

Seawatch Fact Sheet

February 13, 2019

Our position on the issues

- The District and the Sechelt taxpayer are not responsible to remediate a problem created by a private venture.
- In 2006, Concordia Development, the owner and developer, was required as part of the Subdivision approval process, to register a section 219 Restrictive Covenant against title on all lots. This covenant attached an expert geotechnical opinion that described the geotechnical attributes of the land and documented the history of sinkholes in the area to that time. That Restrictive Covenant was registered on the title of each lot in the subdivision. All subsequent purchasers had notice of the known underlying geotechnical hazards in the subdivision.
- In accordance with the Community Charter and the Local Government Act, the District relied on the sealed geotechnical reports provided by the experienced Geotechnical Engineer retained by Concordia Development.
- Other qualified Structural and Civil Engineers signed Letters of Assurance, certifying that the development had been properly constructed. The District of Sechelt again in accordance with the provisions of the Community Charter and Local Government Act, was entitled to and did rely on these reports.

District actions so far

- The District has posted the relevant District commissioned, geotechnical reports to the District website for citizens to access.
- The District has invested over \$682,000 to date on professional contractors to assess the situation.
- The District followed the recommendations of Thurber engineering. Thurber recommended installing concrete barriers and warning signs on Seawatch Lane on January 11, 2019 citing concerns that it may have been undermined in the process that led to a new sinkhole on December 25th, and that was done. Gale Ave N was barricaded previously with a plastic barricade pending Thurber's recommendations that further investigations be made as to its stability. The plastic barricades however were often moved, presenting a public safety concern. These were replaced with a concrete barrier on Gale Avenue North on January 12, 2019.

Current situation

- In July 2015, engineers hired by the District provided costs estimates for various remedial measures that could be undertaken to improve the stability of the ground in the Subdivision. The total cost of the measures proposed were estimated, at that time, to be in the order of \$10

million. The reports, however, cautioned that this was a very complex site and that there was no guarantee that the proposed measures would lead to a long term stable solution. The District determined that it could not incur such expenditures for a project of this nature where there was no agreement the measures would produce a long term solution.

Further the District did not have funds of that magnitude available. Borrowing that amount would have required approval in a public referendum and would have imposed a substantial tax burden on all of the District's residents for years to come.

- The December 25, 2018 sinkhole, which daylighted adjacent to Seawatch Lane on property owned by Concordia, was filled by them immediately. It was reported that it took approximately 400 m³ (40 dump trucks) to fill.
- The daylighting of a void of that magnitude on December 25th led to a reevaluation of the risk to residents and to the public by Thurber who issued a report February 6th. That report is available on the Districts website at <http://www.sechelt.ca/City-Hall/Document-Library?folderId=3002&view=gridview&pageSize=10>

Next steps

- Sinkholes of this magnitude can appear without warning in this area, raising concerns for public safety. For this reason, on February 7th, the District issued an evacuation alert to urge the residents to prepare to leave.
- To provide the residents with the additional time they requested to get their affairs in order, residents were asked to acknowledge the risk to their safety and to remove minors from the area.
- If there are no other events that prompt an immediate evacuation, a local state of emergency will be declared and an evacuation order issued on February 15th.
- When an evacuation order is issued, Emergency Social Services through Emergency Management BC will be able to provide some assistance to the residents such as emergency accommodation and food vouchers for 72 hours if necessary.
- The District is continuing to work with our geotechnical engineers and other engineers to develop a possible bridging plan and secure the required equipment to allow temporary access for vehicles to allow residents to move furniture out of their homes.
- The search for a resolution to the problems at Seawatch can and should continue, but the District of Sechelt can only do that within the proper bounds of responsible government.
- Property owners will need to take their own actions against parties they believe are responsible. The District cannot do that for them.