



Queen Charlotte Volunteer Fire Prevention Society
New Fire Hall
Frequently Asked Questions
Updated December 5, 2016



The Village of Queen Charlotte (the Village) and the Q.C.C. Volunteer Fire Prevention Society (VFPS) are committed to an open, transparent and information-rich discussion regarding this project. All information about the Fire Hall project will be posted on the Village website at:

www.QueenCharlotte.ca

A new Fire Hall is required to provide our volunteer firefighters training space and a safe and efficient base of operations. This handout attempts to answer some of the frequent questions that have been asked and has been updated to reflect additional questions from the Public Meeting that was held on July 20, 2016.

Q. *Can the A-Frame portion of the building be moved to another location? (New)*

A. The Council would be open to proposals to move the A-Frame portion of the building, however the costs of the move would need to be covered by the proponent(s).

Q. *Can the size of the lot fit the building and all the components it needs? (New)*

A. Yes, the property is a double lot measuring 100' x 120' and should be of sufficient size to house the new building and all components.

Q. *Will the building impact the Thrift Store? (New)*

A. No, the Thrift Store wheelchair access ramp does encroach on the property, however the Village is working with the Thrift Store on an encroachment permit to ensure that the new building will not impact that arrangement.

Q. *Will community groups be able to rent or move into the building? (New)*

A. The new facility may be available for rental of meeting space, but at this time we don't plan to have it available for other groups to move into. As part of the offer of purchase, the Volunteer Fire Prevention Society plans to incorporate space for the Legion files and the Legion will be able to use the space for their meetings.

Q. *Could part of the new Fire Hall be set aside for public use and incorporate the same A-Frame structure? (New)*

A. It is doubtful that the A-Frame structure will be suitable for the new Fire Hall as we need to be able to house all four of our trucks.

Q. *Can the log beams, light fixtures, or other materials be salvaged? (New)*

A. The light fixtures have been removed by the Legion. We are looking at options for salvage during the demolition portion of the project. Anyone interested in specific items/materials should send their information to the Village office.

Q. *Will the new Fire Hall be available for Remembrance Days? (New)*

A. If needed it is likely that the new Fire Hall can be made available for an event following Remembrance Day services.

Q. Does the zoning need to change and would it affect other residents around the property? (New)

A. The property is already zoned Public Facility (PF) and would not require rezoning.

Q. How much will the new Fire Hall cost? (New)

A. This will be determined once the preliminary design is completed and a preliminary budget and schedule is created.

Q. Why couldn't the empty lot across the street be used instead? (New)

A. The empty lot across the street belongs to School District #50 and is only 100' x 50' – not big enough to accommodate the new Fire Hall. The property also has Sturdy Creek running underneath it which would require additional engineering.

Q. How do we justify a new Fire Hall in a shrinking community? (New)

A. As of the 2011 census, the Village of Queen Charlotte had 944 residents. The 2016 census results won't be available until the spring of 2017 so it is too early to determine whether the community is shrinking. Regardless the number of buildings in the community has not changed and the old Fire Hall does not meet WorkSafe BC standards. As well, a community requires a certain level of basic infrastructure in order to attract new residents.

Q. With the sale of the property at 202 2nd Avenue, will the Queen Charlotte Legion, Branch 220, be disbanded?

A. The Legion was struggling to keep up with the care of the building and, even when rented, they were taking a loss due to maintenance and operating expenses. The Queen Charlotte Legion continues to function but no longer has to concern themselves with the issues associated with owning a building. Under the terms of the sale to the VFPS, the new fire hall will provide meeting and storage space to the Queen Charlotte Legion at no cost.

Q. What was the purchase price of the property? (updated Dec 5)

A. The Legion accepted an offer from the VFPS of \$42,000 for the property, which was the same price that they paid the United Church when they purchased it. When making the sale, the United Church wanted the property to continue to be used as a public facility and the Legion feels that they are honoring that original agreement with this sale to the VFPS for a new Fire Hall.

Q. Why does the Community of Queen Charlotte need a new Fire Hall?

A. For the safety of our firefighters and our communities we need to build a new Fire Hall. The VFPS has spent considerable time and money evaluating the condition of the current hall and it's been determined that the structure holds enough risk to warrant immediate retrofits to bring it up to a WorkSafe standard. However, it is impractical as a proposed location for a new Hall. Some of the issues with the current fire hall include a lack of ventilation leading to air quality issues inside the building; no decontamination facilities; structural issues with the building itself; an angled driveway and blind entry onto Oceanview Drive; and no additional building space to address apparatus and parking needs.

Q. Why is this property the right choice for a new Fire Hall?

A. The property's central location and side road approach make it an excellent location for an emergency structure. Other benefits include its position relative to the tsunami inundation zone, the hospital, float plane dock and marina and the lack of pre-construction site preparation. Basically this location provides Queen Charlotte and surrounding communities with the best vantage point for emergency services.

Q. *Will it just be a Fire Hall?*

- A. Emergency Management has evolved since the current Fire Hall was constructed. Municipalities have responsibilities that go beyond the typical responsibilities of a fire department. The new Fire Hall will serve as the hub of municipal emergency services. The building will have the capacity to accommodate the Emergency Social Services volunteer group, serve as a municipal Emergency Operations Centre, accommodate emergency services amateur radio and be a reception center for displaced residents. During a major community event, this will be the location that supports all emergency responders and provides resources and information to residents. The Fire Hall will also be available to rent by any other group who requires meeting/training space. A classroom with audiovisual and live meeting capacity is a core requirement in the design of the new Fire Hall.

Q. *How soon will the old United Church/Legion building be demolished? (updated Dec 5)*

- A. There is a lot of work to be done before the building will be demolished, beginning with developing a design for the new building and successfully obtaining grant funding for construction. The VFPS and the Village have successfully applied for a \$10,000 Infrastructure Planning Grant through the Ministry of Community, Sport and Cultural Development for funding to hire a Consultant to develop the preliminary design. We hope to begin working with a Consultant in early 2017 to develop the preliminary design options which will then be shared with the community.

Q. *How will the old United Church/Legion building be honored/recognized?*

- A. Every one of us has a memory...a christening, a wedding, a birthday, a Christmas party, a celebration of life...that comes to mind. The building will always be a part of the fabric of Queen Charlotte. As a 50 year old Society the VFPS recognizes the importance it has had in community. They are committed to respectfully maintaining the core values of this property as a community space. Consultation and input on how best to honor/recognize the old United Church/Legion building will begin at the public meeting on July 20, 2016. Once the feedback is reviewed, a plan will be developed and posted publicly.

Q. *Who are the Volunteer Fire Prevention Society (VFPS) and how are they different than the Volunteer Fire Department?*

- A. The Volunteer Fire Prevention Society (VFPS) fulfilled the duties of a volunteer Fire Department prior to the municipality being incorporated in December 2005. When the Village took over the Fire Department services, the VFPS transferred the current Fire Hall and a small budget for equipment reserves. The VFPS had been fundraising for many years knowing that eventually they would need to replace the current Fire Hall. The Society still exists and its membership is made up of the volunteers in the municipal Fire Department. They kept the majority of their fundraising and those funds are currently being used for the property purchase and they have committed some as matching funds for the Infrastructure Planning grant.

Q. *Who are the volunteer fire fighters?*

- A. The 19 women and men who make up the current group of volunteers sacrifice personal and earnable hours every week to participate in training and community service. They respond day and night to structural fires, earthquakes, motor vehicle incidents and environmental emergencies. They are also your nurses, your foresters, your mechanics, your hospital administrators, your store owners, your teachers, your musicians, your parents and your children. Established over 50 years ago the Society has dedicated itself to the protection and care of Queen Charlotte and surrounding communities in times of crisis and need. None of our volunteers receive remuneration. All of them believe they're making a difference.

As new questions come in, this FAQ will be updated and posted on: www.QueenCharlotte.ca