

Quotes from Candidates

All Candidates Forum: Q/A session JBNA All-Candidates Forum May 1, 2013

1. *Amalgamation*

If your party forms the next government will you take steps to ensure that in the 2014 municipal elections, the citizens of the Capital Regional District are given the opportunity to vote on whether or not they support an investigation into municipal amalgamation?

If yes, what steps would you personally take?

Jane Sterk, Green

The answer is yes; I do support the opportunity for the people of the region to have a voice.

I personally believe that some sort of amalgamation of services is needed.

CRD is not capable of forming the cohesiveness needed.

Cannot be a government imposed solution.

Presumption of cost reductions not there.

Experiences in communities that have amalgamated is that costs go up and savings go down.

Need to know that this is not about saving money. Other amalgamations have meant a rise in costs and reduction in service.

Amalgamation Yes is a grass roots organization working towards amalgamation and how it can be done in a positive way.

Carole James, NDP

Thanks to the Amalgamation Yes group that has been working to bring the pro-amalgamation groups in the CRD together.

Do I support the amalgamation question on the next municipal ballot – Yes.

It is time for the public to have the discussion.

Past discussions have been based on what people feel and not based on facts.

Models, facts, and shared services need to be discussed.

It is time for public voices to be heard.

Karen Bill, Liberal

Yes, I support the referendum question.

It is timely as the discussion of integration of police services began in Vancouver and is now in Victoria with the Chief of VicPD asking for it.

It can't be ignored, so need to ask the public the question. Cannot be imposed.

John Shaw, Communist

Yes, I am in favour of amalgamation on the ballot.

Amalgamation itself will not do much.

Need transfer of funding from province to municipal governments. Municipalities now depend on a shrinking tax base.

Restore municipal tax on corporations.

Juan de Fuca candidates Q&A

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John Horgan, New Democrats

How do you feel about some form of municipal amalgamation in the region?

– Amalgamation is a complex issue with reasonable arguments for and against. The BC NDP believes the public should have a chance to voice their opinion on the subject and support a referendum in the next municipal election asking the question “Do you support your municipality entering into discussion on amalgamation”.

Carlos Serra, Green

How do you feel about some form of municipal amalgamation in the region?

– Instead of following the path of amalgamation, the provincial government should provide more funding and resources to the municipal level and a culture of advocating best practices should follow, rather than delegating political agency to fewer and larger municipalities.

Kerrie Reay, B.C. Liberals

How do you feel about some form of municipal amalgamation in the region? – I understand that this has been an on-going issue for years. The Local Government Act provides for amalgamation and it is clearly up to local governments in consultation with voters to make the right choice for their community. I would be cautious as communities are unique in their priorities and issues.

Esquimalt-Royal Roads candidate Q & A

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MAURINE KARAGIANIS, B.C. NDP

How do you feel about some form of municipal amalgamation in the region? -- I support the call for a referendum on the issue of amalgamation and believe citizens and communities need to be heard.

SUSAN LOW, B.C. Green Party

How do you feel about some form of municipal amalgamation in the region? -- It's time citizens discussed it instead of casting fear and doom on the idea. Regionalized services are increasing. If we're not careful we'll end up with the CRD in charge of everything. Based on the sewage debacle, that would not be good.

JOSH STEFFLER, Independent

How do you feel about some form of municipal amalgamation in the region? -- Forced amalgamation will create resentment and a host of problems and legal challenges. The municipal level is where people feel they have a strong voice and are heard by government. I oppose any actions taken by the province to force amalgamation.

CHRIS RICKETTS, B.C. Liberals

How do you feel about some form of municipal amalgamation in the region? -- I believe the provincial government has a role in helping municipalities determine if there are better, more cost effective ways to provide local services, such as the current arrangements we have for policing, water and recycling. Any decision on the amalgamation of municipalities should be left to the residents of the area through a referendum.

Victoria-Beacon Hill candidate Q & A

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JANE STERK, B.C. Green Party

How do you feel about some form of municipal amalgamation in the region? -- I believe some form of amalgamation is needed if we want good regional planning. Amalgamation, however, needs to be done in such a way that it garners broadly based citizen and community support. Top down amalgamations forced by provincial governments elsewhere in Canada have not proven to lower costs and improve services as predicted.

KAREN BILL, B.C. Liberals

How do you feel about some form of municipal amalgamation in the region? -- I think it should be explored but not imposed.

CAROLE JAMES, B.C. New Democrats

How do you feel about some form of municipal amalgamation in the region? -- I support a referendum in the next municipal election asking the question, 'Do you support your municipality entering into discussion on amalgamation?' Adrian Dix and the B.C. NDP believe that the public should have its voice heard in discussions on amalgamation.

JOHN SHAW, Communist Party

How do you feel about some form of municipal amalgamation in the region? -- Imposed amalgamation from higher levels of government without public consultation or approval is doomed to failure. If Victoria municipalities choose to amalgamate into a larger urban entity, the new civic structure of governance should entail implementation of a comprehensive ward system.

Questions for candidates: Will you take all reasonable steps to ensure that in the 2014 municipal elections, the citizens of your riding are given the opportunity to vote on whether or not they support an investigation into municipal amalgamation?

Question for Party: If your party forms the next government will you ensure that in the 2014 municipal elections, the citizens of the Capital Regional District are given the opportunity to vote on whether or not they support an investigation into municipal amalgamation?

Or alternate for party: Will you ensure that the government will move forward to conduct a study of amalgamation in the capital regional district following a successful vote on amalgamation at the municipal level?

- Conservative Party: no response as yet

Candidates:

Greg Kazakoff, Oak Bay Gordon Head Constituency: My answer to your question is, if elected, I will take all reasonable steps to ensure that in 2014 municipal elections, the citizens of my riding are given the opportunity to vote on whether or not they support an investigation into municipal amalgamation.

- Green

Party: Jane Sterk Green Party Leader and the BC Green Party "100% Yes" - to non-binding question on ballot next municipal election whether citizens support their municipality entering into discussions on amalgamation.

Candidates

Sterk: '...the answer to both questions from Jane and the party is a 100 percent YES!'

Spencer Malthouse, Victoria - Swan Lake: Yes. I support giving citizens the opportunity to vote on the question of amalgamation in the municipal elections of 2014.

Branko Mustafovic, Candidate Saanich South: Almagamation,...yes all possible steps to ensure a choice.....

Adam Olsen, Saanich North: Yes. As a former Central Saanich Councillor I heard the 'costs' and the 'benefits' of amalgamation from residents of the Saanich Peninsula. The three municipalities have never investigated, at even a high level, the potential real costs and benefits of amalgamation to provide either the elected officials or the residents the information we need to make a decision. I advocated that rather than hearing the 'facts' of amalgamation, which are often assumptions, we should take the initiative and

investigate the issue to inform all involved. The Tri-Municipal Council meeting on the peninsula did not go as far as this but rather resolved to have the Mayor's and Administrators meet to discuss the potential for working more closely together. To be clear we do not need to amalgamate if it is not the right thing to do, but we should not base our decisions on assumptions.

- Independent No questions sent as no email address.
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- Liberal Party: Thank you for your email. In British Columbia, we have an organization called the Union of British Columbia Municipalities. The UBCM has represented the interests of local governments in BC since 1905. A link from that organization highlights its goals and objectives, and we understand there will soon be an update relating to issues raised with the provincial parties recently: <http://www.ubcm.ca/EN/main/resources/ubcm-2013-election-platform.html> A lot of that document contains a great deal of information about the role of communities and the governance structure or understanding we have between the province and communities in terms of governance. In particular, Page 4 might be of interest to you. We have extracted one quote from another page that describes the relationship we have: To ensure the maintenance of a sound governance framework, all provincial political parties must commit to working with local government as an independent, responsible and accountable order of government. All provincial political parties must also adhere to the principles of consultation and mutual respect enshrined in existing consultative protocols, agreements and legislation. Your email mentions an investigation into amalgamation. We are not entirely sure to what you are referring. This link will provide you with some additional insight into the process involved in establishing amalgamation: http://www.cscd.gov.bc.ca/lgd/municipality/municipal_restructure.htm

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Christina Bates, Victoria/Swan lake: Amalgamation is a hot topic here on the South Island. Some people are for it, some people are not, some don't even weigh in on the issue at all. As with all decisions there are many facets to consider. If enough people say that they would like to see the question of amalgamation be brought to the table for the 2014 election I would feel that it is my duty to take all reasonable steps to ensure this.

Chris Ricketts: We were advised Chris Ricketts is not prepared to support a vote on Amalgamation Nov 14. It is his view that the existing Municipalities show co-operate more--amalgamation is not necessary.

Ida Chong, Oak Bay-Gordon Head: I would absolutely support a community based discussion that would ultimately result in citizens having a opportunity to decide on whether and on how amalgamation should occur in the capital region.

Karen Bill, Victoria Beacon Hill: Yes, I support the opportunity for the public to express their views on amalgamation.

Kerrie Reay, Esquimalt/Juan de Fuca: Amalgamation is specifically referred to in the Local Government Act (the legislation governing municipalities and regional districts) and is to be the responsibility of each local government and their voters. I sit on Council for the District of Sooke, and would definitely want to ensure that each community with its own unique needs and issues, including all of the municipalities and the district of Juan de Fuca in the riding would have an opportunity to engage and consult with their voters on what the benefits and drawbacks of amalgamation. As your MLA, should amalgamation be on the table I certainly would work to ensure that all municipalities

engages their voters on this very significant and sensitive topic.

Rishi Sharma, Saanich South: Thank you for the question, very much appreciate the feedback. If I have the honour of being the MLA for Saanich South, I would fully support any related discussions on the prospect of municipal amalgamation. The possibility of municipal amalgamation is an issue in which citizens should have direct say in whether or not it should happen, I believe that a citizen's direct vote would be essential if amalgamation were to happen. These discussions and corresponding actions would have to take place at the municipal level, however I would do my best to help facilitate this process.

Stephen P Roberts, Saanich North: On Saltspring, where I live, we are studying the possibility of incorporation. The very least we should do in the Capital Region, if voters want it, is allow for a study of the costs and benefits of amalgamation, and what some of the options might be. I can support putting your proposal to a vote.

- NDP Party

The BC NDP supports a non-binding question in the next municipal elections within the Capital Regional District asking citizens whether they support their municipality entering into discussions on amalgamation. Adrian Dix and the BC NDP believe that the public should have their voices heard on this issue