

Armours Beach plan scaled back

GIBSONS



Ian Jacques Photo

The planned demolition of the former municipal hall at Armours Beach has been put on hold to allow for more consultation, Gibsons council decided after a preliminary concept to upgrade the site met some stiff opposition from the public.

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JOHN GLEESON/STAFF WRITER

After a preliminary concept sparked more public opposition than support, the Town of Gibsons is moving slowly on a scaled-down plan to upgrade Armours Beach.

Council voted Tuesday, Feb. 4, to hold off on the planned demolition of the existing building on the site to allow for more public consultation.

It also endorsed staff recommendations to ensure that floats for non-motorized craft are designed in consultation with an eelgrass expert, and to revise the site plan to include only a small structure, mainly to house public washrooms, "with the overall site being left open and natural."

"What's being recommended here is that we don't proceed with any demolition of the building at this point and that there be further consultation with the community as to how to recognize the value of the site," Mayor Wayne Rowe said at council's Jan. 28 committee of the whole meeting.

Reporting to the committee, director of parks Wendy Gilbertson said 31 people who attended an open house on Jan. 8 did not support the preliminary concept, while 21 supported it and four supported it conditionally.

While 20 per cent of comments expressed a preference for restoring the existing building, Gilbertson told the committee that "saving the structure may not be the best choice to make."

A report on the former municipal hall "indicates that there's termites in the building — and there's quite a few other issues that the building has, in terms of lead, in terms of asbestos, and whatnot," Gilbertson said.

While restoring the building is "virtually an impossibility," a replica could be designed and the site's natural and First Nation heritage could be also recognized, she said, noting that Gibson Creek held an important place in Squamish folklore.