

## Former mayor slams process

A former Lumby mayor is convinced the prison controversy is causing irreparable harm. Joanne Kineshanko, who was mayor from 1992 to 2002, fears the debate over a proposed correctional facility is creating a rift among residents.

"I put the blame on council for it going off the rails," she said. "Concerns were not addressed soon enough and they were allowed to fester. There is a wedge being driven here and to some extent, council may be manipulated by some who want a prison for economic gain. Council is supposed to represent everyone in the community."

Kineshanko is convinced council has predetermined that a prison is going ahead and as a result, it's unwilling to consider what she calls legitimate concerns.

"They have only looked at a prison because they see monetary benefit from government grants-in-lieu of taxes," she said. "They don't appear to be willing to do any homework on the social and economic impacts from a facility. Council has decided this was a good thing for the community and they haven't listened to the fact that a great number of people have concerns."

Kineshanko is also upset council wants residents to provide questions in advance of a March 23 information session at 7 p.m. at Charles Bloom Secondary School.

"If you look at the Penticton and Summerland meetings (on prison sites), it was a total open mic and the corrections branch staff said those meetings were run very well," she said.

While Kineshanko was mayor, Weyerhaeuser created a \$200,000 legacy fund when its Lumby mill closed. Some of the funds helped construct the salmon trail.

"Current council has decided it's OK to build a prison next to the trail and a prison and eco-tourism do not go hand-in-hand," she said.

Lumby's current mayor denies allegations that council has pre-determined there will be a correctional facility.

"It was just an idea we came up with and people were interested and we looked at it more," said Kevin Acton. "I don't know how we could be any more transparent. There have been no secret meetings." Acton also denies council has been manipulated to lobby for a prison.

"It was council and the mayor's idea to pursue information," he said. "In terms of divisions in the community, that is a result of people and personalities and nothing to do with council. There was noise from a wood chipper and it was creating divisions."

Kineshanko may not like the format of Wednesday's input meeting, but Acton says council is trying to ensure there is decorum. "We are giving people the opportunity to submit questions if they want in advance or they can ask them that day," he said. "People will be able to ask what ever questions they want. There will be no censorship."