

Mayor requests letters of support to council from those who favour prison

Summerland Mayor Janice Perrino said she receives daily letters, e-mails and phone calls from concerned residents about the proposed correctional facility in Summerland.

Perrino told council this week she received five e-mails on Monday alone regarding the prison. She said reaction is split between those in favour and those opposed.

"We are considering everything." Perrino stated in her mayor's report. "There may be tremendous economic benefits, but we must also consider infrastructure costs both now and in the future, how this would affect our policing, fire department, water and waste water treatment plants, and how this might affect growth in the future and where growth is best located."

Perrino asked those who consider locating the facility in Summerland as being good for the community to write a letter of support to council. "One thing we can all agree on: a corrections facility somewhere in the South Okanagan is a good idea," she continued.

During the public question period, resident Brian Adams, who operates a bed and breakfast, said that while he respects Perrino remaining neutral on the issue, she and council will eventually have to make a tough decision.

"It's not like the RCMP detachment," Adams said, noting there's strong emotions on both sides of this issue.

As a tourism operator, Adams praised council for road upgrades that make the Kettle Valley Railway more desirable. He suggested enhancing websites, noting Europeans who visit Summerland usually have their trip mapped out in advance thanks to user-friendly websites.

On the issue of the prison, Adams said he's in favour. "As a tourist operator, I have no fear whatsoever of our town being labelled as a prison town. When I hear people who I consider to be intelligent speak about being a prison town . . . I think that's ludicrous," he said.