

# OCP review needs public involvement

ENGAGEMENT BURNOUT AFTER OLYMPICS, SAY PLANNERS

by Claire Piech

Get involved — that was the theme of the council workshop on Tuesday afternoon, where lawmakers sat down with municipal staff for the first time to publicly hash out the details of the Official Community Plan (OCP) review.

"I hope what we can communicate to the community is the need for collaborative engagement and decision making," said Mayor Ken Melamed.

"It is not just about inviting people and having them show up, but also having them have an understanding of what it takes to get to a collaborative decision process. We want to hear ideas, but we also want to have people show up and be willing to listen."

Councillor Eckhard Zeidler was more blunt about the need for community participation.

"If there is anything I have discovered it is that the world is changed by those who show up," he said. "A process is a

wonderful thing. When a process is there and you want to effect change, get in there, because that is where it happens."

Municipal staff and council are hoping to get as many people involved in the yearlong OCP review as possible.

Both sides of the table acknowledged that after years of being hyper-involved with the Olympics there is a large amount of engagement burnout in the Whistler community. How to get people from all of Whistler's demographics involved in the process is challenging.

"We are in a post-games scenario, and we are living in a community that has been hyper-engaged for a number of years," said Kevin Damaskie, sustainability coordinator for the Resort Municipality of Whistler. "The urgency to attend one of these meetings is not as urgent as it just was."

About 130 people attended Apres in Action, the municipality's first public meeting on the OCP, which was held in mid-May. But most attendees were either municipal staff or from organizations that are connected to the municipality.

Hot topics at the inaugural meeting included economic diversity, garbage removal and housing for seniors.

One way municipal staff is hoping to get residents engaged in the future

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—KEN MELAMED

direction of Whistler is through the Kitchen Table Working Groups.

This fall, the municipality will work with interested Whistlerites to show them how to host their own OCP brainstorming sessions as well as give them all the materials they need, explained Naomi Devine, Whistler 2020 Sustainability Coordinator with the Resort Municipality of Whistler.

"It is important for us to stress that it is vital for council to be involved and engaged in this OCP update at every step of the phase," said Damaskie. "I think it is important for the community to see council's involvement in this process."

At the workshop session, Devine also confirmed that the Community Advisory Group and the OCP Working Group have both been formed. The advisory group will start meeting this July, and the working group this fall.

All of the community advisory group meetings will be public, although decisions will rest with the group's members.

Melamed also cautioned that those who get involved need to be aware of the importance of compromise.

"Everyone's opinions need to be considered," he said. "Through dialogue and discussion, we can come out the other end with some kind of idea of where we need to go."

For more information, visit the municipality's OCP website at [whistler2010.com](http://whistler2010.com). ■