

# Local innovative leaders who are making a difference

By Peter Dixon

Greater Victoria is blessed with innovative leaders to help "green" the Capital Regional District (CRD).

Oliver Brandes is one.

He is the Senior Research Associate Water Sustainability Project Leader in the POLIS Project on Ecological Governance at the University of Victoria and is a member of the Capital Regional District's Water Advisory Committee (WAC). Brandes is a dedicated, hard-working and committed leader promoting water conservation. He travels across Canada giving presentations to decision- and policy-makers about conserving our water resources but is also active locally.

At the last WAC meeting he presented two motions.

1. "WAC recommends that the Regional Water Supply Commission (RWSC) amend the *Strategic Plan for Water Management* to set out an explicit goal of meeting growth in water demand through water conservation, reuse and recycling, and rainwater harvesting."

To backup his motion, he said it was

"a logical local outcome of the recent *Water in the City* conference that builds on the CRD-Water Mission Statement and the associated priorities of stewardship, water conservation and sustainability. This amendment provides clear direction and objectives for the conservation program and long-term water planning in the region."

2. "WAC recommends that the RWSC include water conservation backcasts to the year 2050 as a formal element of all future strategic water planning initiatives."

The rationale behind this motion was that "it enhances transparency and effective public engagement by the CRD and RWSC concerning the options, opportunities and issues related to the sustainability of our local water resources. A backcasting process also emphasizes that cost minimization is only one aspect of water management, and that sustainability of our water resources has an important value that may not be measurable by standard cost-benefit analysis," said Oliver.

The WAC passed the motions to be

forwarded to the RWSC. On behalf of the WAC, Vic Derman, a commissioner, presented it to the RWSC for discussion. At the time of this writing, it will be discussed at a RWSC meeting in the near future.

Credit should also go to Zeb King, a Central Saanich councillor, who managed to convince the council to support the two resolutions, which were then forwarded to the RWSC.

Derman is also a CRD Board member and submitted his own initiative to the board.

At the last CRD Board meeting he made the following motion:

- that the Capital Regional District Board recognize the need to make climate change concerns a central factor in all relevant board decisions and major projects undertaken in the region; and
- that the Capital Regional District Board direct staff immediately to create a broad, cohesive strategy outlining how the regional district will respond to the imminent problems posed by climate change; and said strategy should build on excellent existing initiatives such as those promoted by the Roundtable on the

Environment and should include all internal district operations.

The Board decided to table the motion and referred to staff to bring back a report that would include policy considerations. The report will be available in about two months.

The third innovative leader is Dean Fortin, a commissioner on the RWSC.

His recommendation to the RWSC said "...given the inextricable link between potable water use and wastewater generation, and the potential to reduce potable water use by using treated wastewater for non-potable uses, the Regional Water Supply Commission recommends to the CRD Board that staff from Water Services be included in the CRD Liquid Waste Management Project team to contribute to the development of reuse options and their implications for the strategic plan for water supply, demand management and wastewater treatment capacity."

Kudos must be given to Oliver Brandes, Vic Derman, Dean Fortin, and to Zeb King for their commitment and determination to address water and climate change issues in the CRD.

The community thanks you.