

November 3, 2008

Complaint to Human Rights Tribunal Dismissed

The BC Human Rights Tribunal has dismissed a complaint alleging that the City of Campbell River and its Mayor, Roger McDonell, failed to take steps to make the City Council Chambers accessible.

In her October 29, 2008 comments outlining the reason for dismissal, Tribunal Chair, Heather M. McNaughton, states she is satisfied that proceeding with the complaint *“would not further the purposes of the Code.”*

Reasons for granting the City’s application to have the complaint dismissed included:

- The City has committed resources to a permanent solution to the inaccessibility of the Council Chambers.
- The City has already made interim arrangements for access and the Tribunal has been advised that those arrangements will remain in place until a permanent solution is achieved in early 2009.
- If all goes according to the City’s plan, the concerns outlined in the complaint, and those of other citizens, will be fully addressed at that time.
- People will always have the option of filing another complaint if the inaccessibility of the Council Chambers reappears as a problem.

“The City has been aware of the accessibility concern, and acknowledges Chambers were not fully accessible to people who use wheelchairs or other mobility devices, when the complaint was filed in August this year,” says Mayor Roger McDonell. *“Following receipt of the complaint, the City permanently erected a portable ramp, which will remain in place until a permanent ramp is completed.”*

Even though City Hall was constructed well before the disabled access provisions of the British Columbia Building Code were introduced, most of the building is accessible. Several years ago, the City had a portable wheelchair ramp constructed for the purpose of providing access to the lower part of the Council Chambers, which contains the public seating gallery and podium. Installation of the portable ramp was installed as needed, and advance notice of the need for its use was required. Prior to the use of the portable ramp, provision was made for some wheelchair access on a landing at the back of Council Chambers.

In March 2008, Council adopted two resolutions approving the expenditure of up to \$6,000 for the design, construction and installation of a power door opener and permanent wheelchair ramp to provide full access to Council Chambers.

“Construction of the improvements has been somewhat delayed because City Council is considering proceeding with a more extensive upgrade of the Chambers at the same time as they provide for full accessibility,” says Mayor McDonell. *“If the more extensive project is not approved, accessibility improvements will proceed to be completed early in 2009.”*

– 30 –

Contact: Mayor Roger McDonell 250-286-5710