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# WE'RE NOT SO DIFFERENT

*The Canadian Home Builders' Association is a non-profit organization dedicated to education, professionalism, consumer awareness, and housing affordability.*

The Victoria Real Estate Board recently held a Saanich All-Candidates forum where issues ranging from secondary suites to planning for LRT were addressed by those seeking office.

The candidates seemed sincere in their desire to participate in the development of their community, but sometimes it takes more. Knowledge and understanding of your community's challenges are also critical to being an effective representative.

For example, the question asked by the Canadian Home Builders' Association was, "Will the candidates review concerns that Saanich takes four times longer to process half the number of building permits processed in Langford?"

Many of the candidates dismissed the issue with the response, "Saanich is different than Langford." In fact, some of the candidates confused building permits with development/rezoning applications. Regardless, the feeling among most was there's no problem.

However, candidates Rob Wickson and Leif Wergeland, recognized the issue as one of administrative efficiency. Wickson is a former

Victoria and BC Chamber President and understood, "Time is money."

Wergeland suggested everyone should go through the building permit process for a good look at what builders and their clients experience. To their credit, both Wergeland and Wickson were open to improving Saanich's administrative processes. Voters deserve open and forward thinking candidates if we are going to successfully plan for the future.

Candidates promoting differences among us isn't a solution for future challenges. It is not reasonable to accept that a building permit in Saanich takes 4 to 6 weeks, yet the same permit takes only 3 to 4 days in Langford, 15 minutes away.

Add differences in our region's building code interpretations, inspections, policing, planning, and it seems we're manufacturing differences rather than emphasizing similarities.

The fact is, we are not so different in this community of 340,000, and it's time our elected representatives recognized this.

At the very least, candidates should address the issues at election time, administrative and otherwise, rather than using language intended to separate us.

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