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Good timing and professional help keys to small business development success

As a *“small family business in a sea of major development,”* Will Pakosz says his family is relieved to have successfully navigated the permitting process to re-locate and expand their business.

“We’ve been looking for the opportunity to expand and create a space that reflects our business values. Everything has finally fallen into place, and we are realizing our vision,” says Will, whose family has continued to grow Healthyway Natural Foods in Campbell River over the last 22 years.

Although the development process seemed a bit daunting at first, he says *“the support from the City and community in general has been very encouraging.”*

Having an experienced professional take their project through the development process kept the project on schedule with no major hurdles or delays, adds Donna. *“The architect made sure our vision for the property was as clear as possible, and covered all the details, which made it easier for the City to approve our permit application.”*

“Even with some staff turnover that was happening at the City while our application was in progress, the transition of dealing with new people was better than anticipated,” Will adds. *“The handbook and guidelines provided concise information, and there were no surprises. There was a sense that we were working together through this.”*

“We definitely felt there was a recognition that we are a small business,” Donna says. *“Staff reached out offering support not just in pre-development meetings, but afterward too.”*

The Pakosz family aims to open Healthyway Natural Foods at its new location on the corner of Cedar St. and 11th Ave. by August 2015.

“We’re so thrilled with the location. It will be a great home base for our business, and an opportunity to be part of the common vision for downtown,” Donna says. *“We’re renovating to open up the building to the outside for downtown events and hope to create a community gathering space, for seminars and workshops that will complement the fresh food component of our business.”*

“Being part of the downtown core and tied to the cultural epicentre, we’re looking forward to gently creating our own sense of community among like-minded businesses and welcome feedback from other people on opportunities to work with us, especially in the lease space we will have available at the new location,” adds Will.

At its Oct. 7 meeting, City Council approved the major form and character development permit, authorizing the development of commercial premises for a food store, with a proposed yoga studio and offices above. The proposal will expand and extensively renovate the former restaurant to more than double its footprint and have it appear as a new building, with a two-storey addition, roof-top patios, a “green roof” canopy, an outdoor seating area, 22 parking stalls behind the building, decorative paving features and landscaping that unites the entire property with fruit and street trees and native or established ornamental plants.

“Campbell River’s Official Community Plan seeks to promote growth and investment within the downtown core and this will re-develop three under-used properties with high-quality architecture that attract customers and visitors, which could help promote further development on nearby sites,” says Amber Zirnhelt, the City’s manager of long-range planning and sustainability. *“This project is an excellent fit for the downtown area and is expected to add significantly to the character and liveliness of the surrounding streets.”*

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