

Mike Butler Calls for Local-First Procurement, Water Storage Infrastructure and Federal Investment in Parksville

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/EINPresswire.com/ -- Mayoral candidate Mike Butler is calling on Parksville residents to look local first when purchasing lumber and building materials for decks, fences, renovations and property maintenance — and says the City itself should adopt the same philosophy.

Butler says Parksville has an opportunity to use local purchasing and municipal procurement to support local workers, local businesses and the development of new local industries.

“Before we look outside our community for the materials and services we need, we should look at what our own local businesses can provide,” said Butler. “When residents buy locally produced wood and building products, they are helping keep local people working and keeping more money circulating in our community.”

Butler points to Aquila Building Supplies as an example of a locally focused business that employs local workers and sells locally.

“Businesses like Aquila Building Supplies demonstrate what a strong local economy can look like,” Butler said. “They employ people here and provide products for people here. We should be creating more opportunities for businesses like this to grow.”

A Local-First Approach to City Procurement

Butler says, if elected Mayor, he will pursue a local-first approach to City procurement, looking to local businesses and contractors first for City projects, supplies and services before looking outside the community.

“If the City is going to spend taxpayer dollars, we should first ask: can a local company do this



work? Can a local contractor provide this service? Can we source the materials from a local producer?" Butler said.

"If the answer is yes, I want Parksville looking locally first."

Butler says this approach should extend beyond construction and wood products to include metal production, metal fabrication, manufacturing, equipment, maintenance and water infrastructure.

Local Solutions for Water Security

Butler says local procurement should also be part of a longer-term strategy to improve Parksville's water security.

He wants the City to investigate local water-storage options and infrastructure that can capture and store water during periods of abundance, reducing pressure on the system during dry periods and helping the community become less vulnerable to drought conditions.

"We need to stop treating drought as something we simply have to accept," Butler said. "We should be looking at practical local water-storage solutions that allow us to capture and hold water when it is available, so we have greater security when conditions become dry."

Butler also wants the City to examine opportunities for local production of water-system components, including pipe and other infrastructure, where local businesses can competitively and appropriately supply them.

"If we are going to upgrade our water infrastructure, we should be asking whether we can have those pipes, components and other materials produced right here," Butler said. "That means infrastructure investment can also become an opportunity for local manufacturing, local jobs and local economic growth."

Federal and Provincial Funding Before Property Taxes

Butler says Parksville should also be more aggressive in pursuing federal and provincial funding for major infrastructure projects rather than automatically turning to property taxpayers to finance the entire cost.

"When we need major infrastructure, the first question should be, 'How can we save money on the property tax bill?'" Butler said. "The first question should be, 'What funding programs are available from the federal and provincial governments, and how do we bring those dollars back to Parksville?'"

Butler says the City should actively pursue infrastructure grants, government partnerships and

other funding opportunities before placing additional costs directly on local property owners.

"We need to pursue every reasonable source of outside investment before reaching deeper into the pockets of Parksville taxpayers," Butler said.

Partnering With Companies to Create Jobs

Butler also wants Parksville to explore joint ventures and partnerships with companies that want to invest, manufacture and create jobs in the community.

"If a company wants to come to Parksville, invest its own capital and create good-paying local jobs, the City should be asking how we can work together to make that happen," Butler said.

"That could mean a partnership, a joint venture, access to City-owned resources, infrastructure support or simply making sure the regulatory process doesn't stand in the way of responsible investment."

Butler says the goal is not for taxpayers to carry the entire cost of economic development.

"We should be bringing government funding together with private investment and local businesses to get projects built," Butler said. "The taxpayer shouldn't always be the first and only source of money."

Using City Contracts to Build Local Industry

Butler wants the City to consider contracting and procurement as a way to help establish and grow local industries.

"We can create opportunities for local companies to do the work. By contracting out projects to qualified local businesses, we can help companies invest, hire workers, develop skills and grow."

"Whether it's a local building-supply business providing materials, a local mill producing lumber, a metal company fabricating components, a contractor building infrastructure, a manufacturer producing equipment or a local company helping build our water systems, we should be asking how we can create more opportunity for locals to do the work."

Butler says this approach could apply to construction, wood products, metal production and fabrication, manufacturing, water infrastructure, landscaping, maintenance and other services required by the City.

"We should be using the purchasing power of the City to create opportunity for locals," Butler said. "Construction and manufacturing by locals, for locals, should be part of Parksville's economic future."

Butler is encouraging residents undertaking projects such as decks, fences, renovations and property maintenance to ask where their materials come from and look for locally produced alternatives first.

“Buying local isn’t just a slogan,” Butler said. “It is one of the practical ways we can strengthen our local economy, support local families, create good-paying jobs and build a more resilient Parksville.”

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