

Unrest manifests into new group

Delta Now brings together those upset over power lines, highway, port and more to have say in elections

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The Delta Optimist

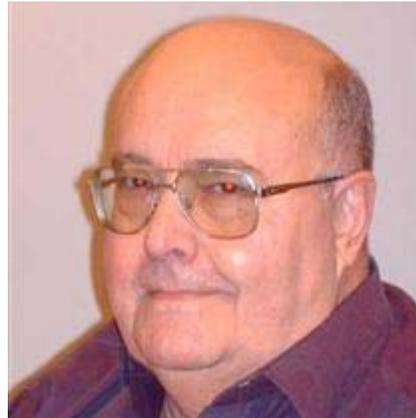
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They're as mad as hell and aren't going to take it anymore.

Several Delta activist groups and concerned citizens are joining forces to form a large collective calling itself Delta Now.

The aim of the alliance is to speak with a much louder and influential voice in the upcoming federal, municipal and provincial elections.

Already holding several meetings to iron out details on how it will proceed, the group, so far, includes Tsawwassen Residents Against Higher Voltage Overhead Lines (TRAHVOL), Mothers Against Power Poles (MAPP), the Sunbury Neighbourhood Association, Against Port Expansion (APE) and the Boundary Bay Conservation Committee.



CREDIT: file photo

Greg Hoover, who helped develop an alternate route for the South Fraser Perimeter Road, has been an outspoken critic of government at all levels. He is the chairman of Delta Now.

Other groups and citizens are also encouraged to join, said Greg Hoover, one of the authors of the Hoover/Naas proposal for the South Fraser Perimeter Road.

Saying Delta has been trampled by a myriad of issues, Hoover is the new group's chairman.

He said groups like TRAHVOL have worked by themselves diligently within the system and done everything possible according to the rules, only to have zero effect on the outcome.

"I'm not a NIMBY, I'm a construction project manager by trade. There are rules and regulations in place that if I want to build, I have to follow," said Hoover.

"It means I can't build on the ALR, I can't build in environmentally sensitive areas, I can't go anywhere near the bog, but it seems like any level of government can go in here and do whatever they want, whenever they want."

He contends that provincial Liberal policies should convince voters to oust the government.

Hoover's comments echoed a speech last week at rally outside South Delta

Secondary by broadcaster Rafe Mair, who urged concerned citizens and groups to get together. Mair said South Delta residents would only have themselves to blame if they decide to continue voting Liberal.

Saying she joined Delta Now only as an resident who will observe, Burns Bog Conservation Society president Eliza Olson said the new alliance may be able to reach a wide spectrum, filling a void by left by groups that no longer exist, especially those that once represented North Delta.

The Burns Bog Conservation Society has been lobbying against the alignment of the South Fraser Perimeter Road that will be constructed adjacent to the bog.

Concerned about the environmental impacts, Olson recently appeared before Delta council to point out the wetland's conservation covenant contains a dispute resolution mechanism the municipality could pursue.

Mayor Lois Jackson told Olson the new highway would not be within the designated lands.

Olson, who gave federal Liberal leader Stephane Dion a tour of the bog earlier this year, said many ordinary citizens have a lot of information on the different issues that needs to be shared.

Roger Emlsey, executive director of APE, said his group is non-political and doesn't endorse candidates, but Delta Now is a good opportunity to establish some accountability. He said it's also a good opportunity to make candidates declare their positions when it comes to Roberts Bank, as well as container storage, rail yard expansion and Terminal 2.

Hoover said the municipal government also has to change because it hasn't been effective on the speaking out on the issues. He said only Vicki Huntington has consistently stood up for residents.

The municipality recently released a comprehensive binder, available for public viewing, which highlights the major issues affecting Delta and the municipality's response and efforts. Hoover said he reviewed the information and found the material to be extremely thin.

For more information about Delta Now, check out its website at www.deltanow.ca.

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