

October 25<sup>th</sup>, 2017

## **Saanichton Village Association - Raises Final Welcoming Totem !**

Since 2006, a group of residents in Central Saanich have been on a mission to create a village feel for the community of Saanichton with local residents and businesses undertaking a number of local initiatives to enhance the look and feel of the village. The most impactful project to date has been rooted in a close relationship with well-known local First Nations artist Doug LaFortune, and his wife Cathy with what has come to be known as the 'Welcoming Totem' project.

The Saanichton Village Association is pleased to announce the addition of the **Final Welcoming Totem** in the series, planned for the roadways leading to the Saanichton Village. "We wanted residents and visitors to be more aware of their community and the core as they entered the village", notes Jim Townley President of the Saanichton Village Association.

The first Totem in the series was erected in 2012, '**The Heron**' located on East Saanich Rd., north of the Wallace Drive. The second Totem '**The Eagle**' was unveiled in the spring of 2013 and can be found on the south end of the Village on East Saanich Rd. The third Totem '**The Orca**' was raised in the summer of 2014 and welcomes visitors and local residents to the Village on Mt. Newton X Rd. east of the Saanich Peninsula hospital. The fourth Totem '**The Raven**' was unveiled the summer of 2016 in Centennial Park by the tennis courts and the final totem '**The Protector**' is being unveiled **Sunday November 5<sup>th</sup> at 1:30 p.m.** at the **Central Saanich Municipal Hall**, by the parking lot of the original Fire Hall. "The Saanichton Village is more than just the core retail areas, and our idea was to create a sense of inclusion by placing these majestic westcoast symbols in a way that embraced more of the local area", noted Townley.

Each Totem in the series showcases a different symbol. "They all have their role in the First Nations culture, with each representing an important core value for our people", notes carver Douglas LaFortune. "These iconic symbols each has a story that lends itself to shaping our WestCoast communities."

The Totem project has received some significant donations from the Municipality of Central Saanich, local residents and businesses with just over \$20,000 being raised towards the total project goal of \$24,000.00. "The project is almost complete thanks to Katherine Nutt, Ron Spelt and SeaFirst Insurance, Peggy Yelland and the Municipality of Central Saanich. 'We hope to have others from the local community come forward with donations to help us complete our next exciting project', notes SVA Treasurer Martina Redman.

Once the Totem project is completed, the SVA does not intend to stand still. Their next community project will be that of a '**Bike N' Ride**', which will be located just off Mt. Newton X Rd., east of the Mt. Newton Station parking lot. 'We want to leverage the great transit opportunities that the Saanichton Village offers local residents and we felt that giving people a secure place to ride their bike into the village, lock it up and jump on a bus is good for the

environment and enhancing the village feel', notes SVA President Jim Townley. Local business owner and advocate of the 'Bike N' Ride' Ron Spelt will be coordinating many of the fundraising activities to ensure the project reaches completion 'I wanted to see Saanichton evolve into a bustling hub that people like to come and ride their bikes into the village. This will reduce overall traffic and congestion', notes Ron Spelt. The Bike N' Ride is in its planning stages with various designs being discussed to ensure the most functional design is implemented.

Donations to the **Bike N' Ride** project can be made by contacting the SVA through their website: [www.saanichtonvillage.ca](http://www.saanichtonvillage.ca)

SVA Vision statement: "Envisioned by the residents of the community, the Saanichton Village Association is committed to showcasing local tourism, farm gate and retail opportunities, while enhancing the beauty of the area through the establishment of a neighbourly village where residents can walk, cycle and gather in a healthy and welcoming environment."

SVA Contact: Jim Townley President – 250-888-2525