑ during a committee of the whole meeting, the public is invited to speak on every issue on the agenda;
- ❑ the agenda is made available at the time of the meeting;
- ❑ the degree of supporting documentation made available to members of Council results in little sense of direction at these meetings ; and
- ❑ it soon becomes apparent that the senior staff who are in attendance are not as well-prepared as may be expected by both Council and the public who are in attendance.

In terms of commission and committee involvement with staff, we find that members of these bodies are, at times, intent on guiding the activities and judgments of individual staff. This is not appropriate. The staff who do attend such meetings are there as advisors only and act as emissaries of the CAO. It is the CAO who has the authority to direct the actions of any of the staff who report to him.

An Overview of What Works

In this section of our Report, we present some of what we would describe as the key underlying fundamentals of a system of local government. As we have noted previously to Council (in our Draft Report), some of this material is generic and has been referenced in other reports by this firm.

Clearly-Understood Roles of Council

In addition to understanding the key principles that should underline the way by which a Council makes decisions, it is imperative that Council, the administration and the public recognize the roles which are expected of those who lead our local democratic institutions. These roles are both complex and difficult. They are distinct from those played by the administrations which is chosen to serve the Council and the public.

The new Community Charter describes the responsibilities of Council as a whole and Councillors as follows:

Council as governing body

114 (1) The members of a municipal council are the mayor and the councillors.

(2) Despite a change in its membership, the council of a municipality is a continuing body and may complete any proceedings started but not completed before the change.

(3) The powers, duties and functions of a municipality are to be exercised and performed by its council, except as otherwise provided by or under this or another Act, and a council, in exercising or performing its powers, duties and functions, is acting as the governing body of the municipality.

(4) A council has all necessary power to do anything incidental or conducive to the exercise or performance of any power, duty or function conferred on a council or municipality by this or any other enactment.

Responsibilities of council members

115 Every council member has the following responsibilities:

(a) to consider the well-being and interests of the municipality and its community;

(b) to contribute to the development and evaluation of the policies and programs of the municipality respecting its services and other activities;

(c) to participate in council meetings, committee meetings and meetings of other bodies to which the member is appointed;

(d) to carry out other duties assigned by the council;

(e) to carry out other duties assigned by or under this or any other Act.

The Need to Govern

One of the keys to governing and managing a community effectively and

efficiently lies in the extent to which roles are clear, well-understood and reasonably practiced. Councils are elected to provide leadership to the business of governing and managing municipalities. While many of the day-to-day matters are expected and or legislated to be handled quickly and expeditiously by the administration, the decisions which they make need to be within the overall policies and direction established by the Council. These policy decisions by Council are, at times, very complex and difficult to render and, at times, very straightforward and simple.

The choices made by a Council need to be based on what it perceives as being in the best interests of the majority of the residents of the District. This is a challenging task. Several alternate views exist on most issues. At times, a few may sound quite acceptable. In difficult and perhaps urgent situations, the Council may struggle with determining which mix of views represents the best strategy. Thus, regardless of the fact that various options may appear to have at least some merit, it is the duty of Council to make its determination based on what it believes to be the best choice for its residents. Leadership is all about making difficult choices in often a stressful environment.

Setting Direction

Leadership is all about identifying choices which impact the future. It is the

business of determining what is on first base and what is on second. It is centered around picturing the future and trying to apply that sense of future vision to present day decisions.

This is what a Council is charged with doing. A Council, with the input and guidance of its administration, must set the course-it must steer the ship in the right direction so that the efforts of those charged with rowing are not futile. Without someone, however, guiding the way, the ship will drift badly and time and resources will be lost.

How does this come about? Well, normally the CAO will recommend to the Council that time be set aside for a session of goals and priority setting, preferably making use of an external facilitator. This is recommended as it is highly unlikely that the session will stay on track without someone who is experienced and external to the actual business ensuring that discussions do not become a repeat of the last Council meeting.

The expected outcomes of such a process include the following:

- A statement of vision
- A statement of values
- A listing of Council goals
- A series of key issues facing the Council and a prioritized list of those which Council has identified as essential to their preferred course of action.

Making Policy Decisions

The decisions of a Council effectively become the policies of it. That is, whether the Council decides by way of resolution or by bylaw, its decisions taken together, constitute the policy bank of the municipality. While policies should preferably be presented to Council according to a set format, the key to an effective Council is the recognition that its decisions become the standard upon which the administration functions and makes decisions.

Resolving Issues of Conflict

Council also has a role in resolving matters which may either currently be in conflict on the community or which are likely to result in dispute. Although such matters are often considered by a Council so delicate as to warrant an in camera discussion, they often do not meet the criteria of confidential issues but are, rather, controversial. Regardless, such matters still require that Council's guidance be sought and a decision rendered.

In most instances, it has been our experience that the public is prepared to support its Council in whatever decision it makes provided that the Council has followed a process which is thoughtful and thorough.

Ensuring Appropriate Programs and Services

Other than any such requirements for services identified in legislation, it is Council's responsibility, in the final analysis, to determine which programs and services will be made available and in what areas to what citizens. Thus, Council may agree to fund certain programs for seniors or for children which are not a requirement of the Act but which the citizens of the community expect. Or, for example, Council may provide for paid firefighters or may be able to rely on a strong, committed volunteer force (or a combination of the two). These are choices which a Council has the discretionary power to make.

Making the Best Use of Public Resources

The role of a Council has often been described as that of a steward. That is, one of the fundamental principles of a local governing body is that it will ensure that the resources of the municipality are being utilized wisely and in accordance with the budget and Corporate Business Plan as well as any policies and procedures which may apply.

Ensuring that Council has made the best use if resources requires that it:

- Establish clear policies relating to the recruitment and treatment of personnel

- Identify potential risks in the use by the public of municipality-owned facilities and equipment
- Establish a comprehensive tender policy and procedures
- Identify potential suppliers of goods and services.

Building Relationships

One of the keys to how effective a local government is will be its ability to build and carefully manage key relationships. One of the most central aspects of any local government is the need for Council to work towards establishing a relationship with the public which is open, transparent and honest. This requires ongoing attention and should not be presumed to be effective simply because people attend meetings of Council or are willing to volunteer to serve on commissions.

A second key relationship and role is that of the CAO and Council. The Chief Administrative Officer plays a very primary role in terms of acting as the link-pin between Council as the policy-makers and the staff as the administrators of those policies. The CAO thereby champions the decisions of Council to the staff and the advice of staff to the Council. He provides a quality control function in that any advice going before Council for a decision needs to meet his scrutiny as to completeness and accuracy. Further, the CAO also acts as the advocate for the opinions of the administration and

ensures that the Council has the full picture of all salient points in any decision.

The ongoing relationship between the Mayor as chief executive officer and the Chief Administrative Officer is also critical to the overall functioning of the District. The Mayor symbolizes Council authority and legislative leadership. He may be able to bring to each situation Council's perception of the political issues confronting the community. He should be in an ideal position to advise and counsel the Chief Administrative Officer with regard to the direction that they feel is appropriate for Council as a whole to take.

Acting as a Unit

Regardless of Council's own strengths and weaknesses, it is absolutely fundamental that it provide leadership to the District and to the administration through the establishment of appropriate policies and its unwavering support for decisions once they have been made. This Council will be viewed as effective to the extent that it:

- views itself as one single entity;
- does not capitulate on decisions to individual members but which maintains its focus on the directions which are supported by the majority;
- acts as a group rather than a series of seven individuals;
- seeks to understand issues fully prior to making a decision;

- agrees to involve the public in advance on issues of considerable importance;
- seeks the input of senior staff on any and all issues of significance; and
- strives to hear the minority views prior to making a decision which clearly reflects a majority view.

It is not intended by legislation nor by this document that Council members should forsake their individual viewpoints in order to be viewed as a "board of directors." Indeed, we would expect Councillors to, at times, disagree quite strongly on particular issues or policy changes. This independence of thought and speech should always prevail. Rather, we see the need for Councillors to be able to articulate their individual views prior to a decision being made. While nothing restricts a member of Council from continuing to voice criticism of Council decisions thereafter, care must be taken to ensure that this is not done purposely to undermine the collective and democratic will of Council as a whole.

Orientation of Council

As a result of our work here and in virtually every other region of Canada, we are convinced that one key failure of most is the absence of a sound orientation process for all members of Council immediately after assuming office. If Council is to be able to make good progress in addressing the key issues and in providing good leadership,

it is essential that all members begin with the same (or equal) base of knowledge as to what this new job entails. We stress that this applies equally to those who have been elected for the first time and to those who have served for several terms.

Such an orientation process should involve a detailed review of the respective roles of Mayor, Councillor, CAO and department heads; a review of current issues facing the community; an introduction to each department head; a tour of key community facilities and potential problem areas; a review of legal requirements (by the District's solicitor); etc.

Role of the Mayor

The new Community Charter describes the role of the Mayor as follows:

Responsibilities of mayor

116 (1) The mayor is the head and chief executive officer of the municipality.

(2) In addition to the mayor's responsibilities as a member of council, the mayor has the following responsibilities:

(a) to provide leadership to the council, including by recommending bylaws, resolutions and other measures that, in the mayor's opinion, may assist the peace, order and good government of the municipality;

(b) to communicate information to the council;

(c) to preside at council meetings when in attendance;

(d) to provide, on behalf of the council, general direction to municipal officers respecting implementation of municipal policies, programs and other directions of the council;

(e) to establish standing committees in accordance with section 141;

(f) to suspend municipal officers and employees in accordance with section 151;

(g) to reflect the will of council and to carry out other duties on behalf of the council;

(h) to carry out other duties assigned by or under this or any other Act.

The Mayor is recognized in legislation as the chief elected official of the municipality. This position is an important one to single out because of the significant influence the person holding this position can exercise. The Mayor has considerable power, albeit largely informal, and can exercise this influence over the conduct of the business of the municipality. This does not ignore the fact that the Mayor has only one vote on all matters and is, in many respects, co-equal with his colleagues on Council. Rather, it reflects the fact that the public and media often tend to pay more attention to the Mayor than to others on Council. The Mayor must therefore be very prudent in his use of this power and exercise it for the good of the community as a whole.

Expected Roles of the Mayor

In addition to those responsibilities set out in the Act, the Mayor's anticipated roles include that of:

- Chairperson of Council;
- Consensus seeker amongst members of Council;
- Liaison with the CAO;
- Advisor to Council;
- Ex-Officio on various boards and committees;
- Ceremonial responsibilities;
- Liaison with other levels of government.

Chairperson of Council

This role is perhaps that which is seen the most frequently by the public and Council alike. Its visibility and importance is enhanced even more so by the presence of the media.

The Mayor is expected to chair each meeting of Council and ensure that the business of Council is handled expeditiously and effectively. This requires the Mayor to be aware of meeting protocol, the needs of his Council members, the personalities of Councillors, and the issues to be determined at that meeting. He needs to be comfortable with power and with dispensing authority with clarity and equality.

Consensus Seeker

The Mayor is expected to draw the views of his colleagues together and to

point out a reasonable compromise if one exists. The Mayor needs to retain his impartiality on the issues until the issue has been presented to Council and until it is appropriate for the Mayor to voice his personal views on the issue. While the Mayor is not expected to compromise his principles, most issues have within them the potential for agreement providing that people are prepared to see each other's point of view. The difficulty, of course, is convincing everyone that some degree of compromise is needed to reach a reasonable solution.

Liaison to Staff

Although the role of a Mayor is to be the political leader of the Council, it is also often the case that both the Council and administration expects the Mayor to provide a linkage between the legislative and administrative arms of government. In part due to his position as leader of Council and in part due to the more frequent presence, the Mayor is expected to be Council's main spokesman to the administration. This role is particularly important as a means of ensuring that the views of Council as a whole are understood at the senior levels. The Mayor needs to be able to advise the CAO and senior staff as to his Council's anticipated view of a matter or to clarify a policy position or explain a particular grievance as expressed by Council.

Advisor to Council

The Mayor is often expected to be in a position to bring issues and concerns to the attention of his colleagues on Council. This derives from the Mayor's increased contact with the public, organizations and other levels of government e.g. the CRD. As an advisor, there is an implied expectation on behalf of Council that any information to which the Mayor becomes privy will be shared with his colleagues on Council as early as is possible and realistic. Otherwise, members of a Council may perceive that important information is being withheld for questionable motives.

Ex-Officio to Boards and Committees

The Mayor, by virtue of his office, may be appointed to various boards and committees. These bodies are often appointed by Council and may consist, at least in part, of public citizens who are asked to advise the municipality on one or more key functions (e.g. planning, recreation, economic development). To ensure ongoing support by Council, to increase the likelihood of Council being informed as to the issues and to gain an insight at least into how Council may react to a particular recommendation, the presence of the Mayor is often considered to be useful. It needs to be made clear, however, that the Mayor's role is to reflect the views of Council (as they exist in terms of policy, resolutions, bylaws and informal

debates/discussions) to the external agency. If the advisory agency presumes that it is hearing the word of Council, only to find out that the Mayor's opinion was very much a minority viewpoint, problems of credibility will result. As well, the role of the Mayor as a liaison rather than that of advocate must be made apparent to the advisory agency.

Ceremonial Responsibilities

Every Mayor across Canada is expected, from time to time, to perform certain ceremonial duties. Such duties will likely include such special occasions as civic day, Remembrance Day, annual parade, high school graduation, business openings, special meetings, etc. Unless the Mayor is otherwise committed, he is expected to be present and carry the civic colours. This tends to build a real sense of community pride and accomplishment and thus the importance of this role should not be diminished.

Liaison with Other Jurisdictions

The Mayor is also expected to be the key representative of Council in meetings with other municipalities (unless delegated to another member of Council), the Regional District and the Provincial and Federal governments. Any liaison on a political level should normally be conducted through the Mayor's office. When another level of government is pondering new legislation or a new regional or local project, they

expect to receive the opinion of Council when dealing with the office of the Mayor. While that role may be delegated on occasion to another member of Council, or a committee, it should as a matter of protocol, be voiced and/or co-ordinated through the office of the Mayor.

Appointment to Commissions and Boards

With regard to the appointment of Council members to boards and committees, it is normally deemed to be a prerogative of the Mayor to recommend the appointment of Council members on an annual basis. This prerogative needs to be limited by two caveats. First, the Mayor should consult with all members of Council prior to any recommended appointments being placed before the full Council. Secondly, Council as a whole should approve these appointments by a majority vote (unless as otherwise delegated to the Mayor by policy).

Role of the Chief Administrative Officer

The Chief Administrative Officer's position in the organization is generally viewed as second only to that of the Mayor and Councillors in terms of potential impact on how things get done. The CAO represents Council's main link with the rest of the organization and is expected to act as the channel through which the administration reports. The role is also central to Council in that the

CAO is expected to be the principal policy advisor to Council and thus the source of considerable wisdom and experience based on an extensive background in local government.

According to the Community Charter, the CAO has the following responsibilities:

Chief administrative officer

147 A bylaw under section 146 may establish the position of chief administrative officer of the municipality, whose powers, duties and functions include the following:

- (a) overall management of the operations of the municipality;*
- (b) ensuring that the policies, programs and other directions of the council are implemented;*
- (c) advising and informing the council on the operation and affairs of the municipality.*

It is our view that the CAO will:

- Provide clear policy options and advice to the Council
- Carry out the will of the Council as expressed in the approved resolutions and bylaws of the Council
- Ensure that the services of the organization are clearly defined and are in concert with the expectations of the residents
- Develop an organization structure which allocates staff to the required functions/service areas; ensure that

the structure is current and clearly defined

- ❑ Create position descriptions which reflect actual and current duties to be provided by each of the personnel; empower the supervisory staff to take action on their areas of responsibility
- ❑ Coordinate the efforts of the administration through regular meetings with the department heads; ensure that they are meeting regularly with their own staff and communicating issues/plans and discussing/resolving problems
- ❑ Provide ample support for staff in the face of any criticism from the public or from the Council; take corrective action vis-à-vis poor performance where that is justified
- ❑ Provide performance feedback on a regular basis to those senior staff reporting directly to the CAO
- ❑ Encourage ongoing and relevant training for senior staff (and through them for the other members of the administration)
- ❑ Ensure that the compensation plan and personnel policies are appropriate and fair for all employees.

Relationship to Council

Council needs to know that the individual holding the position of CAO is fair-minded; astute; of strong character; able to resist the temptation to stray over the blurred line separating policy

and administration; capable of retaining confidences; willing to be a strong leader for the staff; able to work in a team environment; and of high moral standards. Political leaders of today also expect the CAO to be proactive with regard to any new initiatives or policies which will place the municipality at the forefront of public sector bodies. As well, Councils want their Chief Administrative Officer to also function effectively as the chief policy advisor.

This relationship needs to be built on a base of mutual respect and trust or it will not survive for long. Council needs to know that the CAO is working for it and that the CAO will always strive to provide Council with clear options, full information and sound advice. The CAO, in turn, needs to recognize Council's support for his intentions and his actions.

Relationship Between the Mayor and CAO

The ongoing relationship between the Mayor as chief executive officer and the CAO as chief administrative officer is critical to the overall functioning of the District. The Mayor symbolizes Council authority and legislative leadership. He may be able to bring to each situation Council's perception of the political issues confronting them. He should be in an ideal position to advise and counsel the CAO with regard to the direction he feels appropriate for Council as a whole to take. The Mayor is often

able to act as an important conduit between the Councillors and their chief administrative officer. This results from the Mayor's' close liaison to his Council and thus his appreciation of what each member is likely expecting vis-à-vis this issue or that. At the same time, his physical presence in the office in close proximity to the CAO enables him/her to convey messages and concerns on an ongoing basis. (Again, we urge caution in interpreting this dialogue as the CAO will need to be certain that advice is not treated with the same status or urgency as a direct motion of Council.

The CAO-Administration Relationship

The Chief Administrative Officer has a major role in acting as the administrative head of the system. This implies full accountability for the actions of subordinates who are to receive their guidance from the CAO. The CAO can also serve a particularly valuable function as mentor of his colleagues and other managers in the organization. While it may not always be apparent, the rest of the organization receives their message as to appropriate style of management and decision-making from the CAO. Thus, the Chief Administrative Officer who is prepared to take some calculated risks in order to move the organization ahead will influence others in modeling a similar attitude and style. The CAO who is reasonable and outgoing will end up attracting others of a similar attitude. Conversely, the Chief Administrative Officer who is reticent

and adverse to risk-taking will engender the same or similar attitudes and style amongst his colleagues and subordinates.

The Chief Administrative Officer is expected to act as the 'point man' for his department heads before Council in terms of report presentation and policy advice. Thus, regardless of the matter under review by Council, the CAO should have been sufficiently briefed so as to put his name on the report going to Council and be able to initiate the discussion of the matter. Once the issue is introduced to Council, the CAO should then feel free to refer the rest of the presentation over to the department head in question to provide the details needed to achieve a level of understanding by all members of Council.

Relationship to the Public

The CAO will also have some degree of profile with the public due to the importance of his role and the visibility attached to it. In many instances, the media will report on the advice of the CAO and his department heads, and then the reaction of Council to that advice. Depending upon the degree of personal visibility of the CAO, the public will perceive the culture of the corporation, as embodied in the style of the CAO. If the CAO is aware of the impact on the public as to his personal style, he may be able to positively impact the public's perception of the

District that is anxious to be transparent in its decision-making processes. Because so much of what a municipality is mandated to do is expected to be public in nature, the actions and decisions of a Council and its CAO will be open to the scrutiny and feedback of its public.

Our Observations Relative to Council

If the District of North Saanich is to make both positive and lasting changes to the way in which it governs the affairs of the District, it must be prepared to change some of its existing practices. These changes are necessary if Council is to be able to present an image to the public that is positive, optimistic, cohesive and community-sensitive. This requires the District to determine what type of Council it wants to become and then to identify the steps necessary to get there. This is not an easy process nor one which can be accomplished overnight. It will take some time to adopt and there will be some trials as well as sceptics along the way.

Effective Legislative Leadership

Our Observations

We have found and observed that:

- ❑ When we asked for the Vision statement for the District, the information we were provided with is

derived from the current Official Community Plan produced in 1995.

- ❑ The focus appears to have been on the here and now with insufficient attention accorded the important aspects of “where to from here?”
- ❑ Between our work with Council on establishing some goals and priorities and that which will occur as a result of the renewed Official Community Plan, some of these questions relative to future direction should be addressed.
- ❑ An Official Community Plan is not intended to replace the need for a Council-driven Strategic Plan. The OCP is intended to provide policy and planning guidance relative to land use within the municipality. A Strategic Plan on the other hand also provides policy guidance on issues such as: financial planning, Council development, the environment, organizational decision-making, intergovernmental relations, communications, etc.
- ❑ This Council has not to date established its vision for the District but is intent on doing so; a workshop session has been set for the week of our Report presentation and at that time, we hope to make some progress in this regard. Council, in conjunction with senior staff, will be addressing the development of a Council Strategic Business Plan for North Saanich.
- ❑ With regard to the impact of the Mayor’s role on bringing about

effective community leadership, we are aware of the fact that the new Mayor had been working towards the development of a consensus style of decision-making with his Council members. This, according to most, would represent a “breath of fresh air” and would recognize that all members of Council are equal players in governing the District.

- ❑ While we would encourage the Mayor to continue to reach out to all members of Council and encourage all to work together collegially, he may also need to sit down with each from time to time and discuss the impact of any behaviour that brings the Council as a whole in a bad light. As a body, the administration has a high regard for the Mayor and very much appreciate the recognition they receive from him, such as the staff picnic he organized and the messages he sends to staff on their birthdays.
- ❑ The Council meetings we observed were a mixed bag in some respects. That is, we attended a Council meeting which was reasonably well-run by the Mayor. Business was dealt with in a very expeditious manner. Proper protocol was followed in the sense that all questions and responses were placed “through the chair” and care was taken to ensure that discussion focused on the business at hand. We are also aware of the fact that certain meetings have produced

some aberrant behaviour by individual members of Council. The Mayor needs to take decisive action including calling an immediate recess in order to address such behaviour in order to ensure that such actions/comments cease.

- ❑ We have also had representation at committee of the whole meetings which are intended to be less formal than a Council meeting and more open to public involvement. Again, we were reasonably impressed by the calibre of meeting chairmanship exhibited in these instances although we noted several aspects of these meetings which could be improved. Council as a whole needs to be aware of what mechanisms and techniques contribute to quality decision-making and decorum. The degree of focus on the minutiae was concerning as it reflects a Council or individual members who are not comfortable with their roles as governors and would rather replace that of the administration.
- ❑ It is important that Council recognises its role as a policy setting body and the staff's role as a resource responsible for implementing the policies and bylaws approved by Council. The present policy manual includes policies dating back to the mid-60s. While an attempt has been made to indicate that the policies contained in this manual have been reviewed and updated, we find little real evidence

that this has actually happened. Further, we do not find evidence of this or prior Councils taking much a policy approach to the issues placed on the agenda. The policy manual should be reviewed as a matter of priority by the Clerk (perhaps as the lead player on a small committee charged with this review by the CAO) and then brought forward to Council for review and approval.

Trust between the Elected and Administrative Arms of this Organization

Our Observations

We have found and observed that:

- ❑ There appears to be a reasonable degree of respect for members of Council by the administration and similarly from Council to the administration.
- ❑ While, for the most part, it would appear that members of Council do not interfere with how staff undertakes their duties, there are some exceptions wherein we believe Councillors are dealing with staff in an inappropriate manner. The administration should never be lead to believe that any member of Council is to be treated any differently than any other citizen in terms of any of their day to day business dealings with the municipality. If a member of Council is in the office to conduct any business with the District then that transaction should take place with the Council member on the public side of the counter waiting their turn like any other member of the public.
- ❑ In no instance should a member of the Council be accorded preferential treatment nor should such be expected. It should be clearly understood that all citizens are subject to the same rules and bylaws as if they were living next door to a member of Council.
- ❑ Council should prepare and adopt a “code of conduct” setting out how dealings with District staff are to be conducted. This information should be made available to staff, including the procedure to be followed by members of staff who feel that their duties are being inappropriately interfered with by either a member of Council, by a committee of Council or by the public.
- ❑ Another comment that we heard frequently from staff was that some members of Council, upon hearing a complaint from a member of the public about an employee, would immediately make a critical comment about the employee without getting the employee’s side of the story. This is very demoralizing to staff, particularly where they are of the firm view that they acted in an entirely appropriate manner. In these situations it is very important to hear “both sides of the story” before any conclusions are drawn.

- ❑ Concerns relating to staff performance, whether of a nature impacting the public or not, should be referred through the Mayor to the CAO. It should be up to the CAO to check into the matter and report back, where that is either necessary or appropriate. It is never appropriate for the members of Council to provide such feedback direct to a staff member unless, of course, the staff member is the CAO.

Effective Council Principles and Practices

Our Observations

We were advised that:

- ❑ members of Council were provided with an Orientation Manual when they were elected to municipal office. As well, the members were encouraged to attend the newly-elected seminar series sponsored by the Union of BC Municipalities.
- ❑ We reviewed the orientation manual and its materials and note that the latter was considered useful by Council members. We also note, however, that members felt that there should have been a local orientation to the roles of Councillor and Mayor which may have helped members of Council become more quickly aware of their respective roles.
- ❑ This Council is focused on trying to make the best decisions for this District. Considerable time is taken in

hearing from the public and any input received is discussed amongst Council prior to a decision being made.

- ❑ We have previously described how any Council should expect to be briefed on the policy issues with which it is confronted. Unfortunately, this Council has accepted as normal information which is incomplete; backgrounders which have not been timely; and advice on how to handle a public presentation which is less than ideal. It is our view that Council is often placed in a situation whereby it must respond to issues and proposals placed before it without a complete grasp on the situation and all of the known background elements.

An Effective Decision-Making Structure

Our Observations

We have found that:

- ❑ The District of North Saanich Council's decision-making processes include the following:
 - Committee of the Whole
 - Council meetings
 - Council resolutions
 - Bylaws
 - Policies
 - Staff reports
- ❑ While these processes are quite standard to municipalities, they only

function well when they are used as a part of a decision-making model. Such a model would need to be clear to all members of Council and the administration and followed on a consistent basis. Of the foregoing components, the absence of effective, comprehensive staff reports signed off by the CAO taken together with a credible policy-development process reduces the potential for broadly based, thoughtful decisions immeasurably. We will provide Council with suggested changes to the model at the conclusion of our report.

- ❑ We believe, on the other hand, that the public is reasonably involved in the processes utilized albeit without all of the administrative input fully on the table.
- ❑ The agenda for a Regular Meeting of Council adheres to the format approved in Procedural Bylaw No.716:
 - Public Hearings
 - Adoption of Agenda
 - Public Participation Period
 - Petitions and Delegations
 - Adoption of Minutes
 - Business Arising from Minutes
 - Original Communications
 - Reports
 - Committee of the Whole
 - Capital Regional District

- Saanich Peninsula Water Commission
- Saanich Peninsula Wastewater Commission
- Peninsula Recreation Commission
- Peninsula Agricultural Commission
- Library
- Tri-Municipal Council
- University of Victoria/North Saanich Liaison Committee
- Other
- Unfinished Business
- Motions and New Business
- Bylaws
- In-Camera
- Adjournment

One is left with a number of distinct impressions in reviewing the materials attached to the agenda for **regular meetings of Council**. These follow:

- ❑ The degree of detail of the attachments ensures that members of Council will readily become involved in “assisting” members of the administration with their responsibilities
- ❑ There is no apparent protocol followed in terms of how items are prepared or forwarded to Council. In some instances, the items are simply forwarded to Council as they come into the office whereas other communications to Council appear to warrant a covering memorandum or

administrative report. The section "Original Communications" should be removed from the agenda. Any such item which requires Council's attention should be so listed by staff as "New Business" along with the requisite CAO report or should simply be listed at the conclusion of the agenda as "Council-For Information".

- ❑ The rules of procedure for the public participation period are useful albeit the time allocation may be either too much or too little depending upon the number of speakers/delegations to be heard. An effective chair who has the support of his/her colleagues should be able to specify a time limit per speaker (i.e. 3 minutes) and then move the presentations along fairly quickly given that Council is not going to be making any decisions on these items which they will be hearing for the first time.
- ❑ It may be wiser to have the public participation period part way through the meeting in order to give Council an opportunity to deal with some of its other business while latecomers arrive and so as to give those in attendance an indication of a) how business is to be conducted; and b) a recognition that there are many more issues on the agenda than simply "their" item.
- ❑ There does not appear to be the need to list the names of boards/committees who are not

scheduled to be dealt with at that meeting.

- ❑ There are reports that add virtually no discernible contribution or value to the agenda package other than weight. For example, the RCMP report is a compendium of statistics that shed little light on what the Force is doing or where it sees the priorities of the region. For example, there was a significant increase in assaults, thefts and impaired drivers (2001 vs. 2000) yet no rationale as to why and whether or not the District could somehow do something about it. The question with such a report should be "So What?" (We also note in the correspondence received from the Police that a prior monthly report had somehow been overlooked. The writer apologized but we were left to wonder whether or not anyone at the District had noticed the absence of the prior report.)
- ❑ There are various communications from external authorities which appear on the agenda without comment by your administration. The rule of thumb should be "no administrative report and recommendation (however brief), no external communication to Council. The agenda package needs to be complete by the time a member of Council reviews it over the weekend and not at the time of the actual meeting.

- ❑ The issues which we see as impinging on Council's ability to make good decisions is not so much a matter of the wording of the Procedural Bylaw No. 716 as it is with regard to the willingness of Council members to learn to work together in a cooperative manner.
- ❑ The only sections which we take issue with in the Procedural Bylaw are Sections 33 and 34. The former relates to the number of times a member may speak to any matter on the agenda, which, at present is limited to one once only. This is too limiting and would inhibit good debate if so enforced by the Mayor. On the other hand, the Mayor should be able to seek Council support to closing the debate after the key issues have been adequately covered. Section 34 refers to the need for motions to be seconded which we find to be unnecessary. This parliamentary technique is valuable in a much larger forum where minor and unsupported matters could consume an inordinate time when indeed the issue may be the cause of only one member. In a group of seven, this provision is not needed.

One is left with a number of distinct impressions in reviewing the materials attached to the agenda for **Committee of the Whole meetings of Council**. These follow:

- ❑ There is (or should be) a responsibility for the CAO to plan a briefing for whoever is scheduled to chair a committee of the whole. This would be useful from not only a process point of view but also in terms of the content and context of the issues.
- ❑ The issues which we observed being presented and debated, while perhaps not similar to others at other committee of the whole meetings, caused us to question whether or not the staff had done their homework in advance of the meeting so as to ensure that the Council was as up-to-date on the issue as might reasonably be expected. One of the requirements of the administration is to be able to anticipate questions from the members of Council. It is our view, based on the level of detail requested by Councillors at the meetings, that this was not apparent.
- ❑ The fact that an issue may be the responsibility of the CRD does not remove the obligation from the CAO to ensure that the District's own engineering staff prepare a District report on the matter. If nothing else, the District's staff, including the CAO, should be able to suggest to Council the governance concerns which Council may want to address to the CRD representative. Otherwise, and as an example only, the Council members may begin to think it is their responsibility to help the CRD devise creative means of

reducing the odour problems from the Wastewater Treatment Plant.

□ There needs to be a better flow to how matters are handled at the committee stage. The matter under review should follow the following schedule:

- The item is identified by the Chair.
- The Chair requests the CAO (or his/her delegate) to verbally brief Council on the matter. (While such a briefing should be part of a written brief to Council, the purpose of the verbal brief is two fold: to remind Council of the salient issues; and, to provide a summary of the issue for the public).
- If the matter is the focus of an independent body such as the CRD, the verbal briefing to Council may be requested (in advance) of that party.
- A member of Council should then present a motion on the topic so that those speaking thereafter will know what the focus of the debate should be. Without a motion, the discussion will wander all over the waterfront with little pattern evident.
- The Chair then requests those interested in this issue in the audience to step to the podium/microphone to make their

points on the matter or to record their questions.

- These should be recorded so that the CAO or a representative of the administration can speak to the issue later in the meeting, at the same time as responding to other requests or comments.
 - Once all of the public members have spoken or posed their questions, the Chair could then direct the questions firstly to the CAO for response as to the facts of the matter and then to members of Council to debate the matter.
 - The matter should then be moved forward (as per the earlier motion) for Council's consideration or, if the discussion leads otherwise, for referral back to the administration for a report and recommendation to Council. In most instances, the latter approach is preferable as that allows the administration time to review any initial report and add to it or to draft a revised report based on the new information brought to light at the committee of the whole meeting.
- Recommendations from public committees need to be reviewed by the administration in terms of:
- Sphere of jurisdiction
 - Potential impact on existing policy

- Potential impact on budget
 - Potential impact on staff resources
 - Enforceability of any requested bylaw
- Council entertains presentations from various groups and organizations at the Committee of the Whole with little to no pre-briefing by the administration; this reduces the ability of Council to see through to the conclusion of where these issues are intended to go and to route them quickly.
 - A number of the issues that are presented to Committee of the Whole by the administration may reflect an inability to make decisions within their area of responsibility or a lack of confidence in doing so. Some of the issues being discussed in committee also appear to speak volumes about the absence of a clear policy-making framework.
 - Bylaw 716 states that “Committees of Council shall meet on the days specified by the Mayor at the Inaugural Meeting...” which implies that the Mayor has checked with all Councillors to ensure their availability for those dates. Presumably, the past pattern of meeting dates will be followed unless those dates are in conflict with the majority of the members of the current Council.
 - The bylaw also provides for the Mayor to appoint the chairman of the

committee either in advance or at the time of the meeting. This privilege of power of the Mayor needs to be exercised with caution so as to ensure that the rotation of members into the role of the chair is handled appropriately. (We note that this has not been the practice of the current Council and that this power of the Mayor as established by bylaw should be re-established).

- Bylaw No.716 also identifies the procedures to be followed in committee. These are useful and include:
 - The number of times members are permitted to speak
 - Limitations on the number of delegation speakers and the time allowed to make presentations
 - The Mayor is ex officio to all standing and select committees
 - The opportunity for members of Council to attend committee meetings even if not appointed to that committee but they are limited in being able to speak but not vote at such committees
 - Committee reports are to be taken forward to the next regular meeting of Council or at a special meeting of Council.

Other Committees of Council

Budget Committee:

- ❑ The budget committee consists of all members of Council. Meetings are scheduled every Tuesday starting in the new year. The Committee receives a briefing from the Director of Finance regarding the financial status of the District and any impacts on the proposed budget.
- ❑ The following is the proposed 2004 schedule:
 - Sept - Oct
 - Provide managers with preliminary budget reports based on previous 5 Year Financial Plan for their input and adjustments.
 - Nov - Dec
 - Review departmental budgets with managers
 - Jan - May
 - Review budget with Budget Committee.
- ❑ The Director of Finance (Treasurer) is responsible for putting the budget together based on the information provided by the managers and then to present an overview to the Committee. The department managers present their budgets in detail to the Committee who would approve or cut as they deemed necessary.
- ❑ The Committee receives for review the requested "grants-in-aid" from local groups and organizations who

are requesting financial support for their organization

- ❑ The list of such organizations is received along with their requested amount; no comment is provided by the administration other than a note which indicates how much Council can approve before it has a negative impact on the new budget. Some of the requests are extremely small while others are quite significant and are supported by a considerable amount of documentation.
- ❑ The request from external groups is not accompanied by any sort of evaluative mechanism which would assist the Council in making any thoughtful decisions.

Economic Planning Committee:

- ❑ This committee was struck after this past election and has 21 members appointed. It is scheduled to meet every three weeks or as required. Its members consist of three members of Council including the Mayor and, according to the list provided by the District, one member of the administration. This may be a misprint given that having a staff member on the same committee as one or more members of Council would constitute a conflict and a violation of a basic premise of democracy i.e. that members of Council vote; administration members advise.
- ❑ The Committee has been meeting and reports some progress in

identifying how best to ensure a broader fiscal base for the District going into the future. The Committee has also reviewed the District's infrastructure and equipment plans.

The Official Community Plan Review Committee

- ❑ The OCP Review Committee consists of nine members, two of whom are members of Council.
- ❑ The Committee is expected to meet every two weeks or as necessary.
- ❑ Its principal purpose is to:
 - Review previous OCP review processes
 - Advise Council on the documentation to be prepared, consultants to be hired and procedures and processes to follow
 - Inform and consult with residents, neighbourhoods and resident associations, Council committees and District staff on their observations and review recommendations
 - Compile and deliver to Council all information and submissions gathered
 - Recommend to Council the processes to follow including timelines for the OCP review.

The Committee has circulated a questionnaire to the public and has recommended a process which is

forecasted to conclude by September 2004.

An Organizational Model Based on Need

Our Observations

The organization structure reflects the following characteristics:

- ❑ Eight senior staff reporting to the Administrator
- ❑ A confidential secretary included amongst the senior staff
- ❑ A senior staff member who reports jointly to both the Administrator and to the Engineer
- ❑ Inappropriately placed resources.

We comment in depth on this issue later in our Report.

Openness to Change

Our Observations

We have found and observed that:

- ❑ This is a fairly new Council with four Council members having served one previous term (including the Mayor in his former role as a Councillor) whereas two members were newly elected in 2002.
- ❑ It is our view that both Council and the administration are open to making changes which they feel would benefit their delivery of services for the public. We make this observation while recognizing that not all members of either grouping would necessarily recognize the

same need for change or in the same areas of this system. On the other hand, most noted that the public obviously expected change in electing a new Mayor who represented a differing philosophy than the former long-term incumbent.

- ❑ Members of both the Council and the administration spoke of the need to change how the administration engages the public and responds to its requests. The public of North Saanich are obviously very aware of what is happening locally and many have experience with local government and how it functions elsewhere. The expectations of many of those with whom we spoke are high and thus the need for the District to ensure that the services it provides are of a competent nature and delivered in such a way that those being served feel as if the staff are keen to be of help.

Organization Culture

Our Observations

We have found and observed that:

- ❑ The culture of the District is relatively complex to grasp and often defined quite differently by those whom we interviewed; similarly with regard to the organization. The organization culture is one which has evolved over time and under successive Administrators and Councils. What we see is an organization culture which reflects:

- Considerable degree of harmony within individual departments
 - Many staff who are keen to provide good service to the public and who are very concerned with the attitude of those who fail to grasp this fundamental aspect of government
 - Internal jealousies and petty differences in individual circumstances
 - Staff conflict dealt with very slowly and, in some instances, not at all
 - Lack of rapport within the ranks of senior staff; these differences are papered over to a great extent.
- ❑ It was also drawn to our attention that Council, on occasion, demonstrates an inability to make decisions and, when faced with a difficult choice, will often defer a matter for consideration to a later date. While we recognize that this is necessary at times, it is important that tabling for further consideration not become part of the operating culture of Council and that, when items are deferred, there is a clear understanding as to what additional information is needed to finalize a decision and how quickly that is to be presented.

Our Observations Relative to the Administration

We have conducted our Review over the past four months and thus our comments reflect our perspectives based on that period of time. We realize that this has been an organization in transition but note as well that much of the concerns voiced to us by those members of the public with whom we spoke as well as by members of Council and by staff themselves all pointed to the need for enhanced performance by the District's administration.

We were advised that the administration of the District is the responsibility of a staff complement of about 38-45 full-time equivalencies made up of the following:

<input type="checkbox"/> Exempt staff	9
<input type="checkbox"/> Regular full-time	25
<input type="checkbox"/> Job Share	2
<input type="checkbox"/> Regular Seasonal	2
<input type="checkbox"/> Auxiliary (including Auxiliary Pool)	7

Clear and Consistent Administrative Leadership

Our Observations

- The District administration has not developed an administrative game-plan to guide its actions and to ensure that these are in concert with those of Council. We did not find the attributes of an administrative team which ought to characterize the

members of senior staff. They appear to function more independently and do not tend to share issues and concerns with one another.

- There is no real evidence of a "strategic, big picture" approach to the issues. Everything is viewed as "one-offs" with even the biggest issue of the day, the Deep Cove project, treated as though it were the purview of only one department.
- Department heads were not found to be providing the levels of leadership necessary in this size of organization, and not committing sufficient time to these types of management duties.

Sound Administrative Principles and Practices

Our Observations

- It is noted that a review of the Council agenda prior to its finalization is not regularly undertaken with the Mayor. As this is Council's agenda, it is essential that some mechanism be in place to ensure that the agenda reflects the priorities of Council, and utilizes the limited time available to Council appropriately.
- Agendas for Council and its committees lack the consistent use of a "Request for Decision" format, although we do note that a number of items recently forwarded to

Council have included draft resolutions for Council consideration.

- The organization has not emphasized long range planning, and though there are some instances of good planning being done, this is not consistent throughout the organization. In particular, outside maintenance work tended to be planned from day to day and lacked methods of planning flexible workloads around annual, seasonal and event priorities.
- Training and development funds for staff are available within department budgets but the allocation of funding and its accessibility to staff has not been equitable across the organization. (There is a real need for someone to take charge of the HR functions in this organization given the number of issues which we found which relate to human resources).
- Training that is required by legislation or policy has not been consistently maintained, with some staff either not receiving training in areas such as WHMIS, Flagging or First Aid, or not receiving recertification at the appropriate times.
- Safety training for staff was observed to be inconsistent across the organization with reports of some staff receiving minimal safety training. It was also noted that safety

training was not recognized as a high priority by the organization, and had in the past been deferred or skipped when workloads were high.

- It was noted the public works and parks functions have lost efficiency due to the lack of clerical support services. While a full-time position may not be possible due to small size of the organization, the lack of resources dedicated to this function is detrimental to two significant public service functions of the organization.
- Current subdivision design processes have resulted in narrow strips of forested land being passed to the municipality for parks and trail development. This type of subdivision design does not address issues on wind damage and potential dangers when trees on adjoining properties are removed, the problem of maintaining difficult to access locations, and fire prevention and suppression. A broader internal subdivision review process, involving the impacted service functions of the municipality, should have been implemented when these problems were first identified.

Communication Practices

Our Observations

- Communications to the public or staff did not appear to be a priority for the organization and the emphasis on

the importance of effective communications was mostly missing.

- Communications to staff were found to be consistently poor on an organizational level. Some staff reported that they often were made aware of policy or procedural changes by newspaper articles, or from members of the public calling in to question the policy change. Where improved communications were noted, it was due to a manager or supervisor who was taking special efforts to keep their staff informed.
- Staff meetings have not been held on a regular basis with staff, although they have been more frequent since this Corporate Review was announced. Also, accessibility to timely information, such as Council minutes and management group minutes, has not been provided at the same level to outside staff as it has to inside staff.
- Prompt response to phone calls was raised as an issue a number of times during our interviews. Further questions determined that there were generally two areas of problems. Firstly, some staff members have not made it a priority to return calls from the public or other staff promptly, and sometimes calls are simply not returned. The organization needs to make clear the timeframes in which a returned telephone call (or similarly a response to an email) is expected

from its staff. Secondly, messages from the public have been taken for staff members who are away from the office for meetings, or even on vacation, without switchboard staff being aware that these staff may be away for days or weeks. Internal systems need to ensure that calls are appropriately redirected to ensure a prompt response.

Organization Culture

Our Observations

- The District of North Saanich has a code of conduct for its employees (dated October 4th 2000). The senior staff (with some exceptions) have attempted to promote good relations amongst the staff and, for the most part, their efforts are respected. We note that Section E of the Code states that “Employees are expected to conduct themselves in a friendly, courteous and professional manner when dealing with the public”. Based on our own observations and those related to us by the residents and members of Council, it is apparent that less emphasis was placed on this Section than perhaps others.
- The human resource policies and practices relative to employee compensation and benefits appear to be generous. Exempt staff who attend both Council meetings and committee of the whole meetings are entitled to three additional weeks of

vacation pay over and above that which is provided by CUPE contract.

- We have reviewed the compensation paid to both exempt employees and members of Council. We believe that these will have to be reviewed and adjusted so as to be closer to an industry standard (particularly for senior employees). The search for the new CAO will likely have given some indication to the organization as to how much of an adjustment will be needed for senior staff.
- Council has not provided the leadership necessary to develop a modern municipal “service culture” within its organization. Where some degree of this culture exists, it is because of individuals within the organization realizing there is some need for change.
- Administration has developed a culture of being separate. While this varies by department and individual staff member, the organization has distanced itself to some degree from Council, the public, contractors, businesses, unions and organizations and municipalities in the region. Instead of looking at itself as a separate function, the organization should be viewing itself as a partner in a complex matrix of interrelated services.
- Many staff observed that there was insufficient interaction between Council and staff at a social level.

While staff members recognize that they should not be receiving direction from Council members, they expressed the desire that Council members have more opportunity to get to know their staff and their families.

- Administration has allowed a strong split to develop between the rest of the organization and outside staff. While these splits can be expected, an alert administration ensures that additional processes are in place to ensure that outside staff members receive equal levels of information as inside staff, on a timely basis.

Financial Practices

Our Observations

- Although financial statements have been appropriately prepared, the use of the same auditors for a long period of time needs to be questioned. These types of services should not be awarded based on the lowest tender and a change in auditors, when that occurs, ensures that appropriate relationships are maintained between Council, its Auditor, and administration.
- When our firm requested copies of the annual management letters from the auditors, we were advised that we would find very little content in those letters as all issues have been resolved. While we would be pleased to find that there are few or no issues

in an organization, we suggest that a “new set of eyes” may result in the identification of a number of areas of improvement.

- Involvement of front line staff in the development of annual budgets was limited, particularly for outside functions.

Type of New Residential Development	Residential units per 2 acres	Average assessment per residence	Residential Assessment per acre (i.e. tax base)	Street frontage per residence
Large Lot	1	400,000	200,000	300 ft
Normal Density	20	120,000	1,200,000	65 ft

Processes

that fully involve staff at all levels have been consistently found to result in better budgeting.

- While it was not part of the specific terms of reference for this Review, it was noted that although the District has had lower residential tax rates than its neighbours, and it currently continues in that position, residential taxes have been increasing at a faster rate than in neighbouring municipalities.
- Residential taxes have been reduced by applying higher commercial and industrial tax rates than has occurred in neighbouring municipalities. This trend of increasing residential taxes and high commercial and industrial taxes will continue unless tax base losses due to large lot residential development area are offset by new commercial and industrial development. A separate study of this long-term trend in tax base

revenue needs to be undertaken. Continuing large lot residential development is partially a driver of this increase in costs as the following model comparison would identify:

Analysis of the District’s financial data shows that:

- Operating revenues increased by \$1.6 million (21.4%) from \$7.4 million in 1999 to \$9.0 million in 2002
 - Water & sewer revenues increased the most by \$663 thousand, or 62.4%.
 - Water & sewer revenues also fluctuated the most; going from \$1,089 thousand in 2000, decreasing by 29% in 2001 to \$775 thousand, then increasing by 123% to \$1,725 thousand in 2002.
 - Net taxes increased by \$650 thousand, or 12.3%.
- Operating expenditures increased by \$0.9 million (13.1%) from \$6.8 million in 1999 to \$7.7 million in 2002.
 - General government services increased the most by \$491 thousand, or 55.9%.

- Protective services increased by \$277 thousand, or 21.3%.
- Total Fund Balances increased by \$972 thousand (28.3%) from \$3.4 million in 1999 to \$4.4 million in 2002.
 - Reserve Funds increased the most by \$807 thousand, or 38.8%.
 - Operating Funds increased by \$150 thousand, or 9.9%.

The 5 year financial forecast prepared by the District of North Saanich shows that:

- Revenues from taxes, water, sewer and other revenues are projected to increase by \$0.7 million (7.9%), from \$9.5 million in 2003 to \$10.2 in 2007.
 - Taxes & Grants in Lieu are expected to increase the most by \$0.6 million, or 9.3%.
 - Revenues from grants & borrowings for capital projects will total \$10.7 million between 2003 & 2005.
- Expenditures on general operating, sewer & water are projected to increase by \$0.6 million (6.6%), from \$8.6 million in 2003 to \$9.2 in 2007.
 - Expenditures on capital projects will total \$14.9 million between 2003 & 2005.
 - Revenues from water and sewer user charges will consistently be less than expenditures,

increasing to an annual difference of \$1.1 million in 2007.

Equipment and Office Space

Our Observations

- Somewhat ironically perhaps, we generally find the administrative offices and “city hall” to be substantially better equipped than that provided for the rest of the outside administration. In this instance, the opposite appears to be true. The building space used by the outside departments appeared to us to be in good condition and suitable for the functions included. We note that the District’s Engineer is credited for having encouraged and facilitated some of these improvements.
- The district hall, however, is a building that the administration has to fight with to make it function somewhat to suit their requirements. The layout of the building is not well-suited to the delivery of public services and the public are hard-pressed to find the services they need without staff having to point them over to a different area. In some instances, the staff need to take the public over to an opposite counter in order to pay for the service which they are receiving at the other end of the building.
- The District office also lacks any working space for Councillors, and

the committee room that was made available is often in use for staff and public meetings during office hours. Councillors may have to share a single room, but they should expect to be able to access a shared desk, phone, photocopier and fax, and to have individual locked storage available for documents and agendas.

- An indoor space planner may be able, with the input of the office staff and the restructured organizational design, to come up with a design of the internal space and better signing which would facilitate services to the public. At some stage, preferably sooner than later, the District needs to remove this structure and start over. This building does not fit the image of a District as prosperous as North Saanich.
- The lack of outdoor lighting in the parking space is a matter which should be addressed on a priority basis. This poses a danger to staff who are working late (and who have pointed this out to us). Further, the lack of lighting is also a hazard to the public who are invited to attend evening meetings of Council.
- The sign pointing out that the building is District Hall should be removed and replaced by one which is visible to average eyesight from the road and from the perspective of a passing vehicle.

Performance Measures

Our Observations

- The District of North Saanich needs to consider the adoption of specific performance standards for various types of communication with its residents. These would include:
 - Building permit applications
 - Development applications
 - Referrals to public advisory commissions
 - Lifting of stop work orders
- For example, we were made aware through your agenda for a special meeting of Council that a letter dated August 6th requesting that a stop order be lifted was not dealt with until the August 25th special meeting of Council and that the recommendation was to then have the matter referred to staff for a response. Thus, presuming that this response would not be dealt with until the next regular meeting of Council (about 2 weeks hence), the original request would not be responded to for about 4-6 weeks after it had first been requested. This, on a stop work order which ought to be tracked likely every 2-3 days by staff, is unacceptable.
- Responses to letters, e-mails and faxes from members of the public and/or their agents were often ignored or delayed.

- Responses to telephone calls from members of the public and/or their agents were often ignored or delayed.
- We were provided with a copy of three separate performance appraisal systems: for the Administrator, the senior management and non-supervisory staff. The systems appear to be satisfactory and should form a reasonable framework within which the review of employees can occur. We note that the one for the Administrator indicates that it is to be conducted by the Mayor. This we would strongly disagree with given that the Administrator does not report to the Mayor—he/she reports to the Council as a whole. Having the Mayor conduct this review sends a number of inappropriate messages regardless of how well-intended the process. We note that the current Mayor had circulated the performance format to all members of Council just prior to the retirement of the former CAO.
- Performance evaluations are required annually by policy but they have not been done regularly by the organization, and this was most often reported by outside staff. In some instances, it was reported that the last performance evaluation given to some staff members was 5 or more years ago.

- Many staff reported that their managers and supervisors were micro-managing their day-to-day functions; this has resulted in the reduction and hindering of the performance of the organization, the staff and its managers.
- Staff reported that pressure had been received from members of Council on whether bylaws should or should not be enforced. This situation should be resolved by Council providing policy on the standards for bylaw enforcement and the results expected.
- The level of performance and coordination within outside services was not as high as expected. This was partially due to the lack of long term planning on the use, allocation and sharing of resources by the roads, drainage, utilities and parks functions of the municipality.

Information Access Systems

Our Observations

- IT and GIS services for the District have been well managed and have produced excellent results with limited resources. Cooperative efforts with other municipalities and organizations should continue to be encouraged.
- Present IT and GIS services are built around a single individual with the necessary expertise. Other staff in the organization have only limited

capabilities to cover these duties and the loss of services from this individual staff member would have a detrimental impact on the organization. Succession planning for this position needs to be undertaken, with some emphasis on changing the role of the position from one undertaking many tasks directly, to a greater focus on coordinating outside and inside resources.

- The present organization structure places IT and GIS services in Finance. While Finance was the original and majority user of computer services, this is not true today. The location of this function in the organization should be reassessed.

Staff Survey

A staff survey was undertaken to determine the roadblocks within the organization to effective and efficient performance. The results of this survey showed that more work is required in the following areas:

- ❑ Ensuring that Council's vision for the future is clearly communicated to the entire administration
- ❑ Requesting all members of the administration to participate in providing Council with their input
- ❑ Expecting Council to support the work and efforts of the administration rather than agreeing with the negative comments of the public

- ❑ Understanding that training for employees is essential to the growth and development of the organization
- ❑ Ensuring that all members of staff are brought up to date on the issues
- ❑ Outside staff feel that they are not respected, and believe that non-outside staff have no understanding of the difficulties of their work. They have insufficient workers and resources to be able to complete their jobs properly.

Staff members view the arrival of a new CAO as presenting a good opportunity to instil a more proactive form of municipal management for the District. Concerns mentioned most frequently include:

- The need for strong administrative leadership
- A more decisive management style and the need for a person with strong "people skills" in the CAO position
- The need for the CAO to give department heads more of a free hand to operate on a "management by exception" basis, the need for more delegation of responsibility and authority and the need for more drive, initiative and excitement in the organization.

Highlight of Our Departmental Review

It is our view that the individual departments are striving to provide a good quality of services to the residents of North Saanich albeit in a structure or environment which simply does not facilitate or encourage first-rate cooperation in the delivery of services. Our survey of the individual departments reveals that:

- The only corporate goals and objectives of Council to guide the departments that are clearly articulated are those set out in the Official Community Plan which was last updated in 1998. This update took about a year to develop.
- Our assessment of the Services Department is that it is a relatively well-managed system with a motivated staff, a sense of commitment to the best interests of the District and an excellent departmental morale. The Director has implemented a number of operational changes to improve the efficiency of the department and actively encourages staff to look for ways of improving how business is done. Of particular merit here is the computerization of the building permit system which has led to major improvements in how applications are processed.
- Responsibility for Parks was removed from the Engineering Dept.

and moved to the Inspections Dept. In 2000 Parks was moved from Inspections to the Works Superintendent but not under the direction of the Engineer but with the Works Superintendent reporting directly to the Administrator for Parks issues.

- The only significant change, other than the structural changes outlined above, has been the workload that was taken on during design and construction of the South East Quadrant Sewer project where the day-to-day needs of this project were handled by the Engineer.
- The reporting relationship of the Works Superintendent to the CAO with respect to solely the Parks function has led to confusion in setting priorities and allocating staff resources.
- A problem being experienced by staff in the Engineering Department has to do with the need for a better records management system. The manner in which information is filed and accessed needs to be reviewed and a better system, including the integration of historical files, needs to be implemented.
- An important responsibility of engineering staff is the review and approval of subdivision applications. Standards have been set for the time needed to review these applications (six to eight weeks) and applicants

are advised accordingly. Staff endeavours to return phone calls in a prompt manner but it would appear that there is no departmental standard in this regard. Such a standard should be established and adhered to.

- Several staff commented that their work would be easier and the public better served if there were clearer policies and guidelines established for things such as culvert construction (including letting homeowners construct their own so long as they were to District specifications), driveway connections, etc. The Department should allocate resources to preparing information packages dealing with these types of projects and ensure that this information is distributed to the public.
- We were advised that people doing business with the Department have expressed frustration about delays in obtaining information due to staff absences and the lack of a backup person to provide the information requested. This suggests the need for better cross training of staff and the need to empower other members of staff (in particular, the Engineering Assistants) to provide this service.
- Analysis of the data provided by the District of North Saanich on the issuance of permits was limited due to error in some of the dates included in the data. Where entries

show erroneous data (i.e. showing the date of issuing the permit before the date of submitting the application) this data was excluded. The following was observed from an analysis of this data:

- Data from 298 building permits was review, being all those building permit applications since January 1, 2002 which have been processed and either refused, withdrawn or a permit issued. Based on this review it was found that the maximum period of time to issue a permit was 393 days, the minimum time 0 days (i.e. the same day), and the average time was 37 days.
 - This average time of 37 days or 7.2 weeks is exceptionally long when it is considered that many of these applications were for small renovations or additions.
- When the applications for a new single family dwelling (SFD) are considered it was found that the number of permits issued was 82, the maximum time to issue a permit was 380 days, the minimum time 0 days (i.e. the same day), and the average time was 41 days.
 - This average time of 41 days or 8.1 weeks is exceptionally long when it is considered that it is only 4 days longer on

average than the time to review all permits. In other words it only takes 4 days longer to review a SFD application than an application for a minor renovation or addition. This clearly indicates that there is a backlog in starting or completing the review of permit applications.

- At the present time, the Works Superintendent has a dual reporting relationship, being supervised by the District Engineer for the Roads/Drainage and Utilities operations and by the CAO for the Parks operation. This arrangement presents problems in the sense that demands on the Superintendent's time come from two different sources which, at times, causes difficulties in terms of priority setting and confusion as to who's in charge.
- It is important to note here that the Parks section deals mainly with the maintenance of natural areas and that recreational problems are undertaken by agreement with the Capital Regional District.
- The growth in the amount of infrastructure in the District due to the completion of the southeast sewer system and the prospect of an additional system in the Deep Cove suggests that it is timely that a review of the staffing requirements in the Works area be undertaken. For example, work on the sewer lines

such as flushing and upgrading pressure reducing valve stations is only done when problems arise, rather than there being a regularly scheduled maintenance program. In addition, the staffing requirements necessary to enforce the Tree Bylaw would suggest the need for a review in this area as well. Given that the District's parks are, for the most part, natural areas and given that volunteer help could be very effective in helping to preserve these areas, there would also be merit in establishing a parks volunteer coordinator to help muster resources in this area as well.

- The Clerk is the Personnel Officer for the District and handles inquiries directed to the human resources department, participates in some interviews for employees outside the Administration Department, maintains the personnel records for the District, handles some Union issues (not grievances). The Clerk has not had sufficient time or resources to provide the full level of human resource services needed by the District. This could be addressed by increasing her access to support personnel and by having the Clerk partner with someone in another jurisdiction who may have more experience in the HR functions.
- This department has to be involved in helping the District establish a clear financial business plan which

focuses on needed resources to achieve the objectives of this Council. While this responsibility has to be chaired by the CAO, the head of Finance will need to play a larger leadership role in presenting fiscal forecasts and trends as well as comparative information.

- Purchasing functions are decentralized to the departments which may run counter to efficiencies and control requirements of the organization in some circumstances.
- The “west wing” should have a cash register incorporated into it so as to remove the current and unnecessary requirement to have staff bring the public over to the east wing to pay for any building and engineering services.
- The IT/GIS department was created at the beginning of 2003. Presently, this department is within the Finance Department and the IT/GIS Coordinator reports to the Municipal Treasurer. At the present time, the IT/GIS Coordinator is a one person function.
- On behalf of the District, Sierra Systems completed a 5 Year Strategic Plan for Information Systems in 2001.
- Over the past five years, the District’s reliance on technology has increased. This trend is expected to continue. This has increased the workload and has increased the

need to be well organized, to be able to access outside resources, and in future to address staffing levels.

- The Fire Department is headed up by a Chief who has been there for the past 28 years and has acted as Chief for the past 5 years. The department operates out of two Fire Halls and has six trucks in their fleet. The Chief’s office is located in the #1 Fire Hall on Wayne Street.
- The Fire Department is typical of other departments in smaller communities and consists of a paid Chief, Fire Inspector, part time Clerk and approximately forty volunteers. The creation of these permanent positions in the Department is regarded as a major accomplishment by the volunteers and is seen as being critical to the maintenance of an effective fire fighting/inspection capability for the District.
- Efforts to integrate the Fire Department into the overall District organization have met with limited success. Perhaps due to the distinct nature of this department, the Fire Service has consistently been viewed as an external department and not really a major player at the management table. The Department needs to be seen as an integral part of the District’s team and a very important service. The fact that much of the workload is shouldered by well-meaning volunteers does not negate the relevance of the

department nor the importance of integrating their services and personnel within the overall embrace of the District's organization.

Public Input Processes

Public Commissions and Committees

Bylaw No. 653 of the District of North Saanich provides for the establishment of an **Advisory Planning Commission** and an **Environmental Advisory Commission**.

The Advisory Planning Commission has as its mandate to "...shall advise Council on all matters respecting land use, community planning or proposed bylaws and permits under Divisions (1), (2), (4), (5) and (7) of Part 29 of the Municipal Act that are referred to it by Council."

- ❑ The APC is to consist of seven members appointed by Council from amongst the citizens of the District with one member of Council appointed in a "resource capacity". Members are appointed for a two year term and are subject to the removal of Council. The bylaw is, unfortunately, silent as to the maximum tenure of members.
- ❑ The commission is at liberty to choose its own chairman and vice-chairman.

- ❑ The commission is required to provide a report to Council on matters referred to it within 60 days from the date of the referral or within the time specified at the time of the referral.

The bylaw also contains provisions respecting the **Environmental Advisory Commission**. While many of the foregoing provisions apply, those that do not include:

- ❑ the membership of the EAC is set at 11 with 6 appointed by Council on each even-numbered year for a two year term with the remaining 5 appointed by Council in the odd numbered year for a two year term.
- ❑ The EAC is expected to advise Council on environmental matters referred to it by Council.

Members of the EAC are not allowed to serve at the same time on the APC nor vice versa.

At present, most issues are referred to the respective commissions by Council by way of a staff referral to Council. The issue is then passed along to the relevant commission by the staff sometimes without all the necessary background information.

The actual terms of reference for the commissions are rather vague and generally open to the will of Council as to whether or not the item is referred. There has been the suspicion at times that Council has simply referred a

matter because it is not yet ready to make a decision.

Commission chairs report that Council almost always follows their recommendations. Their minutes outline the rationale for decisions. For the most part, the commissions attempt to follow their understanding of the applicable bylaw or OCP and rely on these because of the absence of any Council policies on these issues. On repetitive issues, the commissions attempt to follow past precedent or decisions but can be influenced otherwise by their site visits. There are no written protocols.

The **Parks Commission** has been established under Bylaw No.830 subsequent to Section 687 of the Municipal Act. The Commission's powers are again advisory in nature on topics related to:

- The acquisition, disposal, enlargement, maintenance, protection and development of municipal parks
- Parkland dedication
- Assistance to local groups working on park improvement projects
- Site-specific park improvement concepts and job creation projects.

The Parks Commission consists of seven members appointed by Council, with three non-voting liaison members: one each from Council, the EAC, and the APC. (The Commission Chair notes that the two liaisons from the other two commissions do not attend their

meetings although the value in doing so may be the issue.) The Parks Superintendent attends these meetings and acts as an advisor. His input is valued by the Commission.

Observations

In summary, the commission members with whom we spoke are community-minded volunteers who take satisfaction in being on these advisory bodies. While they have noted certain concerns, these may not be shared with all members and are provided herein for the edification of Council and staff. The concerns include:

- Inconsistency by Council in its decisions
- Lack of orientation to the job of committee member
- Absence of protocols and policies which would provide a degree of guidance
- Appropriate materials not always made available at the time of the referral
- The proper routing of reports not always clear; do they need to be referred to Council or by the administration
- The sense of timing or urgency of the matters under discussion was seldom clear.

It is clear, however, that Council needs to be certain as to its expectations of these advisory bodies. As noted, they exist so as to give Council another

window on some of the key issues which fall within the mandate of the respective commissions. Whether or not the Council decides to accept the advice of the Commissions in all instances is another matter. We would presume that while there may be a fairly high acceptance rate, that there will be instances wherein Council will decide that the advice a commission provides does not serve the District well. That is the prerogative of any Council and is one which must be respected by the commission members and by Council.

Committee of the Whole

The District of North Saanich utilizes a committee of the whole approach to ensuring some degree of Council discussion prior to having matters come before Council for final decisions. We concur with this approach albeit believe that certain process changes need to be made such that Council can focus its energies on the significant matters and leave those issues which are within policy to the CAO to resolve.

The committee of the whole should be renamed the “Policies and Priorities Committee” as an indication that Council is intent on making certain changes to how their decision-making process functions. While this in and of itself is not a major distinction, we see this as one measure which links well with the other changes which we are proposing.

The principal advisor to the Policies and Priorities Committee is the CAO.

Whether or not other management (or other staff) is in attendance is the prerogative of the CAO.

The recommended decision-making process and model, once complete, should be circulated to all full-time employees with sufficient description (in the vernacular) so as to make the process user friendly. The public should also be advised as to the new model once accepted by the Council.

Final reports or recommended actions should be placed on the agenda of the regular Council meeting and be subject to the discussion and debate of the Council at that time. We view the regular Council meeting as the principal decision-making forum of any municipality. This is where the major issues of the day need to be aired, debated and decided. As a result, the regular meetings of Council are recognized as the forum for decision-making.

Decision-Making Framework

Council

- Review of reports and recommendations from the P & P Committee and CAO
- Hearing of delegations
- Discussion of policies
- Approval of motions, resolutions, bylaws, policies

- Final authority within legal limitations.

Policy and Priorities Committee

- Review and acceptance of reports
- Review of proposed new policies
- Discussion of status updates on requests by Councillors for information
- Power to make recommendations.

Public Advisory Committees and Commissions

- Review of issues referred within the terms of reference
- Research on such issues
- Power to advise the P & P Committee and/or Council.

Chief Administrative Officer

- Preparation of advice to Council
- Review of senior staff reports
- Decision making powers as defined by bylaw.

Senior Management Team

- Discussion of background reports, Council requests, etc.
- Review of departmental matters
- Signing off of departmental reports
- Advice to the CAO

Organizational Restructuring

Our Comments on the Organization

In some ways, we are impressed that the current system works. That is, we see a number of reasons (largely unnecessary) that combine to stagnate the system and inhibit it from providing services to the residents of the District. While the “people resources” of any organization are far more important than structure, it does not diminish how fundamental a sound structure is. The fact that the District is entering a new phase in its organizational life suggests that this is an excellent opportunity to make the fundamental changes which will aid in improving service delivery.

Proposed Functional Structure

- Chief Administrative Officer
 - Information technology
 - IT/GIS Coordination
 - Strategic Planning
 - Clerk Functions
 - Human Resources
 - Council Secretariat
 - Executive Secretary
 - Legal Counsel (contract)
 - RCMP Services
- Community and Development Services

- Planning
- Development
- Building Inspection Services
- Bylaw Enforcement Services
- Leisure Services Liaison
- Community Group Liaison (Special Events)
- Infrastructure Services
 - Engineering Services
 - Capital Works
 - Roadways Maintenance
 - Utilities/Drainage
 - Equipment/Fleet
 - Airport Liaison
 - Facilities Management
 - Parks
- Emergency and Fire Services
 - Fire Prevention Services
 - Fire Suppression Services
 - Emergency Measures (Disaster Planning)
 - Coordinate Emergency Services (Ambulance, Hazmat, etc.)
- Corporate Services
 - Business Planning
 - Budget Preparation
 - Accounting
 - Collections
 - Financial Reporting
 - External audit (contract)

Recommendations

Acceptance of the Report

1. We recommend that this Report be accepted by Council “in principle”.

Commitment to Action on the Report

2. We recommend that this Council review with the new Chief Administrative Officer each recommendation separately and determine whether or not each will contribute to a more effective municipal organization.

Council Strategic Business Plan

3. We recommend that a “Council Strategic Business Plan” be developed by Council with the assistance and cooperation of the administration. An external facilitator should be retained to assist with this critical and essential process.
4. We recommend that the CAO initiate a corporate-wide business planning and performance measurement initiative through assigning specific responsibilities and deadlines to the senior staff and through organizing an externally-facilitated core service review with Council, management and a cross-section of non-management employees. Members of directly related community bodies might also be invited.

The Public as the Customer or Client

5. We recommend that the CAO place measures before Council which he believes will address the significant concerns vis-à-vis the treatment of the public that we heard voiced by those who responded to the invitation to be heard by the consultant and who may represent a cross-section of the public. These concerns were almost unanimously in agreement that the attitude of District staff needs to reflect that the public is paying for the services and expect to receive professional and courteous treatment from the administration.
6. We recommend that a “Quality of Service” questionnaire be developed and placed in a prominent position such that the public are encouraged to provide their comments and evaluation on the service which they receive from District staff.
7. We recommend that the CAO review current approval processes and advise Council how these might be expedited.
8. We recommend that the District review its current public information materials relative to approval processes, requirements and expected timelines and ensure that the

public is made fully aware of these.

Official Community Plan

9. We recommend that the Council of the District ensure that its revised Official Community Plan reflects those values and views which it heard during the course of the election and that the Plan process ensure the active and informed participation of the public.

Policy Development

10. We recommend that Council, in cooperation with the CAO, engage in a full review of current policies and bylaws in order to determine those which should be retained and those which should be either amended or rescinded. We recommend that the Council request the CAO to present it with a summary of key policies and their present impact so that this Council can determine if these policies are in concert with the direction and mandate of this Council.
11. We recommend that the District of North Saanich undertake a more progressive and broader approach to policy development generally and to its specific policies vis-à-vis training and development for Council and administration. This will require committing sufficient funding into

the budget for a training program for both the Council and administration. We are prepared to provide a subsequent seminar on this key topic if so requested by Council.

Council Covenant and Code of Ethics

12. We recommend that all members of Council agree to the Council-CAO Covenant as recommended in this Report and as attached.
13. We recommend that all members of Council agree to the Code of Ethics and Conduct as recommended in this Report and as attached.

Leadership by the Mayor

14. We recommend that the Mayor:
 - a. pursue a more proactive role in engaging members of Council in discussions related to their individual goals and concerns
 - b. set aside time with all members of Council to engage in a one day “Council priorities” session with an experienced and external facilitator
 - c. ensure that all members of Council accept and stick to an agreed upon decorum for Council and committee meetings
 - d. stop any Council member from berating individual members of staff or each

other by, if appropriate, calling an adjournment to the meeting and asking members of Council to meet with him in the committee room for a discussion about acceptable behaviour

- e. not attend any meetings of the management team unless requested to do so by the CAO (which may occur once or twice annually) or in an emergency situation as deemed necessary by the Mayor
 - f. ensure that no member of Council is encouraged or allowed to engage with staff in the office or at a work site such that the expected degree of separation between Councillors and staff is in any way abridged.
15. We endorse and recommend continuance of the Mayor's informal get-togethers with the Council members and staff. This has been spoken of positively and contributes to a stronger sense of community identity and organizational morale.

The Rights and Responsibilities of the Chief Administrative Officer

16. We recommend that the CAO ensure that he is making the

necessary administrative decisions on issues which fall within current policy and bylaws or which have been assigned to the CAO by bylaw.

17. We recommend that the CAO develop techniques for keeping Council informed on the key decisions which he has been empowered by policy and bylaw to make.
18. We recommend that the CAO use the attached "Request for Decision" format in providing all of his reports on the issues to Council and that members of senior staff utilize the same format in submitting their reports to the CAO.
19. We recommend that any member of Council who may wish to comment on the work of an individual staff member, direct any comments through the office of the CAO. The CAO will use his best judgment in determining whether or not there is any substance to the concerns and whether any disciplinary action is needed.
20. We recommend that any concerns by the public relative to the actions of the administration be immediately referred to the CAO and, if the concerns or complaints are significant, to the Mayor.

Orientation for Members of Council

21. We recommend that Council, by policy, approve of a comprehensive orientation process for all members of Council every three years, within 10 days of a province-wide municipal election.
22. We recommend that the main focus of any such orientation be placed on Council's primary role (i.e. governance) and that an external resource be brought in to provide Council with such an overview.

Council/Management Team-Building

23. We recommend that the Council and senior management get together at least once annually to discuss their approach to issues and their need to work "off of the same page". Such a team-building exercise should be facilitated by someone external to the organization.

Agenda Procedures

24. We recommend that the Council request the CAO to undertake a review of Council agenda procedures and recommend how these might be changed to increase Council's effectiveness as a governing body. This review should include all aspects of our comments relative to the present approach to agenda development

and the processing of agenda issues.

25. We recommend that the CAO and Clerk brief the Mayor on each agenda of Council at a specified time each week and that the Mayor ensure that each agenda, as appropriate, reflect Council priorities and concerns. Thus, while the advice of the administration on any given topic should not be called into question by the Mayor (without the input of the Council), the agenda needs to provide members of Council with sufficient opportunity to place before Council and the public their concerns and issues which reflect the views and concerns of the citizens (as they may be known to Council members).

Council's Obligation to Obey District Bylaws

26. We recommend that all members of Council accept that they are still District citizens and that as such they are required to abide by the bylaws of the District.

Committee of the Whole

27. We recommend that the present approach to the committee of the whole be re-focused on "policies and priorities" and that the agenda be limited so as to reflect this intention.

28. We recommend that the committee of the whole be renamed the "Policies and Priorities Committee".
29. We recommend that the guidelines and terms of reference which we have proposed herein be adopted by Council and used to guide the Policies and Priorities Committee.

Commissions of Council

30. We recommend that Council ensure that all special purpose bodies including its commissions be guided by defined terms of reference, rotation of membership, tenure of members terms, role of any Council appointees as liaison and not advocate, reporting procedures to Council, and the advisory role of staff.
31. We recommend that all reports of the commissions be referred to Council through the Policies and Priorities Committee of Council.
32. We recommend that recommendations from public committees be reviewed by the administration in terms of:
 - Sphere of jurisdiction
 - Potential impact on existing policy
 - Potential impact on budget
 - Potential impact on staff resources
 - Enforceability of any requested bylaw

Council Evaluation

33. We recommend that a Council appraisal and evaluation process be adopted by Council and utilized at least internally on an annual basis. Such a process is available in the literature. We would be happy to provide same under a separate cover.

CAO Evaluation

34. We recommend that a format and process for evaluating the CAO be adopted and utilized by this Council. We would be pleased to provide same under separate cover.

Organizational Changes

35. We recommend that the proposed Organizational Design be adopted in principle by Council and referred to the CAO for a detailed assessment and action plan as to its implementation.
36. We recommend that Council to confirm its support to the CAO to undertake whatever organizational changes are endorsed by Council as a result of this Corporate Review.
37. We recommend that the CAO act expeditiously in taking those steps which will result in the effective and timely implementation of this Report and that an update report to Council on the implementation of

the Corporate Review be presented to Council on a monthly basis until all the approved recommendations are addressed.

38. We recommend that the CAO review all of the staffing issues as outlined herein and present to Council his recommendations relative to the most appropriate steps to be taken, the timing involved, the anticipated costs and the proposed source(s) of revenue to fund these changes.
39. We recommend that the CAO hold all department heads accountable for improved leadership to their departments including regularly scheduled and planned meetings, ongoing communication measures, regular performance reviews.
40. We recommend that the Infrastructure Department be required to initiate performance reviews of all employees.

Approach to Human Resources

41. We recommend that the District recognize the need to strengthen their approach to human resources through the appointment of someone to that role. Such a position would be responsible for:
 - Updating position descriptions on an ongoing basis
 - Pursuing the development (with external advice) of a

broadly-based compensation plan and policy

- Developing written procedures and required assessments prior to the end of new employee probationary periods
 - Assisting supervisory staff with the appropriate handling of personnel issues
 - Ensuring adequate focus on health and safety and risk management issues (recent changes have restored minimal health and safety support services to the organization but this area requires continued development)
 - Ensuring the appropriate handling of personnel files
42. We recommend that the District's budget for training and development be placed within the Clerk/HR Officer's budget and that she, working under the direction of the CAO, be held responsible for developing a coordinated staff development plan and allocating the use of training dollars.
 43. We further recommend that the CAO establish a Training and Development Task Force or Management Committee chaired by the Clerk/HR Officer in order to seek the best use of training dollars.

GIS Strategy

44. We recommend that a long-term strategy on the use of GIS services be considered. A good information piece has been written by the incumbent IT/GIS Coordinator which should serve as the basis for a comprehensive, District-wide plan.
45. We recommend that the IT/GIS Coordinator ensure ongoing input to the District's needs by working collegially with a CAO chosen "IT/GIS Working Group".

Senior Management Team

46. We recommend that the CAO re-structure the terms of reference and expectations of a Senior Management Team (SMT) to incorporate the following:
 - a. Provide policy advice to the CAO and through him, to Council, on all matters which require Council direction
 - b. Seek innovative, creative ways to maximize the ability of the District to carry out its functions
 - c. Review the proposals of each other and discuss their merits and the potential questions which Council may have (prior to the matter being placed before Council for debate and decision)

- d. Discuss and ensure that any matter which requires a new or revised policy statement be so described prior to being placed on the formal Council agenda.

Compensation Reviews

47. We recommend that a "compensation review" for all non-union staff be conducted by an external firm with relevant experience in this field.
48. We recommend that a "Citizens Review Committee on the Compensation of Members of Council" be struck by this Council prior to the next municipal election and that the terms of reference include the necessity to report back to Council just prior to the next election; and that any recommendations from this "blue ribbon" Committee be adopted by Council for implementation the day following the next municipal election.

District Productivity and Moral Task Force

49. We recommend that the new CAO strike a "District Productivity and Morale Task Force" made up of members from across the system to get together and suggest further ways by which the organization could be improved. This will need to be chaired by the CAO in order to

ensure legitimacy and the protection of all voices.

Facility Space Planning, Lighting and Maintenance

50. We recommend that the District retain an indoor space planning firm who will be responsible for reviewing the District's current allocation of office space and make recommendations which will enhance service delivery; place staff in proximity to their supervisors; reduce the notion of two "wings"; and make better use of the vacant space downstairs.

51. We further recommend that the District ensure that Council is presented with a "building maintenance" plan which addresses all of the District's facilities and the requirements to keep these in good condition.

52. We recommend that the parking lots be reviewed and improvements be made to the lighting of these public spaces.

53. We recommend that a thorough review of exterior and indoor signage be undertaken and improvements made so as to provide a clear "District of North Saanich" identity throughout.

Financial Practices

54. We recommend that a thorough review be undertaken of the District's present financial status and the impact on its tax base

due to large lot residential development.

55. We recommend that a long-term trends analysis be undertaken with regard to the sustainability of the District given increasing residential taxes, as well as high industrial and commercial taxes. The District's ability to sustain its present "quality of life" will be jeopardized if a more balanced tax base is not sought in a planned manner.

Process Changes

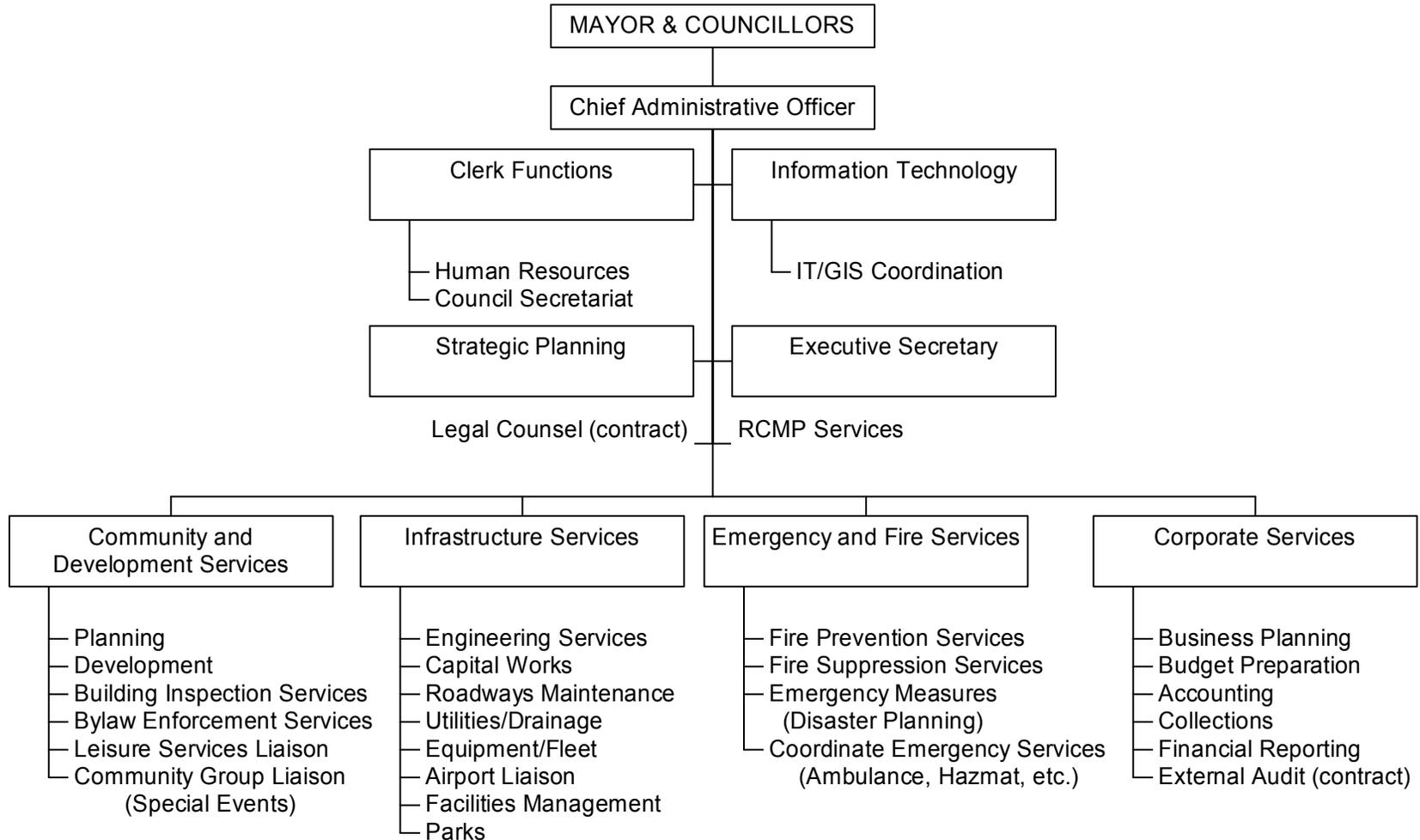
56. We recommend that the following "process changes" be considered and implemented:

- All correspondence should be date-stamped as it is received
- The District's approval process for all applications needs to be publicly-posted together with expected and acceptable timelines for processing and either approving or denying the application
- Requests for responses from approving agencies need to be processed expeditiously; again this process must be subjected to a timeline with staff held to account if response requests are not being followed up on or not acted upon within 48 hours of being received

- All e-mailed and mailed correspondence needs to be responded to by the person so addressed (or by the Clerk where there is no specific addressee) within 48 hours; at minimum, the response must indicate the date of the expected full response to the question(s) being asked
- All requests for a meeting with Council must be responded to within 48 hours with a letter detailing the appropriate information to be included in such a request; the relevant background to how Council handles requests for delegations; and the date by which this request will be responded to by the administration
- Council should be provided with a report by the CAO as soon as possible relative to all

- outstanding requests for building permits and applications for subdivision approval; a timeline should be included which indicates anticipated dates when the matter will be resolved
- There must be a written protocol regarding how correspondence addressed to “Mayor and Councillors” or simply to the “Mayor” will be handled
- Preparation by department heads for Council meetings needs to improve; comprehensive reports need to be prepared in advance of meeting agenda deadlines; the CAO’s approval is required on all reports; audio-visual materials need to be available and done in a competent, easy to read manner.

Appendix A – Proposed Functional Structure



A Draft
Code of Ethics and Conduct
For
the Council of the
District of North Saanich

PREAMBLE: The purpose of the Code of Ethics and Conduct is as follows:

- To provide guidance to Council so as to ensure that each are accorded reasonable and fair treatment
- To assist Council Members in avoiding problems relating to role problems
- To preserve the integrity of the Council and administration
- To protect the individual rights of Council and administration as normal citizens.

These guidelines are additional to any requirements at law and do not excuse any member from complying with any common law or statute law.

Primary Focus

1. Both Council and its administration recognize that their allegiance and loyalties are to the community as a whole and not to any individual(s) or group(s).

Relationships between Members of Council and Its Administration

2. Each Council member shall ensure that his/her behaviour towards other members of Council and the administration is based on the following principles:
 - Respect for the right of others to offer their opinion
 - Tolerance for viewpoints which may be at odds with those of others
 - Respect for views and opinions which may well be in the minority
 - Respect for the role of the CAO as the key employee of Council and its chief policy advisor

- Respect for the right of the administration to present reports and advice which may not be that which is acceptable to Council.

Fair Treatment for Those Presenting to Council

3. Each person presenting to Council will be afforded fair treatment by all members of Council who will seek to ensure that:
 - Presenters are treated fairly regardless of race, gender, religion, age, disability or occupation
 - Presenters are dealt with in good faith
 - Presenters are given an adequate time in which to present their views
 - Presenters are treated without bias and are accorded respect for their time and views.

Chairman of Meetings

4. The Mayor (or chair of meetings) will not tolerate
 - discourtesy by one member to another member
 - rudeness to members of staff or to the public
 - disruptive behaviour
5. The Mayor (or chair of the meeting) should personally speak to any member guilty of such behaviour requesting that he/she desist from such remarks or behaviour. If necessary, the chair shall call a brief recess and speak in private to the offending parties.

Authority and Powers

6. Each member of Council will respect the legislation which accords to Council as a whole the authority to make decisions which guide the actions of the administration. This authority is vested in Council when it is convened as a body at a duly constituted meeting. Council members will therefore refrain from attempting to guide or influence individual members of the administration.

Requests for Information

7. Council members will direct their requests for information or action to the office of the CAO (unless otherwise delegated to a member of staff by the CAO). If the matter is subject to a current Council policy, the administration will respond as quickly as possible in filling the request. If the request is not covered by a current policy, it will be forwarded to the CAO who will place the matter before Council to receive its direction.

Conflict of Interest

8. Neither Council members nor members of the administration will act in such a way as to constitute a conflict of interest. All residents will be treated equally. No special favour will be granted unless it is approved by a legal resolution of Council. Decisions on matters of pecuniary (either direct or indirect) which impact family members in a way not consistent with the population as a whole will be deferred pending the advice of the municipality's solicitor. In this, as in all matters, the legislation will prevail.

Council Spokesperson

9. The official decisions of Council will be conveyed to the public and all others by way of Council resolutions, bylaws and policies. These decisions will be conveyed by the Mayor (or his designate) to the media as directed by the official Council decision. Any other comments on Council positions by any other member of Council which are not consistent with the official position should be prefaced as personal opinion only.

Public Statements

10. A member is not restricted in any public statement they choose to make, but as a member of the Council they are expected to:
 - support the role of the Council, and
 - support the current policies, bylaws and resolutions of the District of North Saanich.

11. Any requests by the media to the administration for comment or information on matters pertaining to a matter within the jurisdiction of the Council and not yet subject to an approved policy should be immediately referred to the CAO (Administrator) and through him to the Mayor.

Acceptance of Gifts

12. A member is expected to avoid any actual or reasonable apprehension of bias in the acceptance of gifts and shall:

- accept only those gifts of protocol or social obligation that occur in normal business relationships, and
- not accept a fee, gift or other benefit that is connected directly or indirectly with the performance of the member's office.

Bribery

13. A member is to be alert to any attempt of bribery and shall:

- reject bribery in any form, and
- report any attempt or perceived attempt to bribe a member to the CAO.

Family Bias

14. A member is expected to avoid any actual or reasonable apprehension of bias in the dealings with relatives not defined as family and shall avoid any actual or reasonable apprehension of bias when acting as a member of Council.

Treatment of Others

15. Each member shall ensure that their behaviour towards other Council members, the CAO and members of the administration, consultants, lawyers, the public and/or their agents is at all times:

- courteous, professional, fair and unbiased
- contributes to the preservation of orderly decorum

- avoids sarcasm, derogatory comments, or questions or comments designed to embarrass
 - respectful of the rulings and direction of the Chair, and
 - where a member is the Chair, they shall be responsible to immediately rule such behaviour out of order and require the offending member to offer an apology to all present at the hearing.
16. Each member has a responsibility to ensure that all persons appearing before or otherwise having dealings with Council are:
- treated fairly regardless of race, gender, religion, age, disability or occupation,
 - dealt with in good faith,
 - dealt with without bias and in a judicial temper, and
 - given an adequate opportunity to state their case.
 -

Confidentiality

17. Each member shall retain in confidence any matters presented to the Council in camera until such time as that matter has been determined by Council resolution to be a public matter.

Partisan Politics

18. Council members are entitled to serve as members of provincial or federal parties.
19. Council members will not allow their party affiliation or responsibilities interferes with the requirements and responsibilities of serving this District as a member of Council
20. Council members will not engage in political activities in the District Hall or at any event sponsored by the District or by one of its commissions or committees.

Adherence to Code, Charter, Act and Procedures

21. Each member shall;

- adhere to all aspects of this code of ethics;
- adhere to the requirements of the Municipal Act and/or the Community Charter;
- adhere to the procedural guidelines provided for by the Council's approved Procedural Bylaw; and
- adhere to the requirements of Council policies and procedures.